

THE  
MINISTRATION OF  
AND  
COMMUNION WITH ANGELS.

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CHAP. I.

SECT. I.—*Are they not all Ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14.*

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THE COHERENCE AND DIVISION OF THE WORDS.

THE apostle is here making a comparison betwixt Christ and the angels. As the world is wonderfully inclined to superstition, so it is wont many times to darken the glory of Christ, by too much exalting of angels: good reason it is therefore that they should be put in their place; the angels are excellent, but Christ more excellent; the angels are glorious, but Christ more glorious: now the prelation of Christ before the angels, the apostle proves by several arguments: as, 1. From the name of Christ: he is called God's Son; so are not the angels. 2. From the rule and dominion of Christ: he is the head and prince; so are not the angels. 3. From the office and place of Christ: 'He sits at God's right-hand,' (*i. e.*) he hath the second place given him after the Father, he is the Father's lieutenant, or his chief ambassador, to exercise all power: so are not the angels; and therefore it follows that Christ is more excellent and glorious than them all. Indeed they are spirits, and therein they have a title of great excellency given them; but they are ministering spirits, and that takes off, and holds them within the compass of their degree; if they but minister, they must needs be inferior to Christ, who is Lord over all: and though it may be objected, that Christ is sometimes called a minister, and that 'he came to minister;' yet that is not in regard of need, but of good will; the angels do

it of necessity, but Christ voluntarily: it is natural in the angels, but only by accident in Jesus Christ; and therefore in all things Christ hath the pre-eminence. Yet let not this doctrine pass without some consolation to the saints and people of God; be it known to you, that as angels are ministering spirits, so they are sent forth to minister for you; ‘Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?’

You see I had need to be careful what I say of the angels; lest that honour which should be given to God and Christ, may in any sort redound to them. This hath been the error of former ages; and of all errors there is almost none more ancient than this. Paul himself had much to do with some, who so advanced the angels, that in a manner they would have brought Christ under subjection; *Let no man beguile you of your reward* (saith he) *in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels.* Indeed there shines in them such a brightness of the majesty of God, that there is nothing whereunto we are more easily drawn, than with a certain admiration to fall down in worshipping of them; this very thing John in the Revelation confesseth of himself, but he addeth withal, that he received this answer, *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God*—there is no worshipping of angels: and yet we must not throw away the comfortable doctrine of angels; I hope before I have done to convince you of a wonderful pledge of Christ’s love to your persons in the administration of angels,—*Are they not all administering spirits, &c.*

In this text is a description of angels; wherein, 1. Of their nature, *Are they not spirits?* 2. Of their office, *Are they not ministering spirits?* 3. Of their conjunction in this office, *Are they not all ministering spirits?* 4. Of their commission and execution of this office so undertaken, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister?* 5. Of the object about which the execution of their office is most conversant, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

## SECT. II.—Of the several Doctrines deduced from the words.

FROM every part I may deduce a several doctrine; as, 1. That *the angels are spirits.* 2. That *the office of the angels is to minister and serve.* 3. That *the highest angel is not exempted from this office.* 4. That *they have their commission from God and Christ to execute their office of ministration.* 5. That *the ministering office of the angels is not for all, but only for heaven’s heirs.* On the four first I shall only give a touch, but on the last I shall insist, and (if the Lord help) enlarge my discourse to the full of my design.

## CHAP. II.

SECT. I.—*Of the First Doctrine.*

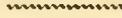
THE *angels are spirits*; and so is God, and so are the souls of men, but with this difference, God is a spirit most simple, without any composition at all: the souls of men are spirits conjoined with flesh and blood; thus the philosopher describes the soul to be the act of the body: now betwixt these two spirits are the angels, who are neither without all composition, as God is; nor are they covered with flesh and blood, as the soul of man is. I know it is a question, whether the angels have bodies? And,

1. The Peripatetics and school-men are for the negative; 'The angels,' say they 'are altogether incorporeal;' and for this opinion are brought in by others these very texts, 'Who maketh his angels spirits,'—and 'Are they not all ministering spirits?'

2. The Platonists and many of the ancients are on the other side: 'The angels have their proper bodies,' saith Tertullian, and, although invisible to us, yet visible to God. Augustine is of the same mind: and herein, saith Lombard, he followed many famous authors, as all the Platonics, Origen, Lactantius, Basil, with all the writers almost of his time: and some more modern agree with them herein; All spirits have their bodies, saith Bernard, as need is, excepting only God himself; and the need that the angels have, he proves from his text, 'Are they not all ministering spirits?' For how can they execute their ministry,' saith he, 'without a body, especially amongst them that are in the body? Besides, they could not discourse, nor move from place to place, without a body.' Nor speaks he of bodies assumed, but of bodies proper and peculiar to themselves.

Methinks a middle betwixt both these comes nearest truth, 'That in comparison of God they are bodies, but in comparison of us they are pure and mighty spirits.' Certainly the angels are not simply spirits, as God is, who is a spirit most simple, without any composition at all; nor are they infinite or immense, as God is, but are terminated in their dimensions, and move from place to place as bodies do. Hence Zanchy approves rather of the ancients, than of the school-men, 'that angels are not simply and altogether incorporeal; only their bodies,' saith he, 'are not earthly, nor airy, nor heavenly, as the Stoics would have them, for all such bodies were created of that chaos, *Gen. i. 1.* but rather, as the imperial heaven is a corporeal substance far different from these nether heavens visible to us, so the angels, made together with that heaven, are corporeal substances, far purer and more subtile, than either earth, or air, or fire, or the matter of these visible heavens.' I will not say they are of the

same body, but they may have like bodies to that glorious body of the highest heaven, or seat of the blessed; and so in respect of us, or of our gross bodies, they may be called pure and mighty Spirits.



### CHAP. III.

#### *Of the Second Doctrine.*

THE office of the angels is to minister and serve; it is true, they are called principalities, powers, mights, thrones, dominions; so the apostle speaks of Christ, that *he was set at God's right-hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion. And by him were all things created in heaven, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:* by all which, though we understand not divers dignities of angels, whereby in nature they excel one another, yet we must needs understand the dignity, excellency, authority, and power, of every one of the angels.

And yet this hinders not, but that these mighty powers are *ministering spirits*; and therefore in other places of scripture we find other titles given to them; as sometimes they are called watchers, *I saw in the visions of my head, and behold a watcher, and an Holy One came down from heaven.* And sometimes they are called soldiers, 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly soldiers, (or of the *heavenly host*) praising God.' Most frequently they are called angels, which is not a name of their nature, but of their office; the word signifies a messenger, as if they were ever running errands betwixt heaven and earth: So 'Jacob dreamed of a ladder set on earth, whose top reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.' Now this is clear, that watchers, soldiers, and messengers, are but ministers and servants. If it be demanded what is their ministry, or service? It is either to God, or to men; in respect of God, they are said *to do his commandments, to hearken to the voice of his word, to behold the face of God, to celebrate the praises of God, and of Jesus Christ*; and in respect of men, they do them many offices of love and service, which we shall discover in the last point, for *are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them* (I say, unto them) *who shall be heirs of salvation.*

## CHAP. IV.

*Of the Third Doctrine.*

THE highest angel is not exempted from this office. Are they not all ministering spirits? It is not one, nor ten, nor an hundred, nor a thousand, but all angels and archangels, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, are 'all ministering spirits.' A question there is, 1. Of the order of angels; and if that be admitted, 2. Whether the chief of that order may be considered as ministering spirits?

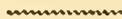
For the first, Dionysius (I will not say the Areopagite) tells of nine orders, because of nine words in the scripture relating to the angels, as seraphims, cherubims, thrones, powers, hosts, dominions, principalities, archangels, and angels; and at large he describes their several natures, distinctions, and properties, as, that the first three orders are for immediate attendance on the Almighty; and the next three orders, for the general government of the creatures; and the last three orders, for the particular good of God's elect; that the archangels surpass the beauty of angels ten times, principalities surpass the archangels twenty times, powers surpass the principalities forty times, &c. How he, or any other, came to this learning, is yet unknown, yet hath this hierarchy, in these several orders, passed for current through many ages of the church.

Learned Mede, in his *Diatribæ of the Angels*, tells of seven principal angels, which minister before the throne of God, and therefore are called archangels, some of whose names we have in scripture, as, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael; to this purpose he cites several texts: *As I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which stand and minister before the glory of the Holy One. And, These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth. And, I saw, saith John, seven lamps before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And, I saw the seven angels which stood before God. And the archangel Gabriel speaks of himself to Zacharias in the very same language, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.*

That there is order amongst the angels, I do not doubt; God is the God of order, and as he orders all things below, so no question he observeth a most exact order in the court of heaven: amongst us, some are superior and some inferior, some greater and others lesser; equality hath no place either on earth, or in hell; and in this visible heaven, *one star*, saith the apostle, *differs*

*from another in glory*: how then should we imagine any disorder or confusion to be in heaven? Certainly there is a most beautiful distinction and order amongst the blessed angels, yet I am apt to think, and do believe, that the difference of those glorious spirits in heaven, is not in their nature, but in their offices: for as among men there is a parity and equality in the respect of nature, and the excellency of one above another is but by accident; so it is with angels, they are equally spiritual substances, all equally created good, and pure, and perfect, and their imparity is because of the divers kinds of their offices, wherein they are employed: Hence, ‘some are simply called angels, some archangels, some principalities, some dominions,’ &c.

But, 2. admitting this order and distinction of angels, whether are not the highest angels ministering spirits? The Platonists that first divided them into three orders, as, some above heaven, called supercelestes; others in heaven, called celestes; and others under heaven, called subcelestes—do suitably give them several offices; as, 1. They above heaven (I mean this visible heaven) continually stand before God (as they say) praising, and lauding, and magnifying his name. 2. They in heaven are there seated, to move, and rule, and govern the stars. 3. They under heaven, are some to rule kingdoms, others provinces, others cities, others particular men. Many Christians, that write of the hierarchy of the angels, follow these opinions. Now, by this surmise, the highest angels do not minister to the saints, but only and immediately to God himself. But on the contrary, did not ‘Michael,’ one of the seven, ‘contend with Satan about the body of Moses?’ And was not Gabriel, ‘who stands before the presence of God,’ sent to speak to Zacharias, and to Mary, and to shew the glad tidings of the gospel? And were not those seven archangels, called, *seven eyes, and the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth?* Surely then neither seraphims, nor cherubims, nor thrones, nor powers, are exempted from this office, they are all *ministering spirits*.



## CHAP. V.

### SECT. I.—*Of the Fourth Doctrine.*

THEY have their commission from God and Christ, to execute their office of ministration; they will not go, unless sent forth: as Christ would not do the office of mediator until he was called, Heb. v. 4, 5. so neither will the angels execute their office without a call: in this respect, the angels are said to wait on Christ, they stand behind him, and receive deputations to their several

offices: *I saw by night, and behold a man—and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white, (i. e.) ministering spirits, prepared for judgment and mercy.* When Zachary knew not who they were, the man that stood among the myrtle trees, Christ (the captain of the Lord's host) answered and said, *These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth:* The Lord first sends them, and then, as agents and spies, they give intelligence of all things done in the world: they will not stir without a commission; but if he sends them, they run, they fly. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, saith Micaiah, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right-hand, and on his left; and the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner; and there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so.* All this discourse is by way of resemblance: as it is with kings and princes, so it is said of God, all his host (good and bad angels) stand about him, and receive their commissions from him: no sooner is any design agreed on, but he gives out the word of command, *go forth, and do so.* See here the commission, *go forth,* said God: *are they not all ministering spirits sent forth,* said the apostle.

## SECT. II.—*A Transition to the last Point.*

ON these four several doctrines, I have no mind to insist, and the rather, because they are so very speculative, and so full of controversy: for my part, I shall never forget what Graserus said he had found in his visiting the sick, and in his own preparations for well dying,—that most of the controversies in divinity were utterly useless, and did entangle the consciences of the simple, just as the human inventions in popery formerly did; and therefore he begun with full bent of mind to shun or abhor them, and in his public preaching to propound only those things which tended to the kindling of true faith in Christ, and to the exercise of true godliness, according to the word of God, and to the procuring of true consolation both in life and death: nor shall I forget what is writ of Abraham Buchaltzer, whose care in his public ministry was to avoid those questions that do but gender unto strife, and to instruct his auditors how to live well and die well. Some indeed blamed him of cowardice, for that being endowed by God with such excellent abilities, yet he would never enter into the lists with the fanatic adversaries of those times; but the reason was, because he always affected peace, having no delight in wrangling, which caused him to say to a friend, *Desi*

*disputare, cæpi supputare, quoniam illud dissipationem, hoc collectionem significat.* Besides, he saw that the greatest antagonists to the church's peace had not so much as one spark of grace in them; and that there came no profit, but much hurt, to the church of Christ, by those continual quarrels amongst divines. I will not deny, nay, I dare not but acknowledge, that in our pulpits we may, and must (as occasion is) propound such a subject as this of the angels, and no question but out of it we may draw matter for faith, and life, and comfort: but as to these particulars of the angels, that they are spirits, ministers of several orders, and all delegated (as the Lord pleaseth) to this or that office, they are very abstruse points, wherein we may wrangle, and do as boys in sport, who strive to strike most sparks out of their flints, but never intend to kindle thereby for use; so we may dispute and jangle about words, or strive to strike out the most subtle and finest-spun notions that we can invent, but, alas, they will not profit our souls, nor tend much to practice, which is the life and spirit of religion: upon this I verily believe it is, that we have far less written in God's word of the nature of angels, than of God himself; because the knowledge of God is far more practical, and less controversial, and more necessary to salvation, than the knowledge of angels or archangels; only if there be any thing of angels revealed in scripture, and most worthy of our knowledge, (as certainly there is,) I take that to be it, which the school-men in all their learning took the least notice of, and that is, of the ministration of angels in reference to God's people: with this one use, saith Zanchius, could the apostle content himself, as knowing that, in the doctrine of angels, this was the most principal, and indeed most practical; and therefore on this point I mean to enlarge, and the other points I shall leave to others.

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## CHAP. VI.

### SECT. I.—*Of the last Doctrine.*

THE chief point yet remains, viz. that *this ministering office of the angels is not for all, but only for heaven's heirs*: on this I mean to insist, and to enlarge my discourse; wherein I shall, 1. Confirm, 2. Apply. 1. For confirmation, we have scripture and reason.

### SECT. II.—*Scriptures for Angels' Ministration.*

*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.*

In this scripture we may observe these particulars,—

1. That the elect are so precious with God, that for their sakes he gives out commands.

2. That he commands the angels (his choice and chief servants) for the good of his chosen : *he shall give his angels charge over thee*. It is the usual way of his providence, to command the strong in behalf of the weak, and commend the weak to those that are more strong : thus it is between children and parents, wives and husbands, the sick and sound, the saints and angels ; he commands the angels over saints, or he commends the saints unto his angels.

3. That the end or meaning of the command, is for the elect's custody, *to keep thee* : they must not exercise a power or dominion over them, they must not exact adoration or worship from them, as the evil spirits do from all their followers ; but the command is to preserve them, defend them, and deliver them, keep them.

4. That the keeping of saints is limited to their ways, *they shall keep thee in all thy ways* : i. e. in all thy necessary lawful ways, not in thy sinful devious wanderings.

5. That the obedience of the angels to this command, is precise, exact, and diligent, *they shall bear thee up in their hands*, i. e. they shall accompany thee, go before thee, wait upon thee, follow thee, as the shadow follows the body, compass thee round, lead thee, observe thee, and in all straits or necessities lend thee an hand.

6. That the issue of this obedience is safety and security ; *lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*. By this one danger we understand, by a synecdoche, all other dangers ; q. d. not any hurt, be it never so little, shall befall the elect : so far shall they be from harm in the head, that it shall not reach the foot ; indeed neither foot nor head, nor an hair of their head, shall perish to their prejudice, Luke 21. 28.

The sum of all this is. As nurses and mothers deal with their children, so must the angels deal with the children of God, that is, they must keep them in their ways, they must bear them up in their hands : children often stumble and fall, unless they be led and carried in hands and arms ; and therefore God hath given his angels a charge over his children, to keep them, and carry them as in arms, lest they dash their feet against the stones.

*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them* : they that sometimes are compared to nurses and mothers, are other whiles compared to soldiers that encamp themselves about the saints ; thus, when the young man had his eyes opened at Elisha's prayer, he saw, and *behold the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire, round about Elisha*. Many military services are they ever and anon per-

forming for the saints ; they are watchful centinels, giving a timely alarm to prevent the enemy : *Arise, and take the babe and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the babe to destroy him.* They are faithful life-guards, preserving the saints in the midst of dangers : *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling, for he shall give his angels charge over thee.* They are safe convoys, bringing the saints through their wilderness to their heavenly Canaan. Jacob had experience thereof : *And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him ; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host ; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim, i. e. two hosts or camps, the one before and the other behind, or the one on one side, and the other on the other side ; or they placed themselves in such sort, as to give Jacob assurance of safety every way.*

### SECT. III.—*Reasons for Angels' Ministration.*

BUT why should they minister for the saints? The reasons are, 1. In respect of God. 2. In respect of them. 3. In respect of us.

1. There are some reasons in respect of God : as,—

1. It is his will and pleasure that they should so minister. Thus Nebuchadnezzar could acknowledge, *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven.* The Lord's will is the rule of all justice, and a most perfect law, whereby he governs the army of heaven, that is, the angels : hence they are described to be God's ministers that do his pleasure ; they inquire no further what is to be done, or why it should be done, but acquiesce in the discovery of his will and pleasure. Indeed all things and actions are resolved into this first principle, the good pleasure of his will ; *He worketh all things after the counsel of his will.* This is the supreme reason.

2. It is his command that they should so minister ; every thing that God wills, he doth not command ; he wills sin to be in the world, but he doth not command it, for then he would be the author of sin ; but as for angel-ministration, he wills and commands them to it : *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word :* upon this ground is the Lord very often called, the Lord of hosts, i. e. the Lord of angels, for so Jacob called the two armies of angels, God's *host* ; and the multitude of angels that praised God at Christ's nativity, are called a multitude of the *heavenly hosts*. Look, as commanders say to their soldiers, go, and they go ; so saith God to his angels, go, and they go ; go and minister to my saints, and presently they minister.

3. It is goodness that they should so minister. Alas, if the Lord should deal with us according to our demerits, rather tigers

and dragons should wait upon us, than the angels : it is more than we can challenge, that any creature after the fall should be serviceable unto us ; but that all the hosts of heaven should be abased to so low a work, as to be sent forth to minister for the meanest saint, even for us poor sinful wretches, dust and ashes, Oh ! what goodness is this ! Upon this account, of the love, mercy, and goodness of God, we read so often of the Lord's sending his angels to attend his saints : thus Abraham told his servant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee* : And thus God told Moses, *I will send an angel before thee* : And thus Daniel told the king, *My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me*. So gracious is that King of heaven, that he will spare his own courtiers out of heaven, and send them on errands to his saints for their preservation ; whence David reasons, *Oh taste and see that the Lord is good ! Oh the goodness of God !*

2. There are other reasons in respect of the angels : as,—

1. It is their duty ; not the brightest angel but is subordinate unto God, and therefore must act and move as the Lord appoints : *This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, and I knew that they were the cherubims*. The cherubims are glorious angels, of great wisdom, strength, and agility, and yet they are subservient to the Lord, and therefore are said to be under the God of Israel : Surely that word of the psalmist, *they do his pleasure*, is the very image of true obedience, *q. d.* they minister not at their own pleasure, but at God's : now what is God's pleasure, but the saints' welfare ? *He hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants*. The angels, that know this, stand not upon terms with God, all they do is but to hearken to the voice of his word, and then they fly : *then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them*. It is a note of a divine upon these words ; ' All things are under the God of Israel, he hath the pre-eminence, he is above wheels, and angels are under him, at his disposal : if he give out the word, the cherubims move, lift up their wings, and order the wheels ; if he say, go and minister to yonder saints, presently they go, as it is their duty.'

2. It is their delight to attend the saints : they know that one day they shall live together, and sing together, and rejoice together ; they know that the saints shall supply the room of the fallen angels ; and when they meet, O the joy that will be betwixt them ! In the mean time, it is their desire and delight to attend their partners in heaven's joy, for they are acquainted with God's design and purpose to save them ; they know what Christ hath done and suffered for them ; the mystery of godliness is seen of angels ; it is so seen, that they take great delight to behold it, yea, they are ravished in the very beholding of it, as at some new and strange object ; *they look into it*, saith Peter their whole spirits are taken up with it, as if it were the blesseddest

sight that ever they could behold ; and they that are so ravished at the work of our redemption, how should they but with delight attend the redeemed ones of Jesus Christ.

3. It is their honour to wait on the saints. It is true, in some respects they are of an higher form, they come nearest to God of all the creatures in the world, and they have kept their cloth of gold unstained six thousand years : O the purity, agility, beauty, glory, sanctity, and excellency of the angels ! Man in his greatest honour, advanced to the highest pinnacle of happiness, is yet in many things below the angels, *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels* ; and yet it is no indignity for them to attend the saints, for herein they are but fellow-workers with God and Christ, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*. My Father is beneficent in preserving saints ; and I work by the same power, saith Christ. At first I created, and still I preserve. Now if God and Christ thus work and wait, well may the angels co-work with them. It was Paul's honour that he wrought together with God : *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also*. Servants of God (such as men and angels) cannot but look on it as their glory, to put to their hands in the same work with their sovereign Lord, the King of glory : if Christ himself came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, the angels may well think it an honour to imitate him, and to minister also.

3. There are other reasons in respect of saints : as,—

1. It is for their consolation : a mighty comfort it is, that other creatures should do them service, that heaven and earth, and all herein, should be made for them, and be continued and preserved for their sakes ; and yet as if all this were not enough, except the angels also were subservient, that creatures of the highest order, of the finest make, of the noblest spirits, who behold the face of God himself, and are taken up with the immediate enjoyment of his fulness, that they, even they should be destined by Christ, the King of saints, to minister to his saints, Oh what a comfort is this ! *If whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope* ; surely this that is written of the angels, as concerning their office and ministration, must be full of comfort, indeed reprobates and unbelievers have none of this comfort ; alas, they are not within the verge of this blessed text, they have nothing to do with the scripture of heaven's heirs ; it is for them, and only for them, who shall be heirs of salvation.

2. It is for their benefit both of body and soul : some observe, that were it not for the angels, the devils, that are ever seeking to devour, would quickly tear the bodies of the saints into atoms. We read, how, afore Christ's death, the bodies of many were possessed of devils, and, when they had torn them, by the command of Christ they were dispossessed ; but after the great work of

our redemption, the devils were more restrained in their power : *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Christ so bound him in chains by his holy angels since that time, that now he hath not his liberty as before to hurt the saints : it is true, that he is still in the world, and rules in the air, but the good angels so defend our bodies against the evil angels, that they cannot touch an hair to our hurt, and, as for our souls, they are in their special care ; it is not to tell how many are the benefits they administer that way ; they teach us truths, they open God's will, they reveal the secrets and mysteries of grace, and by these means they promote the salvation of souls : this they did sometimes by dreams in the night, and sometimes by conference in the day, when they assumed bodies ; but now still they admonish our minds, and, in a secret unperceivable way, they persuade as to the reading, hearing, and obeying of God's word. But of these, and the like soul-services of the angels, we shall enlarge another time.

#### SECT. IV.—*Use of Terror.*

WELL then ; is the ministering office of the angels not for all, but only for heaven's heirs ? What terror is this to the wicked ? Alas, they have no angels to keep them, or take care of them, they are devoid of the presence and ministry of the heavenly angels ; or if they have any inspection of them, it is but a general inspection, such as Hagar and Ishmael had, who are set out in scripture as the types of those that are rejected of the Lord. And this, I take it, is the reason why reprobates live, and are not all suddenly struck dead, to wit, because the angels have some general charge and care over them, that they may be preserved to their condition, but they are not properly guardians of any such men : O woe, woe, woe to the wicked world, *when one woe is past, behold there come two more woes after.* As it was with Saul, when God was gone from him, then the Philistines made war against him, and he was sore wounded of the archers, and at last he fell on his own sword and died : so where the angels of God stand aloof, and will not rescue, one woe follows after another, there the evil spirits keep their rendezvous, the devil works in them mightily, they are hoodwinked, and besotted and blinded by the god of this world, having no power so much as to groan or to wish for deliverance ; we may say of all reprobates as it was said of Saul, *An evil spirit is upon them, and God is not with them* : they are already taken in the snare of the devil, he hath them in a string, and leads them captive at his will : and no wonder, for they have not those aids, those contrary whisperings, they have not the good angels to conflict with the bad, they have not the spirit, a new nature, much less the external helps and guards, of holy and blessed angels ; ah, woe to these men !

## SECT. V.—Use of Encouragement.

WHAT encouragement is this to the godly? Though the wicked have not such guards, yet the godly are the proper objects of the angels' ministry: Are they not ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them? It is a question that puts all out of question: the wicked indeed are left to the wide world, but God is at the charge of giving the saints tutors, and governors, and guardians; here is a mighty encouragement to the people of God; I know not the condition that any saint in the world may be in, wherein we cannot find in scripture some encouragement or other drawn from an angel: Art thou in a journey? so was Abraham's servant when Abraham told him, *He shall send his angel before thee, and prosper thy way*: Art thou in battle, or ready to march against the enemy? so was Israel, when the Lord told Moses, *For mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perrizzites, &c. and I will cut them off*: Art thou in oppression, under the tyranny of wicked men? so Moses told Edom the Israelites were, *Thou knowest of all the travel that hath befallen us, how our fathers went down into Egypt, and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers; and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt*. Art thou in persecution for religion, and forced to fly for thy life? so was Elijah, when he requested for himself that he might die, and said, *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers; and as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise, and eat*. Art thou traduced, maligned, censured, imprisoned, and condemned to death for righteousness' sake, or for the truth? so was Daniel, whom God yet delivered by an angel: *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths; that they have not hurt me, for as much as before him innocency was found in me*. And so it was with Peter, *For behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison,—and when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod*. Art thou amidst a people, whom God for sin hath decreed to destruction? so was Lot, whom the angels hastened out of Sodom, lest he should be consumed in the iniquity of the city. But I am saved this labour of searching any further into scripture; a worthy author had framed us the variety of their assistance in this same scheme: 'One while they lead us in our way, as they did Israel; another while they instruct us, as they did Daniel: one while they fight for us, as they did for Joshua; another while they purvey for us, as they did for Elijah: one while they fit us to our holy vocation, as they did Isaiah; another while

they dispose of the opportunities of our calling for good, as they did of Philips, to the eunuch : one while they foretel our danger, as to Joseph and Mary ; another while they comfort us in our afflictions, as they did Christ and his apostles : one while they resist our offensive courses, as they did Moses ; another while they encourage us in our devotions, as they did Paul : one while they deliver us from durance, as they did Peter ; another while they preserve us from death, as the three children : one while they restrain our presumption, as the cherub before the gate of paradise ; another while they excite our courage, as to Joshua, Gideon, and the other judges : one while they cure our bodies, as at the pool of Bethesda ; another while they carry up our souls to heaven, as they did to Lazarus. It were endless to instance in all the gracious offices which the angels perform.— And is not here great encouragement to all the saints ? The children of princes are not without their guard, no more are God's children ; as they have an heavenly Father, so they have an heavenly guard to wait upon them, and to minister unto them : O mighty encouragement !

SECT. VI.—*Use of Admiration.*

How may this angel-administration cause the saints to admire at the kindness of the Lord towards them ? You darlings of the Almighty, if others regard not, you have cause to wonder at this, that the angels, those created citizens of glory, should receive you in your straits, march after you in your ways, counsel you in your doubts, defend you in your dangers ; in a word, that God should charge all his elect angels to shew love and respect unto you, yea, to serve and to minister unto you : stand amazed at this, O ye saints ! The angels are the most glorious creatures in the world, they are the glittering courtiers of heaven, and the beautiful companions of Jesus Christ. Job calls them morning stars, in that being newly created, they gave glory to the Creator, even as the birds in spring begin their notes, and sing at break of day ; and he calls them sons of God, in that he doth use them as children, they are very near to him, they do always attend him, and continually see his face, they have the privilege of sons : *The morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy.* Now, that such creatures should wait on sinful wretches, dust and ashes, worms and not men, it is enough to cast any man in the world into an amazement or astonishment. A wonder it is, that any creature, though inferior, should be serviceable to man, that by sin hath lost his dominion over the creatures ; a wonder it was, that the ravens should minister unto Elijah ; but that all the host of heaven should be abased (if we may speak after the manner of men) to so low a work, that angels should perform offices of respect to the meanest creatures ; that

an angel clothed with light and glory should come to Zachary, to Mary, and to the shepherds; what, angels of God to wait upon those who are the most despised and rejected of men? Stand, and wonder at this! *When I consider the heavens* (saith David) *the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; 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.* This indeed is applied to Christ, Heb. 2. 6, 7, 9, 11, *who was made a little lower than the angels by the suffering of death, but now is crowned with glory and honour; yet* (saith the apostle) *he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Christ and we are of the same nature, which though in some respects it be lower, yet it is but a little lower than the angels; nay, in some respects are we higher than the angels, for the angels wait on the saints, and the angels are not so married to Jesus Christ in a mystical union, as the saints and people of God, restored to his image, are. Admire at this, all ye saints! verily there is somewhat in holiness more than the world seeth or knoweth, there is some worth, or excellency, or consanguinity, in the saints to Christ, or I cannot think that Christ would set such a guard upon them as his own courtiers. The angels are indeed near in alliance to Christ, but the saints are nearer: the angels are God's progeny, the sons of God, and so Christ is their brother; but man is allied nearer to Christ than so, in that man is of God's lineage, and Christ is of man's lineage: and hence it is, that the angels must now stoop, and bow, and wait, and serve, and minister to the saints. Are they not nearer allied than all the angels? Unto which of the angels said he at any time, you are my sons, my kinsmen, brethren, mother, sister, spouse? An angel is constantly called a ministering spirit, but is no where read a friend of God, the Son of the Father, the delight of the Son of man, the temple of the holy Spirit, wherein the thrice glorious Trinity takes up his mansion. Christians, admire, here is enough to cast you into an ecstasy: come, view the saint's pedigree, and tell me what you think of it.

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*The Saints' Pedigree.*

|                  |   |                                  |
|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Christ is to us, | { | Our Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 2.           |
|                  |   | Our Friend, Cant. 5. 16.         |
|                  |   | Our Flesh and Blood, Heb. 2. 14. |
|                  |   | Our Brother, Heb. 2. 17.         |
|                  |   | Our Father, Isa. 63. 16.         |
|                  | { | Our Husband, Rom. 7. 4.          |

We are to Christ, {  
 His Servants, Rom. 6. 22.  
 His Friends, John 15. 14.  
 His Kinsmen, Mark 3. 21.  
 His Brethren, Job 7. 3.  
 His Sons, Gal. 3. 26.  
 His Spouse, Sister, Love, Dove, &c.  
 Cant. 4. 9.

We are both {  
 One Vine, John 15. 1.  
 One Seed, Gal. 3. 16.  
 One Temple, Ephes. 2. 15.  
 One Body, Rom. 12. 5.  
 One Spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17.  
 One Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12.

Upon the view of this line, genealogy, pedigree, (call it what you please,) methinks, my brethren, we should all cry out, *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? for thou hast made him higher than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour; thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet:—O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the world!*

SECT. VII.—*Use of Magnanimity.*

Do angels wait on heaven's heirs? Come then, ye holy ones, and take an holy state upon you, think yourselves too good to abase yourselves to the world, or to sin, or to be slaves of men: why, you are kings, and have a mighty guard, and therefore you should carry yourselves answerably. Little do the men of this world think of this, or believe this truth; if they see a man to have at his heels a long train of earthly followers, in silks, satins, golden chains, and such like braveries; Oh how such sights are gazed on! and how are such men usually titled, your greatness, highness, excellency! Alas, alas! all is but beggary to the glory of the least of the saints of God, and of their attendants. I see indeed a great deal of glitter in some of these earthly state solemnities, yet in all their pomps they had need of a fair day, and clear sun-shine, or else half their show will be lost: but angels, (the saints' attendants) enlighten the greatest darkness, Luke 2. 9. Acts 12. 7. *Is not their countenance as lightning, and their raiment white as snow?* Matt. 28. 3. Oh then! how should this greaten the spirits of God's people! Why, think of it, you whom it most concerns; it was an high favour for Mordecai, a poor porter, to have Haman, the great pompous peer of the empire, to be his attendant, his lacquey, or his footmen, for an hour: how much more honour is it for you poor worms, to have those mighty peers of heaven, little roys, demigods, to wait upon you continually! King Solomon in all his royalty, in the midst of his

two hundred targets, and three hundred shields of beaten gold, was not like one of the lilies of the field, much less like a saint environed and encompassed with a wall of angels: hence was that saying of Christ, *Despise not one of these little ones*; and why so? because in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father. The brightest angels that look in the face of God, despise not to attend on the meanest saints; and how then should any despise them whom the angels honour? How should any think them unworthy of their company or countenance, whom the great angels think most worthy of their service and attendance? But, especially, how should any presume to wrong the saints, or to rush into God's paradise, such as every true Christian is, where stand the angels of God with a flaming sword which turns every way? It is enough, one would think, to affright all the men in the world from offering any violence to any of God's people; but howsoever they carry, let Christians carry as heaven's heirs, let them walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory: let them consider what servitors and ministers God hath appointed to wait on them, and in the name of God let them carry themselves answerably, and be holily magnanimous. Plutarch tells of Themistocles, that he accounted it not to stand with his state to stoop down to take up the spoils of the enemy whom he had scattered in flight; but says to one of his followers, you may, for you are not Themistocles. If others mind the earth and earthly things, as the swine that follow the trough, and can look no higher, yet let the saints (which the angels wait on) walk above the world, and above all things that are here below. Citizens of Rome might not accept of any other freedom in any other city; they accounted it a dishonour to the freedom of Rome, to take freedom any where in the world besides: you that are free of the kingdom of heaven, and that have the created citizens of heaven to be your life-guards, Oh do not entangle yourselves with the things of earth, seek not to be free here, as if you had no better portion: surely if you understand your own privileges, you are spiritual kings and queens of an otherwise kingdom than this world; you have the privileges of a council, to wit, God's testimonies, Psa. 119. 24. and the privileges of a guard full of state and strength, to wit, God's angels; O how should this greaten your spirits: *Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds, let the high praises of God be in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen. This honour have all his saints.*

SECT. VIII.—*Use of Exhortation.*

Is the ministering office of the angels for heaven's heirs? then to your duties of communion with them. Oh improve this ordinance! Why, here is an ordinance of Jesus Christ scarce thought on; the angels minister to saints, and the saints almost, if not altogether, forget their duties which they owe to God and Christ in that respect. What, my brethren, are you ignorant of such an ordinance? or do you know it, and yet are you negligent? If you are simple, ignorant, and that your ignorance is of pure negation, and not of evil disposition, it is then high time to discover this mystery of godliness to you, that you may be in the exercise of such duties yet unknown; or if you know them, and are negligent of them, it is then high time to rouse up your spirits, and to 'stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,—that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles, of our Lord and Saviour.' Howsoever the case stands with you, I beseech you to hear, learn, practise, and make use of, this present book and work; it is another message that I have from God, another ordinance that I would discover; therefore 'set your hearts to all the words that I testify to you this day, for it is not a vain thing, but it is for your lives.'

The motives I use, shall be only these,—

1. Angel-administration, and our communion with them, is an ordinance of Jesus Christ; it is an institution of Christ, which hath connected to it some kind of spiritual efficacy to work on souls. Amongst other intervening mediums (saith one) there is one great ordinance, which we have not so much considered of, viz. That the good angels (the chariots and horses) should relieve us, as they did Elisha; nor is their relief only as to outwards, but in relation to our religious walking, and to our inward man. Were it not sad to lose an ordinance of Jesus Christ? Or if it be not lost in respect of the living instruments on their parts, yet is it not sad that we should make no use of them? Ministers are an ordinance of Christ, they are messengers, interpreters, (even as the angels, and therefore are called angels, Rev. i. 20.) their office is to declare unto man his righteousness; to pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God; to gather together the saints; to be Christ's paranymphs; to deal about the getting of a wife for the Lamb; to cater for heaven; to bring in custom for the kingdom of God. Ministers and angels are in the very same employment. Now were it not sad, that the ministers of Christ should be neglected or despised? What if you have ministers; is there no use to be made of such an ordinance? The apostle tells you, you cannot have saving knowledge, regeneration, or faith, without their use: I do not speak what God may do

extraordinarily, but this is God's ordinary way: *How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher?* I may say the same of angels in their way, for they are rational and living instruments, they are ministers of God, and they administer to us saving truths: an angel told that first news of the gospel, *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* And shall this ordinance of Christ be without any consideration how we may receive good from it? God forbid.

2. The angels are an ordinance ever present; some other ordinances may be taken from us: men may take from us our bibles, teachers, pastors, or they may imprison us where we cannot enjoy them, but they cannot take from us the holy angels: *When the high priest, and all that were with him, laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison, then the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* And when Peter was in prison, sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the door kept the prison, behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, *Arise up quickly.* No prison is so close, no keepers are so vigilant, as to keep out angels: though we want, and may want other ordinances, yet we have the angels as an ordinance, to walk up and down with us, wheresoever we are, or whithersoever we go. I cannot but remember that speech of a great divine, which at the first reading exceedingly struck me: 'The good Lord forgive me, for that, amongst my other offences, I have suffered myself so much to forget, as his Divine presence, so the presence of his holy angels: it is, I confess, my great sin that I have filled my eyes with other objects, and have been slack in returning praises to my God for the continual assistance of those blessed and beneficent spirits, which have ever graciously attended me, without intermission, from the first hour of my conception to this present moment, neither shall ever, I hope, absent themselves from my tutelage and protection till they shall have presented my poor soul to her final glory.' If a good man, of an holy gracious spirit, was so forgetful of them, that he was fain to cry *Peccavi*, (I confess my great sin, and, the good Lord forgive me,) methinks it should be a prevailing motive to work on us, so to converse with them, and to perform our respective duties to them, as being ever present, without intermission they may wait on us: yet how is it that days without number we should forget them, and their ministration?

3. The angels are an ordinance, improving other ordinances of Jesus Christ; in this respect there is no fear of clashing with other ordinances: it is true that the Lord never calls any assembly to two divers employments at one and the same time,

unless they be subservient the one to the other. Hence it is we blame them, who, coming into our congregations when some public ordinances are in hand, they betake themselves to their private devotions, and will not reverently (without more ado) compose themselves to join with the assembly in that ordinance of God which is in hand: we would not have ordinances clash, only angel-ministration in religious affairs will not hinder, but further our religious services; and angel-administration in civil affairs will not hinder, but further our civil business. 1. In religious services, the angels are assistants; it is said, that they suggest suitable, seasonable, and pious thoughts at such a time: when Cornelius was praying, he saw an angel, saying unto him, thy prayers and thy alms are come up for a memorial before God: and while Zacharias was executing the priest's office before God, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord on the right side of the altar of incense, saying, thy prayer is heard. 2. In civil affairs the angels are assistant;—they shall keep thee in all thy ways; in thy vocation, or particular calling. Now, herein is the excellency of such an ordinance, that it is an addition and improvement to all other ordinances; an argument sufficient to bind us to our duties in reference to it.

4. Angel-ministrations, and our communion with them, is an ordinance in opposition to Satan's temptations, and our communion with him: it were enough to amaze poor souls to consider the powers and principalities that are against them; were they but weak, they were less considerable; but we wrestle not against flesh and blood, (said the apostle,) but against spirits, yea, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. And yet as great as the power and policy of devils are, they are less in power than the holy angels: *There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not.—And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.* Now, here is the encouragement to our duties; not only for God and Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith, but even spiritual substances of good angels, proportionable to the other of bad angels, contend with them, and stand most valiantly on our side.

But what are those duties of communion we owe the angels in this respect? I answer, 1. In general. 2. In special.

1. In general: as is their ministration, so is our duty of communion with them. Now in several ways do they administer to us, and so in several respects do we owe duties to God and them. There is a proportion (if we can find it out) betwixt their ministration and our duty, and they answer one another, as, in the glass, face answers face: if they serve us, certainly there is

something of service that we owe God and them: as the Lord could say, *If I be a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear?* So if the angels stand in any such relation towards us, it cannot be but proportionable or suitable duties are to be performed by us.

2. In special: as the kinds of their ministration differ at several times, so are we to observe their ministration at these times, and to return suitable duties. At the first they minister in one kind, and anon they minister in another kind: as our several needs are at several times, so are their several ministrations at those times. *Ex. gr.* When I was in my mother's womb, they ministered thus; and when I was born, and yet an infant, they ministered thus; and when I was grown, and come to riper years, they ministered thus; and when I die, and go out of the world, they will minister thus; and when I shall rise again, and come to judgment, they will minister thus. Now here is my duty: 1. To consider their several ministrations at those several times. 2. To return suitable duties at times seasonable, as I am, in their season, to perform all other duties.

#### SECT. IX.—*Use of Direction.*

AND this is that special use which I aimed at, and which I had at first in my eye when I begun this work; it is an use of direction, wherein I shall first lay down the office of angels, and then our office. First, what they do in their times, and then what we must do in our times, in answer to them and their ministrations. And O that the Lord would bless this work to thee that readest! O that he, on whose errand I come, would speak himself to thy soul, for he is able to instruct; yea, when he teacheth, all are scholars.

*MINISTRATION OF,*  
AND  
**COMMUNION WITH ANGELS.**

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CHAP. I.

SECT. I.—*Of the Time when the Angels first begin their  
Ministration.*

**T**HE first period wherein the angels minister to heaven's heirs, is, from their quickening in the womb, till their birth. Come then, and first see the ministration of angels at this time; and, secondly, learn and practise we those several duties that especially concern the saints in that respect.

1. For the ministration of angels in that period, most probable it is that then they begin their ministration. The exact beginning is indeed questionable; some would have it begin at the first hour of conception: They have ever graciously attended me (saith one) without intermission, from the first hour of my conception to this present moment. Others, at the first infusion of the soul: Their care begins (say they) as soon as the child is quickened in the womb, for that they have then another distinct charge to look after. Others at the birth of the elect; God revealing to the angels who are such, by requiring their attendance on them then: From their birth to the end of their life, saith Zanchius, angels are assigned of God to wait on the elect. Others at the baptism of infants: Origen, recounting many opinions, doth mention this; which is very improbable, for then it is in the power of parents, who set the time of baptism, to say when the angels shall begin their office over their children: but the elect are as precious and dear to God before, as after the ordinance of baptism. Others at the time of conversion. Of which two reasons are given:—

1. Because the angels know not the decrees before that election be declared in conversion: but this we deny.

2. Because in the state of nature a man is under the wrath of God, and is vexed with evil spirits, that hurry him to sin, and rule in the children of disobedience: but although this cannot be denied, yet God is resolved that all his elect shall have invisible supports against Satan, to preserve them charily, as chosen

vessels, against the time that he shall manifest himself unto them; and it is sufficient to angels, that God wills their attendance, and that hereafter they shall discern some fruit of their attendance. For my part, amidst all these differences, I close only with them who say, that the angels begin the execution of their charge when the soul is infused: and the reasons are solid—

1. Because the child hath then a distinct being of his own.

2. Because then it is a person consisting of soul and body.

2. Because God's providence over soul and body (of which the angels are servants) taketh date thence; *Thou hast covered me*, saith David, *in my mother's womb*: The Lord, in framing our bodies and creating our souls in our mother's womb, did then cover his tender work with his mighty power from all inconveniences, as with a shield; and therefore then did the angels begin their ministration.

SECT. II.—*Of the Manner of Angel-ministration at that Time.*

BUT how do the angels minister at such a time? I answer, they keep, preserve, defend, deliver, sustain, and strengthen the babes, even in the womb. I cannot think that they have only one office at such a time, but that sometimes they attend them for good, and sometimes they deliver them from evil. The case stands thus; in the creation or infusion of the soul, (which is all one, for *creando infunditur et infundendo creatur*) the angels receive their commission; as if the Lord should say, come, blessed angels, here is a creature that shall at last fill up the room of some fallen angel, and then it shall be like to yourselves, and you shall love it as yourselves, but, in the mean time, it is my pleasure that you should minister unto it, and keep it safe; which is no sooner said, but they are prompt and ready to do God's will.

We may wonder at this, that the angels should thus minister to man after his fall, which they never did before. In that collocation betwixt innocent Adam, second Adam, renewed Adam, and old Adam, it is said, that the angels did neither minister unto, nor keep the first Adam, before the fall, because he was in no danger, only they loved him: the angels indeed ministered to Christ, the second Adam, and loved him, but did not keep him, for he was comprehensor as well as viator; Christ is the head of angels, and therefore he is not kept by them: the angels now minister to the renewed Adam, yea, they love him, and keep him, and yet this argues not any prerogative that the saints have above Christ, but rather their weakness and wants, that they have need of the angels to preserve them, as young children stand in need of nurses to wait upon them: but as for old Adam, or wicked reprobates, the angels neither minister to them, nor love

them, nor keep them, in respect of any special and particular keeping: it may be the angels are sometimes ministers of outward things even to the wicked, as the angels brought down manna in the wilderness to the bad Israelites, as well as good; but they have not that particular care of the wicked, as they have of the elect of God; they come not up and down the ladder, Christ, to minister to them, as they do to the elect. Now this keeping of the elect, is not only in this life, but all the while that they are in their mother's womb.

SECT. III.—*Experiences of this Truth.*

OF this, as of all the rest, I would give in some experiences for further clearing:—

1. An ancient matron having many children, and having left bearing for about the space of twelve years, the Lord then unexpectedly gave her to conceive: she wondered, and apprehending nothing but ill health, purposed on such a day to take physic; but the night before (if I mistake not) she felt the child stir in her womb, and then she brake out, as Sarah did; “What! after I am waxed old, shall I bear a child, my lord being old also?” Hereupon the physic was removed, the child preserved, and rightly called Isaac, in imitation of old Abraham and Sarah, who laughed at the news of the angel, that they should have a son in their old age, Gen. 17. 17. and 18. 12.

2. Three godly women, in the island of Guernsey, were condemned to be burnt for their religion; and though one of them was great with child, yet found she no favour: as they were all three in the fire, the belly of the woman breaking with the vehemency of the flame, the infant being a fair man-child, fell into the fire; which being caught, and carried to the bailiff, he commanded it to be had back, and thrown into the fire; whereby after it was born, and preserved by the angels, it died a martyr. *Clarke.*

SECT. IV.—*Of the Duties that concern us in this respect.*

2. THE duties that concern us in this respect, are either parents' duties, or children's:—

1st. For the parents.

1. Parents may rejoice at this, that the holy angels attend them, and those little pieces and pictures of themselves. You that are mothers great with child, are you not sometimes in trouble, fear, and peril? Be not discouraged, for the angels attend your motions, and all occurrences, for the safety and preservation both of you and your's. It is observed, that when Mary saluted Elizabeth, the babe sprang in her womb for joy, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Some think

that this springing of the babe was by the presence of an angel with John, otherwise that little embryo had been incapable of such affections and motions, according to the course of nature; and immediately it follows, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." A serious consideration of the angels ministering to such embryos, may be a blessed means to fill you with the comforts of God's Spirit. O rejoice in this! Nor is that all: for—

2. Parents ought to pray, not to the angels, but to the God of angels, for the favour, assistance, and protection of the angels to their infants. I know such prayers are not usual; but is not that a neglect of duty to our babes? When David prayed against his enemies, he could say, "Let the angel of the Lord chase them; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them:" How much more may we say for our tender infants in the womb, Let the angel of the Lord guard them, and let the angel of the Lord keep them. Manoah and his wife were very careful what to do for the babe which must be born to deliver Israel out of the Philistines' hands; and therefore after the angel had appeared to the woman, and told her, then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, let the man of God (or the angel of God) which thou didst send, come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born: and God hearkened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again." Indeed when he came, he would have no burnt-offering offered unto him, but gave direction, "If thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." Angels would not be prayed unto, nor worshipped, Rev. 19. 10. & 22. 9. But yet, in reference to the angels, we find Manoah praying and offering unto the Lord; and if he prayed for angel-direction, how much more may we turn the promises into prayers for angel-protection and ministration to these poor infants yet unborn!

2d. For the children or parties themselves, when grown.

1. Let them know and be acquainted with their angel-keepers. When David considered how he was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, and covered in his mother's womb, he cried out, "Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." It is not enough to have angel-keepers before we are born, but in time we should endeavour to know them: it is sad to be ignorant still of such a glorious truth; surely God would have us acquainted with his works, and to bear witness of what we know for his glory.

2. Let them praise God for the angels ministering to them in the womb. "Thou art he (saith David) that took me out of the womb:" and thou art he that preserves me in the womb. The Lord doth many things for us, which, at the time when he doth them, we cannot observe; it is our duty therefore to look upon

them afterwards, that they may furnish us with matter of praise to God. But why is not praise rendered to the angels, as well as to God? Because God will not give his glory to another: angels must have their due, but they must not rob God of his praise; whatsoever instruments and means the Lord makes use of, the spiritual eye pierceth through them, and looks on God, and gives him all the glory. You that hear of this angel-ministration in the womb, O praise the Lord! It is, if you rightly apprehend it, a smothered wonder, and so glorious a work of God, that he deserves perpetual praise from you for that one work. "Thou art he that preserved me in, and took me out of, my mother's bowels; my praise shall be continually of thee."

3. Let them act their faith and trust in God, even because of this: to this end are all the experiences of God's love to his saints, that they might store up their faith, and trust God more. O then, among other experiences of God's dealings, make use of this, for strengthening of your faith! "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth; by thee have I been holden up from the womb." As Satan makes assault after assault against faith, so should we raise bulwark after bulwark, for defence thereof: after we have looked upon other men's experiences, we should recount our own experiences of God's care towards us, and make use of all God's dealings for our strengthening. 'Thus, Lord, thou didst for me in my youth, and childhood, and infancy. Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly; yea, in the womb, before I was born, thou didst cover me, and guard me by the angels: and, therefore, how should I but believe? How am I forced to acknowledge that the Lord never leaves me, even when I least perceive his presence?' Here is mighty encouragement for faith.

4. Let them love God and his angels, for this early ministration of the angels. Ancient love is a loadstone of love; were it but a little love, yet long love might beget love again. Why, God hath loved us from everlasting, and the angels have loved us from our first beginning, and therefore how should we but love them again? David's consideration of God's mercy towards us in the womb, took up his heart and ravished his spirit; yea, he was so exceedingly taken with it, that he could not off it. "Thine eye did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.—How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." Oh that our souls were awaked, and oh that our spiritual senses were renewed, that upon a serious consideration of God's love, and of the angels' love to

us in the womb, we might love again, and in a holy pang cry out, How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! and how precious are your thoughts unto me, O ye angels of God?

CHAP. II.

SECT. I.—*Of the Ministration of Angels in our Infancy and Childhood.*

THE second period wherein the angels minister to heaven's heirs, is, from their birth to their youth, or riper years; this takes up the time of infancy and childhood. And in prosecution of this, first set we the object before us at this time; and, secondly, learn and practice we those several duties that will naturally flow from such an object.

I. For the object, viz. The ministration of angels in our infancy and childhood. The scriptures are express: "Take heed that ye 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." By *little ones*, I do not exclude the adult, who resemble little children in some imitable qualities; nor would I exclude little children, whom our Saviour propounds as a pattern for the imitation of the adult, Matt. xviii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. But I would rather take all in, and say, that by little ones is meant either those who are little in stature, as the child set in the midst of them; or, little in grace, parts, esteem, as some of the disciples were; or little in their own eyes, as all the elect are or must be: all these have their angels, and therefore none of these must be despised. When Christ was but a babe, "the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word." And when Herod was dead, "the angel appeared again unto Joseph, in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel." Thus was Christ provided for in his cradle by an angel. When Hagar had not wherewithal to feed her child, "she cast the child under a shrub; and she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, saying, Let me not see the death of the child: and she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of the Lord called Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is; arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation: and God opened

her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled her bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." Here was an angel calling, comforting, and directing Hagar in her child's behalf: or if Hagar and Ishmael were not elect, when Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, he said, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless (or keep) the lads." Many think this was the great Angel of the covenant, to whom Jacob prayed for a blessing on Joseph's sons; and the rather because he is said to redeem him from all evil, which is properly peculiar to Jesus Christ: but others say, that this form of prayer was only an interpretative kind of imploration, that God would bless or keep Joseph's sons by his angels: and for that of redeeming, if this was spoken of eternal redemption, it were indeed peculiar to Christ; but Jacob (saith a late writer) speaks here of redemption and deliverance from temporal evils, which is confessed to be a main office of angels. And Chrysostom, Basil, Rivius, Mercerius (as he cites them) quote this very place for the deputation of angels.

## SECT. II.—*Of the Manner of Angel Ministration at that Time.*

BUT how do the angels minister to us in our childhood? I answer:—

1. They keep us from evil. Were it not so, into how many dangers should we fall? Indeed, a wonder it is, that most children are not disfigured and lamed with bruises and fearful miscarriages, with cutting and burning themselves, as hundreds and thousands of opportunities are offered, but that angels are very diligent to keep them out of harm's way: "When father and mother forsake me (saith David) then will the Lord take me up:" when parents are without natural affection, when nurses are careless, and children are of restless, stirring, and climbing dispositions, then doth the guardianship of angels especially appear. To this purpose is Chemnitius cited by the aforesaid author, saying, That infants are obnoxious to such and so many dangers, that no anxiety of parents, or diligence of servants, can secure them, without the tuition of angels. And Gerson observes the like: 'Whence is it (saith he) that little children are conserved from so many perils of their infancy, as fire, water, falls, suffocation, but by the agency of angels?'

2. They keep us in health: some say, that much physic should not be administered to infants, it is not safe to be too much tampering with such tender things; and I suppose there is less need, in that angels themselves are instead of physicians to such weak patients. It is Mr. Dyke's saying, Angels help to remove diseases and evils, as the devils help to bring them on us: and to that purpose they may have an hand in the use of such means as are for our bodily health.—Angels are the rockers (saith the same author) of babes and sucklings; their invisible hands are

doing for them, when we little think of any such matter. It may be some are sick, and yet recover, and we attribute it to this or that means, when indeed the instrument was an heavenly angel. ‘Certainly (said our divine Seneca) there are many thousand events, wherein common eyes see nothing but nature, which yet are effected by the ministration of angels: as when sudden cures were wrought at the pool of Bethesda, it might perhaps be attributed by many to some beneficial constellation; but we know, out of the evangelist, that an angel descended and moved the water, and made it sanative: where we find a probability of second causes in nature, we are apt to confine our thoughts from looking higher, yet even then there are many times unseen hands:’ How much more when the work is above the power of any secondary cause! this carries its own evidence, without dispute, that if it be not of nature, it must needs be of an higher efficiency. *Ex. gr.* Have we seen a poor weak child raised up from deadly sickness, when all natural helps have given him up; then have the angels of God been his secret physicians.

2. They teach and tutor us. Some think, that angels do help little infants to speak and go; but, howsoever, they are as tutors and schoolmasters to them. Zanchy compares them first to nurses, and then to schoolmasters, that they may instruct them, admonish them, correct them, comfort them, defend them from all evil, and provoke them to all good. Amidst all their offices (which are almost infinite) this I believe is the angels’ care of little children, that they be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Heaven is the place whence many good angels are fallen; and the good angels would have these places filled up again with saints. Hence they take care especially of their soul, tacitly revealing to them the mysteries of grace: not so as if the angels’ office were to preach the word; that ministry is not committed to them, but to the apostles, and others called to it; but it is at least the angels’ care that both children and adults should be taught in the church by men appointed and prepared by the angels: thus the angel spake to Philip, when he was to preach the gospel to the eunuch, saying, “Arise, and go towards the south;” and another angel speaks to Cornelius, saying, “Send to Joppa, and call for one Simon Peter, who shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” If the angels are not our ordinary preachers, lest they dazzle us, their brightness being unsuitable to our weak conditions; yet are they God’s instruments to provide preachers for us, that by them we may be instructed in the law of God, and mysteries of the gospel. And something more the angels do, in that they suggest to infants pious thoughts, and tacitly provoke them to a pious life, and draw out of them such gracious holy words, that the Psalmist’s saying is verified, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.” Thus when the children cried in the temple,

“Hosanna to the Son of David,” and therefore the priests and scribes were sore displeased; Jesus made their apology, saying, “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise?” Certainly those Hosannas of the children were above nature, or acquired parts, or parents’ education; and therefore they were taught them by the angels.

SECT. III.—*Experiences of this Truth.*

EXPERIENCES:—

I. For keeping us from evil.

An infant being laid in his bed with some servants, he was near morning found out of the bed among wooden and iron tools, enough to have killed him; he was taken up cold, yet without any harm, and, being laid in the warm bed, he revived, and so was graciously preserved.

A child fell into a river of water, and, being carried down the stream, was at last taken up for dead, but after some time he revived; and the next day I saw him, and telling him that God had given him a new life, the child wept: I desired him to remember it, improve it, and to thank God for that mercy all his days.

A child playing by the side of a pond, fell into it, where it was like to perish; near the pond was an house, where only one man was reading in a book, but it pleased God that he was suddenly so troubled, though he knew not for what, that he could read no longer: whereupon he walked up and down the room, but could not be quiet; then he walked forth, and espied a straw hat swimming upon the water, and, looking earnestly, he saw the child rise to the top of the water; and so catching hold of it, drew it out, and saved its life.—*White.*

There was a maid, who lived with her mother in Bargamus, and was in one and the same night by a strange wonder brought into the city of Venice; they in the family where she arrived, were near allied to her, and, coming in the morning into the chamber where she was, and finding her unexpectedly stark naked, without any linen, not so much as a rag to cover her, gently demanded of her how she came thither? where her clothes were? and what was the cause of her coming? The poor girl being much ashamed, and mixing her blushes with many tears, made answer to this purpose: ‘This very night, (said she,) when I lay betwixt asleep and awake in bed, I perceived my mother steal softly from my side, thinking I had not seen her; and stripping herself from all her linen, she took from her closet a box of ointment, which opening, she anointed herself therewith under the arm-pits, and some other parts of the body; which done, she took a staff, which stood ready in a corner, which she had no sooner bestrid, but in the instant she

rid (or rather flew) out of the window, and I saw her no more: at which being much amazed, and the candle still burning by me, I thought in myself to try a childish conclusion, and rising from my bed, took down the same box, and anointing myself, as I had before observed her, and making use of a bed-staff in the like manner, I was suddenly brought hither in a moment, where I was no sooner entered, but I espied my mother in the chamber with a knife in her hand, with purpose, as I thought, to kill this my young nephew, (pointing to a child in the cradle,) but she was hindered by finding me here; who no sooner saw me, but she began grievously to threaten me, and came near to strike me, in which fear I began to call upon God to help me; whose name I had no sooner uttered, but she instantly vanished, and I am left here, even as you found me.' Whereupon his kinsman, the master of the house, writ down her story; and, keeping the maid still with him, sent to the inquisitor of the place, where the mother of the girl, his kinswoman, lived in good reputation, and no way suspected. before whom she was called and questioned, and (as the manner of that country is, upon the like probability and suspicion,) put to the mercy of the tormentor, and at length she confessed every particular before mentioned: to which she added, that she had no less than fifty sundry times been transported by the devil, only with a malicious intent to kill that young child; but she found him always at her arrival so guarded [by angels and] by the blessings and prayers of his devout and religious parents, that she had no power over him.—*Barthol. Spinæus.*

## 2. For preserving of health and life.

A child being begotten and born of ancient, sickly, and diseased parents, was hereditarily infirm, and so oppressed with children's maladies, that the physician concluded he could not be long-lived; whence the father, drawing nigh to his death, and making his will, gave him such a portion, in case he should live to the age of fourteen years. Weak he was, and many sicknesses he had, and yet still the Lord raised him up, and unexpectedly restored him to health and strength, that he passed over those fourteen years, and yet lives. Oh that it may be to God's glory, and the church's edifying!

At the taking of Bolton by prince Rupert, amongst others then slain, there was one William Isherwood and his wife; and Felice her daughter, being then but eleven weeks old, lay pitifully crying at the breast of her dead mother: but it so pleased God, that an old woman, the wife of one Ralph Helne, of the same town, aged above seventy years, who had not given suck above twenty years before, seeing and hearing the child, compassionated it, and took it up; and having neither food for herself nor for the infant, in that common calamity, to still the child, she laid it to her breast; and behold the goodness of God, who provides for the young ravens that cry! the child sucking, milk came

into her breast, wherewith she nourished it, to the admiration and astonishment of all beholders.

Isenbard, an earl in Swevia, had to wife one Jermentrudis, who grievously accused one of her neighbours for adultery, because she had been delivered of six children at a birth ; but it so fell out afterward, that herself (her husband being abroad in the fields) was delivered of twelve children, all males : she fearing the like infamous punishment, that by her instigation had been inflicted on the former woman, commanded her nurse to kill eleven of them : the nurse going to execute the will of her lady, was met by her lord, then returning homewards ; he demanded what she carried on her lap ? she answered, puppies : He would needs see them, and opening her apron, found the infants : whereupon he examined the matter, found out the truth, enjoined the nurse to be secret, and to put the children to some nurse abroad ; and when they were six years old, he made a feast, apparelled the young boys alike, and presented them to their mother : she misdoubting the truth, confessed her fault, obtained pardon, and owned her children.—*Heylin.*

A minister, in the late rebellion of Ireland, flying for his life to Dublin, his wife and children followed after him : in their journey, being very weary, they all agreed, when night came, to sit down together under the lee of an Irish mountain, for it was frost and snow. The minister's wife had a young child, called John Teate, hanging upon her breasts, which were become dry through her manifold griefs, and want of sleep three nights together ; the child cried and groaned, and, for want of nourishment, was ready to die, in such sort, that the sad mother, not being able any longer to endure the groans and cries of her babe, arose up from the company, (who sat all together as close as they could, with children in their laps, to keep one another warm,) purposing to leave the child by himself, that she might be freed from those heart-piercing sobs and wailings. And here, behold, the Lord, who hath promised to be seen of his servants in time of need, appeared even literally in this mount ; for as she stooped down with a bleeding heart, and eyes full of tears, there to leave her little one upon the ground, she spied, or rather felt upon the rock (it being then something dark, only the snow cast some little light) a sucking-bottle, which she opening, tasted of what was within it, and found it to be full of good milk, which the Irish call bonny-clabber ; she put it into her child's mouth, with fear lest he, never having sucked before out of any bottle besides her breast, would not draw it ; but he readily sucked his bellyful, and fell asleep : the mother hereat astonished, returned to the company, and shewed them what she had found : who much admired at it, how or whence the bottle came thither, considering that the place was far remote from any habitation at all, and the vessel lay upon the top of the snow lately fallen ; but

some of them called to mind Hagar's story, and related it to the rest, how that "when she was wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba, the water was spent in the bottle; and she cast her child under one of the shrubs, and went and sat her down a good way off, for she said, let me not see the death of the child: and she lift up her voice and wept: and then God heard the voice of the lad: and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, whereat she filled the bottle, and gave the lad drink." These things, compared and laid together, afforded them matter of thankfulness to God, for his providence, and of more comfort than any feast could have done: from thence they concluded, (as if the angel had spoke to them as well as Hagar,) that they should not fear, and that God, who had so wonderfully preserved the infant, would in like manner preserve them all: which accordingly came to pass; for the next day they came to Virginia, where they all found free, unexpected, and plentiful refreshing, even a table in the wilderness; and within two or three days after, they came safe to Dublin, their desired harbour.—*Dr. Teate.*

### 3. For teaching or tutoring of infants.

A child being very young, much affected his ancient and reverend father with his reading of the bible, and with his questions and answers: which drew from the father these very words, that if the child but lived, he verily believed he would suck in learning as a child doth milk. This reminds me of what was said of Origen, (in whom was certainly much of the angel's tutoring,) that his father brought him up from his childhood most studiously in all good literature, but especially in the reading and exercise of the holy scripture, wherein he had such inward and mystical speculation, that many times he would move questions to his father of the meaning of this place or that place in scripture; insomuch, that his father divers times would uncover his breast, being asleep, and kiss it, giving thanks to God, who had made him so happy a father of such an happy child. This Origen, being but yet a child, would needs have suffered martyrdom with his father Leonides, had not his mother privily in the night-season conveyed away his clothes and his shirt; whereupon more for shame to be seen, than for fear to die, he was constrained to remain at home; yet then he wrote a letter to his father with these very words; *Cave tibi, ne quid propter nos aliud quam Martyrii constanter faciendi propositum cogites*, Eusebius, l. 6. c. 3.

In the primitive persecutions, we read of one Romanus, who first being scourged with whips, with knobs of lead at the end, instead of tears, sighs, and groans, he sung psalms all the time of his whipping; and after, his face being buffeted, his eyelids torn with nails, his cheeks cut with knives, and his teeth struck out, that his pronounciation at least might be impaired, whilst he

preached Christ ; he only said, I thank thee, O persecutor, that thou hast opened to me many mouths, whereby I may preach my Lord and Saviour : look how many wounds I have, so many mouths I have to praise my God. But being reviled, that Christ, his God, was but of yesterday, and that the gods of the Gentiles were of great antiquity ; he made a long oration of the eternity of Christ : which done, he said, Give me a child but of seven years old, which age is free from malice and other vices, wherewith riper age is commonly infected, and you shall hear what he will say. His request was granted, a pretty boy was called out of the multitude, and set before him : Tell me, my babe (quoth the martyr) whether thou think it reason that we worship one Christ, and in Christ one Father, or else that we worship infinite gods ? Unto whom the babe answered, That certainly whatsoever it be that men affirm to be God, must needs be one ; which with one, is one and the same ; and insomuch as this one is Christ, of necessity Christ must be the true God, for that there be many Gods, we children cannot believe. And after this was the babe martyred.—*Fox's Martyrology.*

SECT. IV.—*Of the Duties that concern us in this respect.*

2. FOR the several duties that concern us in this respect, they are such as these :—

1. Let us know our privileges, which God in Christ gave us from our birth : The angels were appointed our guardians in the womb, and they have guarded, preserved, and tutored us in our infancy and childhood ; many a time were we in great danger of fire, and water, and falls, and suffocations ; many a time have we been in the extremity of sickness, and very near to death ; many a lesson have we had taught us, and many a motion and holy thought hath been suggested to us :—and is not all this worthy our notice, knowledge, and understanding ? Did we but see little children of poor men waited on by a guard of rich, noble, strong, and valiant men ; would not all admire ? But if he knew this to be our own condition, that when we were babes and sucklings, and could not discern between our right hand and left, that we had then a guard full of state and strength, even of angels themselves ; would not this fill us with the sense of the goodness of God ? Certainly it concerns us to know thus much, that we may better know the goodness of our God, in thus providing for us : “ The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him,” saith David ; and then, “ O come, and taste and see that the Lord is good.” God would not have his favours unregarded ; for if we know them not, never shall we attain to conceive of God himself, especially in his goodness, love, and mercy towards us. But of these more particularly in another section.

2. Pause a while, and to every particular ministration in our infancy, set we a *Selah*: this was the manner of David in his psalms: when some especial thing worthy attention or observation was delivered, he added, *Selah*; that, by a little stop or pause of the breath, the matter, worth, or excellency of the thing might be considered. Methinks it is sad that the angels should do such excellent offices for us, as mothers, nurses, physicians, tutors, and that either we should forget them, or not seriously consider and pause upon them; in other things of lesser consequence, we can speak with delight,—*olim meminisse juvabit*: but are not these passages of God's providence, whereof the angels are especial instruments (as, to keep us from evil, to preserve us in health, to teach us God's will in our infancy or childhood,) of far more excellency, profit, and delight? O then let us set a star at the margin of such notes; and whilst we either read or sing them, let us stop awhile, that we may dwell upon them, and see the want of them on all sides; let us say with Jacob, when he saw the ladder on which angels ascended and descended, "Surely the Lord (or the angel of the Lord) was in this place, (or in this passage,) and I knew it not."

3. Bless we God for his free love to us in our first and ignorant times: whilst we were infants, we could neither deserve nor desire such a glorious guard, and yet even then had the angels a charge to keep us from evil, to keep us in health, and to be our tutors: O adore we this free grace! Say we, as the sweet singer of Israel "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hath set thy glory above the heavens: out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou founded praise." Very children themselves could sing Hosanna to Christ by the help of angels, which occasioned him to cite this text, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has thou perfected praise." Most rightly it is said, "out of the mouths," because they speak not from their own understanding; but by his virtue, and ministration of the angels, their tender tongues were led to speak those words: how much more should we that are adult, and of capacity to understand our duty; I say, how much more should we praise him, by the help of angels, for the help and ministration of his angels! Come, and sing we an Hosanna to him, set we the crown upon the head of free love, free grace: let us join with angels to bless God for his angels, and for their ministration in our infancy and tender years. Is there not cause, in regard of the freeness of his love? It was bestowed on man unmerited, undesired, and placed on him in infancy, yea, even in the dark womb.

4. Live we up to the mercies we received when we discerned little or nothing of them. If any friend do me a kindness unknown to me, I shall take it kindly, and exceeding kindly, when I know it; and if, before, I was unable to requite it, yet

when I am able, I should think myself strongly engaged to retaliate: surely thus it is with the people of God; our friends, the heavenly angels, waited on us in our infancy and childhood, but we neither saw them, nor had them in our thoughts, notwithstanding they went on in the discharge of their office, and sometimes they were as nurses, otherwhiles as physicians, and otherwhiles as tutors and schoolmasters to us: and now that we know this, now that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and of his angels, shines in our hearts, oh how should we live up to these mercies! how should we gratify the angels, who have been thus to us, and have done all this for us! The angel that appeared to Gideon under an oak, was for the present unknown; but when he had “caused fire to rise up out of the rock, and to consume the flesh, and the unclean cakes, then Gideon perceived that he was an angel, and said, Alas, O Lord God, for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face!” Upon this, God was pleased to encourage him, saying, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die. And then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and threw down the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove by it; and afterwards became a judge of Israel till he died. Angels’ presence and encouragements, once discovered and made known, are enough, through the blessing of God, to work in us a fear of God, and obedience to his laws.



### CHAP. III.

#### SECT. I.—*Of the Ministration of Angels in our riper Years.*

THE next period wherein the angels minister to heaven’s heirs, is, from their riper years unto their death. And in order to this, we shall first observe their ministration; and, secondly, our duties.

I. For their ministration, I shall follow the same method as before.

1. That it is so, the scriptures abundantly prove, *Psa.* 34. 8. *Psa.* 91. 11, 12. *Gen.* 19. 15, 16. *2 Kings* 6. 16, 17. If I may give instances, Lot was led out of Sodom by an angel; Daniel was taught by an angel; Cornelius was answered by an angel; an angel appeared to Joseph, Mary, Zachary, Peter, Paul, on several errands. Scarce any remarkable thing befell the people of God, but it was accomplished by the ministry of angels. But what needs more? “are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

SECT. II.—*Of the Kinds of Angel-ministration at that Time, as to our Bodies.*

2. For the kinds of their ministration, it runs in several streams: as, first, to our bodies; secondly, to our souls.

1st. For our bodies.

1. They keep us from evil: so they did in our infancy; but now they do it with this limitation, “they keep us in all our ways,” (i. e.) in all those courses appointed us by God. The devil left out that clause in the psalm, when he set Jesus Christ on a pinnacle of the temple, and tempted him to cast himself down: he told him the promise, that the angels should keep him; but he omitted the main point, “in all his ways.” Certainly there is some special treasure enclosed in this, or the devil would never have concealed it from our Saviour: then we may expect angel-protection, when we are in the ways God hath appointed us; it was no way for Christ to cast himself down headlong from the pinnacle, for the way lay down the stairs: if we keep not in our ways, neither will the angels keep us from external evils: the prophet that went out of his way, and beyond the bounds appointed him by God, “a lion met him by the way, and slew him.”

But do not many external evils befall God’s people, even walking in the ways and courses appointed them by God? I answer,—

It cannot be denied, but that sometimes such things do befall the godly: Mephibosheth, a child of five years old, son to a good father, and afterwards a good man himself, was lamed by a fall from his flying nurse. Satan was permitted by God to destroy the goods, children, and health of Job, though by the Spirit of God he was styled “a perfect and an upright man, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil, and that there was none like him in the earth.” ‘The Lord (say some) can countermand angelical protection, and give instruction to those powers (in some cases,) to suspend their attendance and care of us, yet the promise is not null, and of none effect, for,—

‘1. Angelical attendance doth mitigate the evil, so that God’s people do not utterly miscarry; they may be “troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” Angels are not always to keep us from, but sometimes in troubles; Christ could have prayed that many legions of angels should have kept him from suffering, this he did not, yet the angels ministered unto him in the wilderness; and in the garden, where he sweat drops of blood.

‘2. The promise of angel-protection (as all temporal promises) runs with this tacit reservation and condition, always provided,

that God in his infinite wisdom, for reasons best known to himself, do not judge the contrary more conducive to his glory, and our inward good: we know Job was afflicted, that he might be tried, and the Lord doth sometimes suspend the protection of his angels, that we may the more depend upon himself; as the nurse gets behind the screen, that the infant may go into the mother's arms without crying; if the angels do not help us, it is that we may call upon God for aid.'

2. They keep us in health; so they did in our infancy, but the promise runs without limitation to every age of our life; "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence:—A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand, but it shall not come nigh thee:" and the reason follows, "for he shall give his angels charge over thee." And the conclusion is this, "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." It is the opinion of good divines, that good angels help to remove diseases, and to conserve bodily health; and, on the contrary, evil angels are God's instruments of inflicting sore and grievous maladies. As in the midst of his agonies, the Lord Jesus (saith one) was comforted and refreshed by an angel, Luke 22. 43. so are the angels with the faithful, helping and easing them in their sickness.—For my own part (saith another) I believe that God's works in the world are usually by instruments, and not immediate; and that good angels are his instruments in conveying his mercies both to soul and body, and that evil angels are instruments of inflicting his judgments both corporal and spiritual. Hence God is said to send his evil angels among the Israelites, Psa. 78. 49. Hence Satan did execution on the children, cattle, and body of Job: so then I judge that Satan is the instrument in our ordinary diseases, &c. And I may add, on the same grounds, that the angels are the instruments in continuing or restoring our bodily health.—The ministry of angels (saith a third) is for the promoting of our health; I mean not only of the health of the soul, but of our bodily health: no question but the devils, who are our enemies, and continually stand about us, would quickly rush upon our bodies, and either tear them, or affect them with divers maladies, but that the good angels do defend us by divine command. I cannot deny, but that sometimes God afflicts men by the ministry of his holy and blessed angels; for Sodom was destroyed by the angels; and Sennacherib's host was slain by the angels; and David saw the angel of the Lord, having a drawn sword in his hand, and stretched out over Jerusalem; and an angel of the Lord smote Herod, and he was eaten of worms: but this is not God's ordinary dispensation towards his saints. Surely their ordinary employments, and wherein they delight, is according to the promise, "He shall give his angels charge over thee."

3. They carefully furnish us with all other necessaries for this life. Thus when the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were provided for by the angels: "Man did eat angels' food, he sent them meat to the full;" or, as others translate, "Man did eat the bread of the mighties, he sent them meat to satiety:" It is all one; for what is the bread of the mighties, but the bread of the angels, which are mighty in strength? And manna is called their bread, either because it came from heaven, the habitation of the angels, or because it was excellent, so as the angels (if they needed any food) might eat it; or especially (as I think) because God sent it by the ministry of angels, they were the purveyors of it for the Israelites. Thus when Elijah went into the wilderness, and lay and slept under a juniper-tree, "behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat: and he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water on 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." The same God that provided for him in the time of drought by the ministry of ravens, now again fed him by the ministry of angels. I know these provisions were miraculous; but where no miracles are, the angels have an hand even in ordinary provisions. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him:" And what then? "O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." I know we see not the angels providing for us; but what then? Abraham's servants saw no angel going along with him, and yet Abraham could say, "The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, he shall send his angel before thee:" The Israelites saw no angel going along with them, and yet the Lord could say, "I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanites," &c. For my part, I see no angel removing me from place to place, yet I am fully persuaded, that no minister of Christ removes his station, or goes to a people as their pastor, but an angel of God, or the God of angels, doth so order it: This is the office of angels (saith Zanchy) by a command of God, to send the doctors of the church to such or such a people: accordingly, it was an angel that appeared to Paul in a vision by night, saying, "Come over to Macedonia, and help us." Eusebius tells us a like story of Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, that after his agonies, and constancy of confession, shewed in the persecution of Severus, he was admonished by a vision in the night-season to take his journey up to Jerusalem; and drawing near to the city, a vision, with plain words, was given to certain chief heads of Jerusalem to go out of the gates of the city, and there to receive the bishop appointed them by God: And though

vision or revelation, I have none, yet (as the most reverend doctor said) since I am convinced that the unfelt hands of the angels are in many occurrences of my life, I have learned so much wit and grace, as rather to yield them too much, than too little stroke, in ordering all my concernments for this life. It is true, their appearings are ceased, but not their workings; their converse is not so sensible, yet it is as real as ever it was before.

SECT. III.—*Of the Kinds of Angel-ministration at that time, as to our Souls.*

2. FOR our souls :—

1. The angels declare to us what is the will and mind of God. Thus Daniel being troubled with the visions of his head, he went near unto one of the angels which stood by, and asked him the truth and meaning of them. “So he told me, (saith Daniel,) and made me know the interpretation of the things.” And in another vision, when Daniel sought the meaning: “Behold, there stood before me (said he) as the appearance of a man; and I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.”—And he said unto me, Understand, O son of man. And at another time, the man Gabriel, whom he had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched him about the time of the evening oblation, and informed him, and talked with him, and said, “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.” Nothing is more usual in God’s word, than for angels to inform the saints what is the will and mind of God; the conception of Christ, and the birth of Christ, and the death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, and the ascension of Christ, and his return to judgment, were all told by the angels; only you may look upon these as extraordinaries, and that apparitions of angels, and such teachings or enlightenings of our understanding, in these days you cannot expect. All this I grant, and yet withal I add, that if visibly they do not teach us, they may do it invisibly; yea, and I verily believe they do in ordinary though invisibly, teach and instruct all the people of God.

But how can that be, when they do neither speak to us, nor reason with us, after the manner of men?

I answer; They have other ways of speaking, or of reasoning with us: as,—

1st. They understand us, though we neither speak to them, nor reason with them: One of our light, in his *Child of Light walking in Darkness*, tells us, that evil angels know much within us, and to that purpose they have more advantages than we men have to know one another by: for,—

1. Those spirits can discern all corporeal actions; and though the species, in them, and their manner of knowing corporeal things, differ from ours, yet they are analogical with ours.

2. They make it their business to study men, it is their trade to go up and down, and consider men; "Hast thou not considered (says God to Satan) my servant Job?"

3. They are and can be present at all our more retired actions; they are with us at bed and board, in all companies, and in all solitary places.

4. By what they see outwardly of our actions, they may guess at our inwards, which are as the principles of them.

5. They have an insight into the fancy, and the images therein, which follow and imitate the inward thoughts of the mind, as the shadow doth the body: in this respect they go into a room further than we can go, yea, into a room next to the privy chamber, which yet remains fast locked up unto them. This last goes beyond all the former; and yet (saith my author) all divines grant, that the devils may know and discern our phantasms intuitively, as we do things which are present before us.

6. As they may see into the fancy, so, if God permit, evil angels may go into the head, and see those very images and species in the fancy, that are for the present in direct conjunction with the understanding, and which it is then thinking and musing of. Indeed the immediate knowledge of our thoughts, and hearts, and understandings, is proper only to God; "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins;" yet arguitive, and as they do transpire, and appear in the images of the fancy, and so, *quasi in aliis*, and mediately, they may be very far discerned and looked into by evil angels; and so by discerning those very phantasms which the understanding actually at present vieweth, and maketh use of, they may then judge what it is that the mind for the present is musing on: all this is discussed at large concerning the evil angels.

And if the evil angels may know thus much of what is within us, do not the good angels know thus much? The evil angels have by their sin lost much of their knowledge, and therefore are called darkness, and the power of darkness, because they are exceedingly dark in themselves, and in comparison of the holy angels; but the good angels never sinned, and therefore never were deprived of the least measure of knowledge conferred on them. I must therefore conclude, that, without speaking to them or reasoning with them after the manner of men, they understand as well, (or wherein they do not, God is pleased often to discover it to them by an especial dispensation of favour and grace,) as to the angel in Daniel was revealed the mystery of the seventy weeks.

2d. We may understand them, though they never speak to us, or reason with us, and so we are capable of their teaching; you will say, how may we do that? I answer,—

1. Observe we their work upon our fancies; there they are busy day and night, to set together the images for our understanding

of them: Look, as a compositor, in printing, takes his letters that lie confused afore him, and orders and sets them in words and sentences, to represent to the reader's eye what he would have read by him; so do the angels set and compose the images in our fancies, to represent to our understanding such things as they would have us know: it is good therefore to observe their work day and night, for they may work on our fancies in our dreams.

2. Set we ourselves to think or muse upon those images set together by them. Thus when the angel Gabriel saluted Mary, it is said, that "she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." And after the angels had appeared to shepherds, and that all wondered at those things which the shepherds told them, it is said, that "Mary kept all those things, and pondered them in her heart." Certainly it is our duty, when angels have been communicating their minds to us, to ponder, and muse, and meditate, and to cast in our mind what manner of communication this should be.

3. Try we their work upon our fancies, whether it be agreeable to the word of God: It were sad, if we should take that for the speaking of angels, which is the very voice of devils; now though evil spirits can transform themselves into angels of light, yet they may be discerned, if we will try their work by the word. The good angels are distinguished from the bad, either by their apparitions, or by their actions; the former I omit, for the latter poet gives them in thus:

Who so will sift their actions, he shall find,  
By their success, if well or ill inclin'd,  
The one from other; for the blessed still  
Square all their actions to th' Almighty's will,  
And to man's profit:——  
The cacodæmons labour all they can  
Against God's honour and the good of man.

Indeed, this is a sure and indubitable character; the good angels never speak any thing contrary to the word, or, which is all one, the good angels are employed in nothing save the honour of God, and the profit and preservation of good men; but evil spirits aim all their enterprises and endeavours to derogate from God's worship, and to assume it to themselves, and by their flattering deceptions and oily insinuations with man, to work the utter subversion both of body and soul. It is good therefore to try their works upon our fancies, and, if we find it agreeable to God's word, or if it aim at God's honour and man's profit, we may conclude, this was the speaking of an angel of God.

But methinks I hear some object,—You tell us of a work of angels upon our fancies day and night; and indeed in the night we can more easily observe some such like impressions or work

upon us in our dreams: but are not these things spoken against? was not this the way of false prophets, to observe their dreams, and by them to delude the people, saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed?" Jer. 23. 25.

I answer,—Such dreams as tend to the leading of men from the holy word of God, to wicked doctrines or opinions, which are painted over with the pretence or colour of revelations and divine visions, when they are indeed the mere delusions of Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, are not to be heeded, but rejected; and such were the dreams of the false prophets, tending to idolatry, against whom God spake; "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, (whom thou hast not known,) and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul."

Yet this hinders not, but such dreams as come into us by God's special and sometimes extraordinary work of providence, must needs be directed unto some weighty and good end, as we must conclude, if we either consider the first mover, which is God, or the instruments, which are his holy angels: such dreams will challenge our very serious consideration, and diligent care to take notice of what they offer unto us, and the neglect or contempt thereof cannot be committed without great impiety; and therefore we have not only a warrant, but an unavoidable and inviolable obligation in point of duty, to take notice of such dreams, and to make use of them according to their importance and purpose: "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction."

But because dreams are of several sorts, some proceeding only from the constitution of the heavens, or from the disposition of the air, or from previous cogitations, or from the temper of the body, or from the affection of the mind, or from the procuration of the devil, and only some few from the operation of good angels; it is therefore worthy our pains to know some such marks or characters, whereby we may distinguish these last from all others of the former dreams.

A learned writer, in his book of the *Baptized Turk*, hath laid down these marks of those dreams procured by angels:

1. When they move unto that which is truly and eminently good, or from the contrary evil, and have nothing in them that stands opposite to the truth or holiness of the word of God, or sound reason, nor that addeth any thing to God's words, as a new way of righteousness or salvation.

2. When they are of a wise, sober, just, and orderly frame and composure, without any tincture of lightness, jingling, or vanity in them.

3. When they come unto us, being in an holy temper and disposition of spirit.

4. When they leave both an holy, and humble, and also a strong and certain impression upon the mind, moving it not upon carnal, but spritual principles and motives; to which we may add, an holy clearness and consolation in the spirit, an increase of vigour and readiness to godly obedience and holiness.

5. When they agree with some work that God hath in hand, and have something in them that seems to be above human inventions, and have an excellent agreement in the several parts thereof, presenting the same or several things.

6. When they come unsought and unexpected; for if any man doth purposely seek divination by dreams, composing himself thereunto by superstitious rights or ceremonies, this were expressly against the word: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you; neither hearken to your dreams, which ye cause to be dreamed."—But enough of this matter.

2. The angels persuade us to that which is good; they do not only declare to us what is God's will, but they advise us to it. This is the ordinary office of blessed angels, to instil good motions, to suggest good thoughts, to admonish and persuade us on all occasions to that which is good. As Satan is ever compassing the earth, seeking whom he may devour, here and there laying his snares to catch poor souls in, tempting and enticing them to all sorts of sin, as he espies occasion and opportunity for it; so are the good angels ever and anon suggesting good and pious thoughts; they tacitly admonish our minds, and provoke us to good duties of holiness and obedience: this makes some affirm, that whatsoever the evil angels can do in evil, the elect angels can do in good: if the devils can suggest sin, surely the angels of God are stronger and wiser than devils.

But how do the good angels suggest good?

I answer, 1. They inspire, inject, or cast into our minds, some holy motions: seldom passes the day over our heads, but we may feel these injections—Come, this is the way, walk in it; Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c.

2. They provoke and stir us up with much impunity to this or that duty; "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c. They know well enough our sluggish, dull, and heavy dispositions, our spiritual laziness, and therefore they add stirring, quickening, soul-enlivening expressions, or exclamations, "Ho, come ye to the waters;" yea, they double it, or treble it, "Come ye to the waters;—Come ye, buy and eat;—Come

ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price : ” They are not willing to give over, till they have made us willing to yield to their motions for our own salvation.

You may object, Surely this is the genuine work of the Holy Ghost, thus to inspire and provoke us to good. Very true, and yet that hinders not but that the good angels may be instruments, or agents : We say, the Holy Ghost is the prime Spirit, and yet the angels are as ministering spirits ; the Holy Ghost is the fountain, or head of water, but the angels are as cisterns and channels of water ; it is the will of the Holy Ghost to employ the angels, and to communicate himself to us by the ministry of angels, and therefore the Holy Ghost and angels need not clash. Indeed, motions, inspirations, and holy suggestions, are ever originally and primarily for the Spirit of Christ ; and hence it is, that commonly we put them all on that score, we give them all to Christ’s spirit ; yet I cannot forget the author’s opinion I cited before, that God’s works in the world are usually by instruments, and not immediate ; and that good angels are his instruments, in conveying his mercies both to soul and body. Another speaks as confidently every whit ; For my part, (with the good leave of my learned and religious brethren, be it spoken,) I doubt not but good angels suggest good counsels, tender holy motions, offer pious thoughts, yea, refresh the often-parched spirits of gracious men with inward joy. Shall the devil work in the children of disobedience ? (Ephes. 2. 2.) enormously disquiet the affections, (1 Sam. 16. 15.) yea, inject wicked thoughts into godly men with success, (1 Chron. 21. 1.) and shall the good angels be excluded from all actions and operations upon the inward senses of men ?—I can never believe it.

3. The angels repel temptations, or prevent occasions of sin. This was the meaning of Michael’s contending with the devil about the body of Moses. It was the devil’s design to discover Moses’ grave, and the archangel was ready to resist him ! But why should the angel resist him ? To what end was the dispute about the body of Moses ? Why might not the body and burial-place of Moses have been discovered to all ? Surely the angel would not have it known, lest the people should have idolized and worshipped it in after times. The devil loves idolatry ; and of all kinds of idolatry, the devil abuseth the world most with idolatrous respects to the bodies and relics of dead saints. Now, the archangel knew his design, and therefore he would by no means have those burial-places known. Thus Ainsworth paraphraseth on that text of Deuteronomy, “ He was buried in the valley of Moab, over against Beth-peor ; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. The angel would have no occasion of superstition or idolatry thereby : Oh what blessed steps have we for preventing of sin ! How busy are the angels in our behalf, (when we little think of it,) to repel

temptations, and to prevent occasions of evil? As our good endeavours are often hindered by Satan,—“ I would have come to you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us ; ”—so are our evil actions hindered by the heavenly angels, else were not our protection equal to our danger. A good angel opposed Balaam in an evil way ; and if an heavenly spirit obstruct the course of the evil, and stand in the way of a sorcerer’s sin, how much more ready are those spiritual powers to stop the spiritual miscarriages of God’s dearest children.

4. The angels quicken our dulness, encourage our weakness, and comfort us in our sorrows : all these may be read together in one chapter : “ I was in a dead sleep (said Daniel) on my face, and my face towards the ground, and behold an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands ; and he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright, for unto thee am I now sent : and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling ; then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel.—And there came again, and touched me one like the appearance of a man ; and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong ; and when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me.” In like manner we find an angel quickening, encouraging, and strengthening Elijah to his work, 2 Kings 1. 3, 15. and Isaiah to his work, Isa. 6. 6, 7. and Paul to his work, Acts 27. 23, 24. But especially in the sufferings of his saints, how usual was it with God to send down his angels for their comforters ! When Christ was in his agony, “ there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” When Peter was in prison, “ behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison.” When Paul was in his dangerous voyage, “ there stood by him that night the angel of God, whose he was, and whom he served, saying, Fear not, Paul,” Acts 27. 23. In the succeeding times of the church, how frequently did the angels appear to blessed martyrs for their comfort and encouragement ! Thus Theodorus saw and felt the refreshing hand of an angel : thus Theophilah, Agnes, Lucia, Cecilia, and others, saw the good angels as their comforters, and protectors of their chastity. And although they do not appear to us now in bodily shapes, as in those times, yet the same offices are performed by them in their spiritual and mysterious ways ; now they quicken our dulness, encourage our weakness, and comfort us in heaviness.

SECT. IV.—*Whether the Angels contribute any thing to our Conversion.*

BEFORE I pass this, I would propound a question or two : as,—

1. Whether the angels contribute any thing to our conversion? We have heard at large, that devils do what they can to hinder our conversion: and are the angels less active to good, than they are to evil? I cannot think it. We may be sure, that as the bad angels do bad offices, so the good angels are in their way prompt and ready to do all the good offices they can, as to our good; and my reason is, their will is conformed to the will of God, "They do his commandments, they hearken to the voice of his word." Whatsoever God wills, they will: now God wills the conversion of sinners; "As I live, I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live;" and therefore they will it, and, as they will it, so they reduce that will into several acts, or else it were in vain. But what those acts are may be another question.

SECT. V.—*Wherein do the Angels contribute to our Conversion.*

THE several acts of angels as to our conversion, are such as these:—

1. They inform our judgments: we have heard before, how they invisibly teach us, instruct us, enlighten us, and herein do they contribute to our conversion: for what is the first work of conversion, but illumination? As in the first creation, the first-born of God's works was light, "God said, let there be light, and there was light:" so, in the new creation, the first work is light; "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Hence the state of nature is called darkness, and the state of grace is called light; "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord;" and, "He hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Now, if in this work the angels are assistant, they must needs contribute to our conversion in the first work of it, which is illumination.

2. They move our will: This is that we said before, that the good angels persuade us to that which is good, they instil good motions, they suggest good thoughts, they provide us to duties of holiness and obedience, and especially to this main work of conversion and regeneration; well they know, that without this, all is nothing; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And their desires are strong, that the places made void in heaven by the falling angels, should be supplied by men and women; and therefore they do what they can to move and persuade us to a change. I know they cannot efficiently move or turn the will; we leave to Christ and his Spirit the efficacy and blessing of all; they only move, and persuade, and make use of arguments, to do this or that, but the holy Spirit makes effectual, and gives the issue to what they move. If you

say, What needs this ministration, for Christ can move or persuade without them? I may as well ask, What need ministers, preaching, sacraments? It is enough to silence and stop our mouths, when we hear that these are God's ways of administration, these are God's ordinances, of which the angels are a great part; and according to the good pleasure of God, they act, and stir, and move, and persuade us to conversion.

3. They work on our affections, endeavouring to settle them, and keep them on right objects: It is true, they cannot turn the stream and current of our affections back, (God only can turn this Jordan back,) but they can drive them faster, and cause them to swell above their natural channels; it is the spirit of bondage which worketh fear, but when fear is wrought, they can blow it up, and intend it more, as the Spirit's instruments. Sometimes you have heard how evil angels could work further and deeper fears than the Holy Ghost by himself intended; and cannot the good angels do regularly, what the evil angels can do irregularly? If the evil angels cannot only propound such objects as shall move us to fear, but also can stir up such humours in the body, which such a passion doth act and stir in:—*Ex. gr.* If they can electively work upon melancholy, so as to put a man into a timorous and trembling disposition; how much more can the good angels propound objects, and stir up humours, and so work on the affections, whether of fear, or hope, or sorrow, or joy, or love, or hatred?

4. They repel temptations. You have heard abundantly how the soul is haunted with several temptations; when the work of conversion is passing upon it, then is Satan busy, by way of revenge, for the soul's revolt from him; but are not the good angels as busy as Satan? and if they resist him, what can all the troops of hell hurt us? We know the good angels have as much advantage of their strength over Satan, as they have of their station; how then should that evil one stand in the encounter? or what need we fear in so mighty and sure hands? He that passeth with a strong convoy through a wild and perilous desert, scorns the dangers of wild beasts or robbers, no less than if he were in a strong tower at home; so may we the onsets of the powers of darkness, whilst we are guarded by the angels, who both defend us, and resist Satan in all his fiery darts.

5. The joy in the conversion of sinners, so that heaven rings with the joy: "Likewise I say unto you, (saith Christ,) there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." What manner of joy this is, is unknown to us, and so shall be, until that time, that time shall be no more; only this we believe for the present, that the conversion of sinners is the jubilation of angels; and this, I take it, is the plain sense or meaning of Christ's words, that when they see the ranks and files of lapsed angels filled with new recruits, men and women,

penitent for their sins, this is matter of joy, of ecstasical joy, to the holy angels of God.

SECT. VI.—*Experiences of this Truth, as to our outward Man.*

FOR some experience of this blessed truth, in respect of our bodies :—

1. They keep us from evil.

One going seasonably to bed, about midnight he awoke, and could not sleep; there upon he awaked his wife, and talking with her, suddenly he espied a light in his chamber, which came through a box-hole; he demanded of her what that light was; she opened her eyes, but could not tell; anon she arose out of bed, and looking through the box-hole, (which by a gracious Providence was that night open, though usually shut,) she espied a fire kindled on some wood in the house, which quickly would have set all in a flame, that no way they could have escaped with life: but they both hastened out of their chamber, and, coming into the house, they timously quench the fire, and admiring at God's providence in each circumstance, they returned in safety to bed, and found that rest and sleep after, which before they could not obtain.

The same person riding over a deep water, his horse in the midst of the stream laid him down under him: thus man and horse both plunged in; the man with much ado having recovered himself, and getting through, he rode home wet and cold, which cast him into a fever; yet in time he recovered, and blessed that God, who, by the ministry of his angels, delivered him from the danger both of fire and water.

The same person being at home, a daughter came to visit him, who one evening was very importunate to go more early than ordinarily they used to bed; her importunity so far prevailed, that presently they went to prayers, and commending themselves to God for his custody, all in the family made up the stairs to their several lodgings: no sooner were they dropped asleep, but presently a noise, like thunder, awaked them all; he wondered, and asked his wife if she heard the thunder; who answered, that she being last in bed, was scarcely asleep, but could not tell whether it was a clap of thunder, or a fall of some part of the house; and rising out of bed to go to the chamber were their daughter and a servant maid lay in two beds; at the entrance into the chamber, the daughter cried, Stay, mother, or you endanger your life, for I believe the chamber floor, and chamber adjoining, is fallen down. By that caution she trembling stayed her foot, and drew back to tell her husband the news; he desired her to go down stairs into the house, light a candle, and to see the matter; but endeavouring to open the door below into the house, the passage was stopped with the floor of the chambers fallen

down : their daughter, that lay in one of the two chambers, seated over the house, cried, that her bed cracked, and she was afraid to lie in it; thereupon they advised her to hasten out of it, and with the maid to creep into a corner of the chamber which was more secure. In the mean time, a cry or call was made through a casement for some neighbour's help; by this means a candle was brought, but no passage being possible through the doors, the stanchion of a casement was cut, and one came in at the window with his light; then it was seen how two chambers over the house were suddenly fallen, with all the weight of wood, and clay, and furniture above, and that nothing remained unfallen, but a little room of one chamber, where the two beds stood, wherein the two women lay. At first view they all stood amazed, but recollecting themselves, the two women were by a ladder safely brought down from the corner of the fallen chamber, and being brought into another chamber, they took their rest till the morning. At day-light they saw their wonderful preservation; and, viewing the circumstances, it appeared: 1. If that night all had not gone to bed before their ordinary time, they had been all sitting in the house, which then would have fallen upon them, and have slain them all. 2. If his wife had not then stayed her step, when the daughter cried, Stay mother, she had fallen down into the nether room amongst rubbish, and probably had lost her life. 3. If those two beds had not stood, wherein the two women lay, when all besides fell with one crash, they had both perished, especially the daughter, who was in the first stage of her pregnancy. In every circumstance appeared the finger of God, and the promise was minded, "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."

Simon Grinæus, a learned and holy man, coming from Heidelberg to Spire, was desirous to hear a certain preacher in that city, who in his sermon did then let fall some erroneous propositions of popish doctrine; wherewith Grinæus, not being a little offended, craved speedy conference with the preacher, and, laying before him the falsehood and danger of his doctrines, exhorted him to an abandoning and retraction of those misopinions; the preacher gave good words and fair semblances to Grinæus, desiring farther and more particular conference with him, and each imparted to other their names and lodgings; yet inwardly, as being stung with that just reproof, he resolved a revenge, by procuring the imprisonment, and, if he might, the death of so sharp a censorer. Grinæus, misdoubting nothing, upon his return to his lodgings, reports the passages of the late conference to those who sat at the table with him, amongst whom Melancthon being one, he was called out of the room to speak with a stranger, newly come into the house: going forth accordingly, he finds a grave old man, of a goodly countenance, seemly

and richly attired, who in a friendly and grave manner tells him, that within one hour there would come to their inn certain officers, as from the king of the Romans, to attach Grinæus, and so carry him to prison; willing him to charge Grinæus, with all possible speed, to flee out of Spires, and requiring Melancthon to see that this advantage were not neglected; which said, the old man vanished out of his sight. Instantly Melancthon, returning to his companions, recounted unto them the words of this strange monitor, and hastened the departure of Grinæus accordingly, who had no sooner boated himself on the Rhine, than he was eagerly sought for at his said lodgings. Of this, Melancthon, in his commentary on Daniel, writes; and acknowledges God's fatherly providence in sending this angel of his for the rescue of his faithful servant.

John Spangenberg, pastor of Northense, was no sooner stepped out of his house, with his family, to go to the bains, but the house fell right down in the place.—Our own experience at home is able to furnish us with divers such instances: If a man by some strong instinct be warned to change that lodging, which he constantly held for some years, and finds his wonted sleeping place that night crushed with the unexpected fall of an unsuspected contiguation; to what cause can we attribute this, but to our attending angels?—Or, have we been preserved from mortal dangers, which we could not tell how by our providence to have evaded? Our invisible guardians have done it.

In the true portraiture of his sacred majesty Charles the Second, it appears, that by God this king reigns, in that he hath exercised those providences over him, that are hardly exercised over ten thousands of us; that star in the east, at his highness's birth, speaks much this way: the powers in heaven, that so watchfully guarded him through those sad days, wherein thousands fell at his right-hand and ten thousands at his left, aimed at some great prize: his royal life (the care of angels) must not go out privately, and be lost unprofitably in a corner. Oh how the angels forbade those millions of profane hands, that would rudely have touched the Lord's anointed! His escape at Worcester was almost miraculous: he sought his way all along five miles from Worcester; then he turned to the less-frequented ways that could be, until he came to the borders of Staffordshire; then he removed to an adjoining wood, where he, and one only with him, walked securely awhile, until they found an oak for majesty, in the hollow of which he lodged himself for three days and nights, until my Lord Wilmot providing for his majesty a safe lodging, and then seeking him in the wood, with much ado found his sacred person guarded, and (as I may say) fed by angels.

2. They keep us in, or restore us to health.

One going to London, inned and lodged all night at the Maiden-head in Cateaton-street, where the same night died a

young wife of the pestilence; as another had died before, the sickness and death of the parties being concealed: he arose in the morning, and took some repast, and went about his occasions; but at his return in the afternoon, as he was going into the inn, a friend called him back, and told him the truth; in the midst of the discourse, he saw the gates shut before his eyes, and presently was written upon them, Lord, have mercy upon us. This hath minded him of God's providence and promise, "Surely, he shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence, for he shall give his angels charge over thee."

John Trelille, a poor cripple in Cornwall, that for sixteen years together was fain to walk upon his hands, by reason of the close contraction of the sinews of his legs; upon three monitions in his dream, to wash in a well called Maderness, was suddenly so restored to his limbs, that I saw him (saith my author) able both to walk, and to get his own maintenance.—Marcus Aurelius Antonius, in his dream received the prescript of a remedy of his disease, which the physicians could not cure: whence came this, but by the suggestion of angels? Have we been raised up from deadly sickness, when all natural helps have given us up? God's angels have been our secret physicians.—*Bishop Hall.*

3. They furnish us with all necessaries for this life.

Mr. Samuel, a godly minister in Queen Mary's days, was convented before Bishop Bonner, who committed him to prison, and there chained him up to a post, in such sort, that standing on tip-toes he was fain to bear up all the weight of his body in that manner, to his intolerable pain; besides, he allowed him but three morsels of bread and three spoonfuls of water a day, so that he was extremely tormented with hunger and thirst, and had his body so miserably dried up, that he would fain have drunk his own water, but he could not make one drop. But after he had continued in this miserable case three days, he fell asleep, and one clad all in white seemed to stand before him, telling him, that from henceforth he should neither hunger nor thirst any more; which also came to pass, though he was not burnt till many days after.—*White's Power of Godliness.*

A doctor of divinity, of singular learning and piety, sent his maid to the market, to get provision for the following week. But all the money he and his wife could make, was but five shillings; his wife fell a weeping, and told her husband, that there was little likelihood they could live together, and that therefore she would take one or two of her children with her, and live among her friends, if he could provide for himself and the rest of his children. Nay, dear wife, said he, we have lived thus long together, let us not now part, let us rely on God's providence. She in her grief and haste answered, Well, send Providence to market, and see what it will bring home. It was so that day, that a nobleman,

who knew this doctor very well, dining with divers gentlemen at an inn, looking out of the window, saw the doctor's maid, whom, being an ancient servant, he knew, sent for her up, asking her how her master did? she answered, Very well, and fell a weeping: he inquiring the cause, she told him what straits they were brought to; he, wondering, and being troubled at it, called the innkeeper, and wished him to give that maid ten pounds, and every one of the gentlemen gave twenty shillings apiece. So the doctor, sending Providence (of which the angels are servants and instruments) to market, it brought him home fifteen pounds. Doubtless it is because we do not trust, not because God either cannot or will not give, that makes us so often want mercies; and such providences would be usual, if our confidence in God were but so.—*Idem ibidem.*

There was a certain poor family, who being in great want, and having little or nothing for the children in it; when dinner came, they put them off with playthings, and told them they would see if they could get them something for supper; and when supper came, they would give some small piece of bread, and so get them to bed: and thus they used them so long, while at last the children would not go to bed, but cried for bread. That night it was so, that the Lord Faulkland, waking before midnight, could not sleep; and then it came into his mind that this family was in great want, insomuch that he called up some of his servants, and sent them with a great loaf and a cheese to the house; when they came, they found the children crying for bread, and the parents weeping by them, who with a great deal of joy and eagerness received that unexpected provision. Thus the Lord ordered it by his providence, that they were not only then relieved, but their necessities being related to the Lord Faulkland, he took care of them for the future.—*Idem ibidem.*

Luther hath this story: A certain woman, in the time of famine, having nothing at all for her children and herself to eat, being brought to very great extremity, she resolved upon this course; she made herself and all her children ready, and with a great deal of comfort and confidence she walked to a spring, not far from her house: as she was going, one met her, who asked her whither was she going with her children; she told him, that all her provision was quite spent, and she was going with her children to such a fountain close by, being confident that God, that had provided drink for her and her children, would there provide food for them also; and he that heard the young ravens, and provided for them, would much more take care of her, and her little ones: he that met her, wished her to return home, for she should meet with provision that was ready for her there: she returned, and found a considerable quantity of meal, which was food for her and her children; but whence this provision came, she knew not, nor knew the man who told her of it.

SECT. IV.—*Experiences of this Truth, as to our Inward Man.*

3. FOR some experiences of this blessed truth, in respect of our souls:—

1. They declare to us God's will; of old they did so to Abraham, Lot, Moses, Jacob, Manoah, Gideon, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zachary: and in the New Testament they did so to Joseph, Mary, Zachariah, the shepherds, Mary Magdalen, Peter, Philip, Cornelius, Paul, John the evangelist, and to all the apostles. At this time they do not invisibly declare God's will, nor must we trust to visions or revelations; yet many times they teach us by dreams, and many times they coin impressions on our fancy and imaginations whilst we are waking: they can make rare and wonderful compositions of what they find in us: so that to me, here is the difference between the converse of men and angels; men can speak to the understanding by the mediation of our external senses, but the angels go a nearer way to work, and speak first of all to the internal senses, making such compositions there as the understanding presently takes off, and reads what is written: Do we not, waking and sleeping, see impressions in our fancy, of things that we thought we had forgotten? This is done by the angels.

One being a long while trained up in ceremonies, notionals, fables, unprofitable matter, rather than sound and saving knowledge, which is in faith; at last, conversing with some godly men, and with practical books, he found some impressions in his fancy of another kind of divinity, and so inclined, that divinity was rather practical than speculative; and that such kind of preaching as was usually delivered in an affected spruceness of language, and vain-glorious trinness of the windy and dead letter, would never save souls. These impressions were more and more fixed in him, and at last he was satisfied, that many poor illiterate souls, that felt the power of godliness on their own hearts, had more true knowledge of divinity, than many learned doctors and rabbies, that had nothing but orthodoxy, or a swimming knowledge of truth; and that many unlearned snatched heaven, and took it by violence, while many learned with their learning perished, and went down to hell. The efficacy of this light he gives to the Spirit, but the instrumentality of it, as working upon the fancy or imagination, he ascribes to the angels.

A godly woman, falling into great dissertions, at last the Lord in secret prayer came in with abundance of light and comfort; but within a month after, she being to receive the Lord's supper, all her former tears and troubles returned upon her, insomuch, that a little before the bread was administered to her, though she could not say that the devil appeared to her in a bodily shape, yet he seemed to her as if he did, and told her, that she should not eat;

but then the Lord was pleased to bring into her mind that passage in the Canticles, "Eat, O my friends:" Notwithstanding, Satan still continued terrifying of her, and when she had eaten, told her, she should not drink; but the Lord brought that second clause of the verse into her mind, "Drink, yea drink abundantly, my beloved;" and so she drank also, and presently was filled with such unspeakable joys, that she knew not how she got home; which soul-ravishing joys continued for a fortnight after, and filled her mouth with songs of praise, so that she could neither sleep, nor eat, more than she forced herself to do out of conscience of duty.—*White.*

2. They advise us to that which is good.

The light being presented to one, as before, many blessed motions came in, to make the beginning of saving practical truth; and this he understood was the doctrine of regeneration; and therefore, if ever he would be happy, he must have some feeling of that. Many objections were raised, that the wind bloweth where it listeth; and we are not sufficient of ourselves to think; and it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, &c. The objections are not formally now remembered: but notwithstanding them, the motions to fall on the work continued fresh, and finding them daily upon his spirit, at last he submitted willingly to those inspirations, and every day set some time apart to be in the duty; it proved tedious and difficult at first, but afterwards sin appeared very sinful, and the Spirit set it home on his soul, and by degrees successively he was led from a sense of misery, to some hope of mercy in Christ: and before he had done, (though many a day it continued,) the holy Spirit infused faith, whereby he closed with Jesus Christ, as Saviour, and as Lord, and King, and Husband. This work, begun by the angels by instilling good motions, was the joy of angels, when it was perfected: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

One, about the time of Reformation of religion, desired much of God the guidance and assistance of an angel; and from the thirty-seventh year of his age he had sensible manifestations of a spirit that assisted him, and followed him till his death. In his dreams or visions, he was sometimes admonished of this or that vice, and sometimes advertised of this or that danger, and sometimes resolved of this or that doubt, and sometimes persuaded to this or that duty: Once I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "I will save thy soul." Usually in the morning, about the fourth hour, the angel would have beat at his door to have awaked him, and if he had done any good or evil, he would have manifested the approval or disapproval of it by some sign: if in company he had spoken any unwary words, he was sure to be advertised and reprov'd of it by a dream in the night following: if he had read any book that was not good, the angel would have struck

upon the book, to have caused him to have left it, and laid it aside : Often would the angel have provoked him to prayer, and alms-deeds, and other duties. Bodinus asking him, whether ever he had seen the form of this angel ? He answered, that he never saw any thing, but only a bright and shining light in a round orb ; and once after prayer upon his bed, that he saw a sweet boy, in white apparel, of admirable beauty.—*Bodinus de Magorum demonomania.*

3. They repeal temptations, or prevent occasions of sin.

One having many temptations offered him, especially in his dreams in the night, he observed, that at the same times such thoughts have come in, that in those very dreams he confidently cried—Avoid, Satan ; and again, Avoid, Satan ; for it is written, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve ;” which he believes were put in by the angels.

One Natalius, that had formerly suffered great persecutions for the cause of Christ, was seduced by Asclepiodotus and Theodorus, two sectaries, to be the bishop of their sect, promising to pay him an hundred and fifty crowns of silver every month, and so he joined himself to them ; but the Lord in mercy not intending to lose him that had suffered so much for his sake, admonished him by a vision, to adjoin himself to the true church again ; which the good man for the present, blinded with lucre and honour, did not regard as he ought to have done. The night after he was scourged by angels, whereupon, in the morning, putting on sackcloth, with much weeping and lamentation, he went to the Christian congregation, praying them, for the tender mercies of Christ, that he might be received into their communion again ; which request was accordingly granted unto him.—*Clarke's General Martyrology.*

Cyprian relates a story of one of his fellow-ministers, who in the midst of his torments began to faint, being greatly afraid of death, and desired to be released ; at which time there appeared to him a young man of admirable beauty, and so bright, that man's mortal eye could scarce endure to behold him ; who angrily said to him, *Pati timetis, exire non vultis, quid faciam vobis ?* ‘To suffer you dare not, to go out you will not, what shall I do with you ?’—*Idem. ibid.*

4. They quicken, encourage, and comfort us.

A certain godly woman riding behind her husband, who was a persecutor of Mr. Bolton, as they were riding, it thundered and lightened extraordinarily, so that he trembled exceedingly : his wife with a cheerful voice said, Husband, what ails you ? why do you tremble thus ? He answered, Do you not hear how terribly it thunders ? She answered, Yes, I hear it. And, said he, do you not tremble also ? She answered, No, she was not at all afraid, for she knew it was but the voice of her Father. He was amazed at her cheerfulness and answer, and began to think with

himself, Surely these Puritans have something within them, that they are able to bear up in such storms; and that they have peace, and are cheerful, while I tremble. And being not far off, immediately he did ride to Master Bolton, beseeching pardon that he had persecuted him, and desired that he would tell him what he should do to be saved.

Thomas Ward, of Tiso, in Warwickshire, was all his younger days very loose and dissolute, an enemy to goodness, and an hater of good men; but it pleased God at last to convert him, after a strange and wonderful manner, which was thus: In a morning, as he lay in his bed, plotting and contriving how to molest and persecute some of his godly neighbours, there appeared a vision to him, of a city, wherein there were many poor ragged lambs in the streets, and a man drying of them; and he heard a voice saying to him, What are these? To which he answered, Sheep. Then said the voice again, These are my sheep whom thou persecutest. Presently after he saw another vision, of a pile of fagots, and heard the voice, saying, What are these? He answered, Fagots: Then said the voice, As these are bound up for the fire, so thou deservest to be bound hand and foot, and cast into everlasting fire. He answered, Truth, Lord; yet withal he cried earnestly to the Lord for mercy: and presently after he saw in another vision a pillar of brass, but so bright and glorious, that he was not able to look upon it: then said the voice, Be of good comfort, for thou art a chosen vessel, which shall suffer many things for my name's sake. To which he said, Lord, if it be thy will, let it be now: and presently he had a blow given him on his side, as with a dagger, the mark whereof he carried with him to his grave. After this, it pleased God to raise him up with comfort, and he became an eminent professor, and was very zealous for the truth.—*White.*

A little before the eighth persecution began, God by a vision revealed it to Cyprian, saying to him, Be quiet, and of good comfort, for peace will come, albeit a little stay there is for a while, for that some remain yet to be proved and tried.—*Clarke.*

Theodorus, for singing a psalm at the removing of the body of Babilas, being apprehended, was examined with exquisite torments, and so cruelly excruciated from morning till almost noon, that hardly he escaped with life; and being afterwards asked by his friends, how he could endure such extreme torments, said, That at first he felt some pain, but afterwards there stood by him a young man, who as he was sweating with the pain, wiped away his sweat, and oft-times so refreshed him with cold water, wherewith he was so delighted, than when he was let down from the engine, it grieved him more than before.—*Clarke.*

Whilst Augustine was yet a Manichee, his mother Monica had

a dream, that she was standing upon a wooden rule, and being very sad, saw a glorious young man very joyful, and of a cheerful countenance coming unto her, and that he asked her the cause of her sadness; and when she had declared that it was by reason of sorrow that she had for her son, who was then in the way of destruction, he bid her be of good cheer, and wished her to mark and observe, and that she should see her son to be with her where she was; and so she saw her son, standing with her upon the same rule.—*August. Confess. 1. 3.*

SECT. VIII.—*Experiences of this Truth, as to Conversion.*

FOR some experiences of the angels contributing to our conversion :

On a time, Augustine being in great heaviness, and deep contrition of heart, cried out, Oh! what is this? what suffer I under the tyranny of sin? Unlearned men take heaven by violence, and we, with all our learning, lie grovelling in flesh and blood. After this he had a great conflict, for all his past pleasures represented themselves before his eyes, saying, What, wilt thou depart from us, and shall we be no more with thee for ever? And then a marvellous tempest of weeping came upon him, so that he cast himself on the ground under a fig-tree, and gave full scope to his eyes, which brought forth presently whole floods of tears; and then, behold, he heard a voice, as if it had been of a boy or maid singing, and saying, *Tolle & lege, tolle & lege*; 'Take up and read, take up and read;' Wherefore repressing the force of his tears, interpreting that this voice came from heaven, and was spoken by angels, he took up the book of Paul's epistles which he had with him, with a purpose to read the first chapter that he should find, and opening it, his eye fixed on these words, "The night is spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light; let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c." And by this means he was converted.—*Aug. 1. 8. Conf. c. 12.*

A woman telling me of her great trouble and grief, and of her long continuance in the pangs of the new birth, she said, that she heard at last a voice, plainly and distinctly saying to her, as she was bewailing her sins, If thou wilt forget, I will forget; If thou wilt forget, I will forget.

A man labouring in the pangs of his new birth, began to despair of salvation, and at last concluded he should be damned; whereupon plotting and contriving what was best to do, he resolved to make away with himself, and not to live any longer; for these reasons; 1. because he conceived, the longer he lived,

the more and greater would be his sin ; and, 2. the more would God by his sin be dishonoured ; and, 3. the more and greater would his torment proportionably to his sin be in the fire of hell : And even now going to the place where he had appointed the execution and self-murder, there suddenly came into his mind (as if a dart of light had been injected) this very word, Who knows ? on which pondering and ruminating, he asked himself, Who knows what ? and presently was thrown in (as he conceived) the end of the sentence, Who knows what is God's decree or mind concerning me ? neither angels, devils, nor men. On which words pausing and considering awhile, he reasoned thus with himself, If I know not God's mind, it may be I shall be saved. Upon this he staid his purpose, put on by Satan, and probably prevented by an angel, and so went to prayer ; and within three days after he received comfort.

SECT. IX.—*Of the Duties that concern us in this respect.*

1. IN all dangers let us stir up faith, and exercise it on the promises of angel-protection : Art thou a soldier ? do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with thy wages ; march, charge, retreat, do duty according to command ; God shall cover thy head in the day of battle, for thou art in thy ways : but if thou invadest the ministerial office, presuming to preach, who never was sent ; look to thyself, thou canst not without usurpation pretend to God's keeping, for thou art out of all thy ways : Nor do I fear the frowns of any if offended hereat, and reproving me for giving this just reproof ; I am sure I am in my calling, in my ways ; and therefore with comfort and confidence may rely on God, and his angels' protection ; only that we abuse not the promise as the devil did, let us keep in our ways, that we may be kept safe by the angels ; then only is angel-protection to be expected, when we are in the ways God hath appointed ; that is to say, within the compass of our general and particular callings : they shall keep thee in all thy ways, or in all thy bounds, or in all thy courses appointed thee by God. Surely we have need to look to ourselves in all our actions, as in eating, drinking, riding, sporting, for even in these God hath set us our ways. We hear of many sad disasters of God's dearest servants, and we need not wonder, if we but consider their wanderings. Alas, they keep not within compass, they are out of their ways, or otherwise they might walk safely without any danger. If Jacob keep but in his ways, he may safely meet with his brother Esau coming against him with four hundred men. Mr. Dodd would say, he cared not where he was, if he could but answer these two questions well : Who am I ? and what do I here ? Am I a child of God ? and am I in my way ?—If we were careful of these things, we might free ourselves from all other cares : Oh let us look to our ways !

2. In our sicknesses, sores, dangers of plague or pestilence, let us eye the promise of angel-ministration; "Surely he shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence:—Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day; a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand, but it shall not come nigh thee:—There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling; for he shall give his angels charge over thee." Many other promises we have, both to prevent and qualify, and to remove sicknesses, as Exod. 15. 26. Deut. 7. 15. Psa. 41. 3. Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8. Isaiah 40. 31. And well may we live by faith on such promises as these. But why should the promises of angel-ministration be out of use? To what end are these promises, if we may not rest or roll ourselves upon them as well as others? Should God say in our sicknesses, Send to such a physician, and make use of him, and you shall be cured; we should submit: And are not these heavenly physicians of more value? And have we not an express promise, that in their ministration we shall have health? Oh let us eye these promises!

3. In our outward wants, let us have some thoughts of angel-ministration, as to supplies. It is a wonder how all the creation is serviceable to man; the very plants and herbs administer to his food; the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, are for his sustenance; the sun and stars contribute to his being and preservation: if any piece of the creation should escape his ministry, one would think it should be the mighty and blessed angels; and yet behold an angel provides bread for Elijah, and water for Ishmael, and all other necessaries for God's children. The world is yours, saith the apostle:—God would never have made this field (the world) were it not for the corn (the godly) growing in it: and as of this corn the angels are the reapers, so they have the care of it for its nourishment and preservation: Art thou a saint, and in want? Surely it concerns thee to shake off idleness, to take the opportunity, and to observe God's providence in all affairs; and amidst those several providences of his ordering, forget not the ministration of the angels: For my part if together with the word, my own experiences may be any encouragement; I do verily think, that rather than thou shouldst die for thirst, an angel will open thy eye to see a fountain, out of which thou mayest fill thy bottle with water, and take and drink.

4. In learning the whole counsel, will, and mind of God, let us turn over those leaves which speak of angels; these are the invisible attenders of the blessed Deity, and without some knowledge and apprehension of them, we shall never attain to conceive of their God and ours, as we ought to do: but in this

knowledge let us mind especially their ministration to our inward man; herein are many depths, yet they are sweet, delightful, and most profitable truths: they come to our phantasms, (the species of sounds, of shapes, or whatsoever else, as they are kept and preserved by the inward senses,) and they move them at pleasure, and put together such conceptions or apprehensions, as are most accommodate and fitted for the knowledge of that truth, which they would suggest to our minds. Is not this worthy our knowledge? Shall the angels take pains to speak to us, and to acquaint us with the knowledge of saving truths, and shall not we willingly hearken to them? O let us listen to what they say; and that they may have matter to work upon, and to speak to us about, let us be ever ready and prompt to receive good images and impressions of things into our fancy: It is said, that the angels cannot put into our fancies what never was there before, as they cannot make a man born blind to dream of colours and their differences; but they can make many compositions and deductions of the images they find there, to the saying of what they will; and therefore let us hear all the good we can, and take heed of receiving ill impressions by our ears, or eyes, or any other way. If any one tell us an ill story once, the devil will tell it us a thousand times; it is a great happiness to this purpose not to know ill: And on the other side, if we see or hear good objects, and that our memories (which are as treasures of all we see or hear) be stuffed and filled with many such good things, then may we comfortably hope, that the angels will make use of all those images to converse with us, and tell us over and over what is the will and mind of God.

5. In the many motions, inspirations, and holy suggestions to this or that good, let us stop awhile, and seriously consider whence these come; certainly if they are of good, and tend to good, they come either from the Spirit of God, or from his holy and blessed angels. I confess the efficacious power on the heart belongs only to the Spirit of God; it is the Holy Ghost that overrules, and melts, and new-moulds us; that so persuades us to charm, and turn, and captivate our souls: yet the angels are ordinances, means and helps of God's own appointment; they are ministering spirits, sent from God to counsel and persuade us to this and that duty: And whether the good motions instilled proceed from the holy Spirit, or from these ministering spirits, it is good for us to listen and hearken to these movings, workings, hints, intimations. Methinks we should hearken to the advice of a friend, how much more to God and his angels! O how sad is it for my soul by sin to counterwork the actings of angels, and breathings of the Spirit! that the angels should knock at our heart, and that the Spirit should put in the hand by the hole of the door, and yet that neither should be yielded unto, but both resisted; this must needs grieve the Holy Ghost,

and grieve the holy angels, that would persuade us, and seal us up unto the day of redemption.

6. In the occasions of evil, or temptations to this or that sin, observe we the stops and lets which often are made by the holy and blessed angels; we little think how busy the angels are for our good! the devil, we know, is like a roaring lion, and the day passeth not over our heads, wherein he offers not this or that temptation to ensnare our souls: And are not the good angels at counter-work? Do not they as often pull us back? Or do not they at least very often hedge and block up our ways, by withstanding the occasions of many a sin? O then say, as Jacob did, "Surely the angels of the Lord were in the preventing of this temptation, and I knew it not." It were enough to strike us into a dread, and to break forth into praises of God, if in the overcoming of any temptation, we had some thoughts of the protection and ministration of angels: Surely (should we say) the Lord and his angels have helped and relieved us, or Satan had prevailed; and we had been quite foiled.

7. In our deadness, fears, sorrows, afflictions, let us remember the words of Elisha to his servant, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that are against us." Seldom did the angels appear to any, but this was their language, "Fear not;" as, "Fear not, Daniel;" and, "Fear not, Zacharias;" and, "Fear not, Mary;" and, "Fear not, Shepherds;" and, "Fear not, Paul:" it is one of their prime offices, "to strengthen the weak hands; to confirm the feeble knees, and to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. When David said to Abiathar, that may we imagine the angels to say to us, "Fear not, ye sons and daughters of the Almighty, we are your protectors, strengtheners, comforters; and with us, and by us, you shall be in safeguard." O the many quickenings, encouragings, comfortings, that the saints have by the ministration of angels! Next to my God, and my Saviour, (saith one,) I shall ever place my greatest comfort and confidence in the angels of God, neither hath earth nor heaven any creature-comforters like unto these; there is none like them, or to be compared with them.

8. At all times and seasons, let us think and carry ourselves as in the presence of God, and the sight of his angels. If I may instance in some times: As, 1. In time of temptation, let us think of it then. Seneca gave Lucilius this counsel, Whatever he was doing, that he should imagine some of the Roman worthies did behold him, and then he would do nothing dishonourable. Surely, if the eye of God, and of his angels, were ever in our eye, this would be a supersedeas and counter-poison against all sin: Tell me, how dare you sin in their presence, or do that in their view, which you would not dare to do in the sight and pre-

sence of some earthly man? "I charge you before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," saith Paul, *q. d.* Consider God's presence, and Christ's presence; or if they work but little with you, consider the presence of the elect angels: surely, the nearer things come to the manner of our presence, the more they will affect us; and therefore consider, that the angels are present with us, in the very room where we are acting our very wickedness: I blush to think (said the author above cited) how often I have done that whereof the angels were ashamed for me; I abhor myself to recount their just dislikes, and do willingly profess how unworthy I am of such friends, if I be not hereafter jealous of their just offence. 2. In time of public service, and public duty, think on it then: "For this cause (saith the apostle) ought the women to have power over her head (that is to say, to be modestly veiled) because of the angels." Elect angels are exact and careful observers, and eyewitnesses, of our behaviour and deportment in the public ordinances. To this end were the curtains of the tabernacle pictured full of cherubims, to signify, that about our solemn meetings, whole troops of angels take notice of our carriage. Surely, if this were considered, we should be very serious in God's worship; yea, how spiritual and heavenly should we be, if our hearts were but fixed on these glorious angels! O ye blessed spirits (said a saint) ye are ever by me, ever with me, ever about me, but especially in God's house I do as good as see you, for I know you to be there, I reverence your glorious persons, I bless God for you, I walk awfully, because I am ever in your eyes; I walk confidently, because I am ever in your hands. My brethren, we are even now, at this time of public meeting, amidst watchful and waking overseers; we are looked and looked through in all our ways, as if heaven were all eyes round about us: Oh then with what fear and trembling, with what reverence and devotion, should we stand or wait here before God and his holy angels?

9. In reference both to others and ourselves, let us learn to imitate the angels:—

1. For others, let us imitate thus, they are as our guardians, physicians, purveyors, tutors, instructors, soldiers, quickeners, encouragers, comforters; so let us in our several stations and places aspire to angelical work: if the angels guard us, let us be as guardians of one another; if they study our health, let us wish health, and endeavour it as we may, one for another; if they purvey for us, let us relieve the necessity of the saints; if they tutor us, let us acquaint one another with the mysteries of grace; if they instruct us, and persuade us to our duties, let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day:" If they fight for us, and take part with us against the evil angels, let us take part with

the saints against the oppressions and violence of all wicked men ; if they quicken, encourage, and comfort us, let us quicken the slothful, confirm the weak, and comfort the feeble-minded. Surely the way to have angels' reward, or to see the face of God is to do the work of angels. Oh let us improve this piece of the creation to our use, as well as all the rest !

2. For ourselves, let us imitate thus : 1. Reverence the majesty of God as they do, Isaiah 6. 2. 2. Stand ready prest to execute the will of God, as they do, Psa. 103. 20. 3. Let us study holiness, as they do ; they are of a most holy nature, and therefore are they called holy angels. So be we holy, even as they are holy. It is but equal, that we who expect to be like the angels in glory, should be like them in grace : Many would strive to be like them for gifts and parts, but not for holiness, which yet is the special thing propounded to our imitation ; When we say, " Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven : " no question, this principally is intended, that we should lead here angelic lives ; that is, in heaven they are ever doing God's will, there is no sin there, so we should keep harmony with the angels of heaven, and do his will here.

10. To conclude : In all our duties, in reference to the angels, let us " look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith : " they are as the means and instruments of our good, but he is the author and finisher, and all the efficacy flows from him. Hence it is that we must chiefly apply ourselves to him : " Trust not in man, no, nor in princes," saith the Psalmist ; so may I go on, Trust not in princes, no, nor in angels, nor archangels absolutely, but still in subordination unto Jesus Christ. This use the Psalmist teacheth us of angel-protection : " The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him : " and what then ? " O taste, and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him ; " not in them, but in him : our chief confidence must be in none that is on this side God. When God promised Moses that an angel should go before Israel, and yet withal threatened the subduction of his own presence, (" I will send an angel before thee, but I will not go up in the midst of thee ; ") no marvel if Moses were no less troubled, than if they had been left destitute and without a guard ; and that he ceased not his importunity, till he had won the gracious engagement of the Almighty for his presence in that whole expedition ; " If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." For what is the greatest angel in heaven without his Maker ? O then let us eye God, and eye Jesus Christ, in all, above all, and beyond all angel-ministration. It was a sweet saying of one we mentioned before : Blessed be God for the angels, as the author of them and their protection ; and blessed be the angels under God, as the means used by him, for our protection, and other blessings : Let the angels have their due, but let God in Christ

be our all in all; for as by him the angels were created, so were they created for him; "and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

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## CHAP. IV.

### SECT. I.—*Of the Ministration of Angels at our Death.*

THUS far have we observed the angels' ministration, even until death; and yet they have not done, for no sooner death seizeth on the elect, but they minister to them, and in some respects continue their ministration till the resurrection-day. In order to this, we shall first observe their ministration; and secondly, our duties.

1. For their ministration, that known place is most obvious: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." And we read of Michael the archangel, contending with the devil about the body of Moses. Whence some observe, that angels have a care not only of the souls, but of the bodies; yea, even of the dead bodies of the saints.

### SECT. II.—*Of the manner of Angel-ministration at that Time.*

FOR the manner of their ministration, it relates both to bodies and souls:—

1st. For the bodies of the faithful:

1. In the very agony of death they help and ease them: Thus was Christ refreshed in the midst of his agony by an angel. In like manner are they serviceable to the saints; for if ordinary physicians have their electuaries, how much more can the angels minister cordials in their way?

2. After death they guard the bodies of the saints: The devil would have abused the dead body of Moses, but Michael the archangel contended with him, and rescued the body out of his hands: Satan's malice is without end, and therefore hath he stirred his instruments to abuse the dead bodies of many martyrs; he loves not that dust wherein the holy Spirit dwelleth, but the angels take care of every dust, so that not one shall be lost at the general day: suppose them scattered up and down the world, yet are they but thrown and sown in the earth, that they may spring out again to a glorious incorruption; and in the mean time the angels are a guard, and have a regard to them in their sleep, till the morning of their resurrection day.

2d. For the souls of the faithful:—

1. The angels, in the very article and point of death, are vigilant over them, and oft-times inspire the parting souls with a spirit of divination, or consolation, surpassing all human knowledge. Thus Gregory could say, That sometime souls, before their departure, came to the knowledge of things by revelation; and sometimes by heavenly inspiration they penetrate with their spiritual eyes the very secrets of heaven itself. Do we not see by experience, that when the soul is drawing into a separate condition, it is in a great part delivered from bodily operations, and from the business of the outward senses, and from the commerce with external and worldly matters, which puts it, as it were, into a kind of sabbath, or state of rest? Now the more quiet the soul is, and the more sequestered from earthly and outward things, the more apt it is to enjoy the benefit of internal light, and the better fitted for spiritual commerce with God himself, or with his angels, which (saith one) may also lead us to understand something towards a reason, why men drawing near their departure, are observed to be disposed to presage and prophesy, to be full of comfort, as if heaven entered into them, before they could enter into heaven.

2. The angels stand ready to receive souls separate from their bodies, into their embraces. Macarius, a learned monk, could say, that immediately after death, the choirs of angels received the souls of saints into their own side, into the pure world, and so brought them unto the Lord: Wicked men, when they die, shall have a black guard of angels to receive them, and to haul them down to hell: but the godly shall have a white guard, the same angels that were said before to bear them up in their hands, will then receive them into their arms, and fall upon them with hugs, and kisses, and embraces.

3. Angels convey souls in their hands, or on their wings, through the air and middle region, up into heaven: we cannot go from earth to heaven, but we must needs pass through the devil's territories, or through the air, (for so is Satan called, "the prince of the power of the air;" that is to say, of the airy dominion or principedom,) thither were devils, with Satan their prince, exiled from heaven: whence the Jews have a tradition, that all the space betwixt the earth and the firmament, is full of troops of evil spirits. As it is the opinion of all doctors, (saith Hierome,) that devils have their mansion and residence in that space between the heaven and the earth. And although some against this allege those texts, "For if God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;"—and, "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day:" yet learned Mede hath expounded the first text thus, That he cast them down to

hellward, or to this lower orb, there to be reserved for chains of darkness at the day of judgment:—and the latter text thus, That the evil spirits which fell into this lower region, were there to be reserved, as in a prison, for everlasting chains of darkness, at the judgment day. This is the valley of the shadow of death, through which the souls of saints are to go to heaven; and because of the dangerous voyage, the angels scour and clear the passage for them; they go with them, and fight for them, and with speed and triumph at last convey them to their Father's house. Oh in what pomp and triumph did Lazarus's soul ride on the wings of angels! Never was Dives so honoured in his life, as was Lazarus at his death; he might ride in some chariot drawn with horses, but Lazarus was, and the souls of all believers shall be, drawn at their deaths in fiery chariots; they shall be carried and conveyed into heaven by the angels of God.

4. The angels welcome the souls of saints, in this heavenly progress, to their heavenly Canaan: they are not only porters to carry souls, but they are porters also to receive souls, they stand ready at heaven's gates, to set open the doors, and to bid them enter into their Maker's joy. In that vision which John had of the great city, the holy Jerusalem, he saw twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels: Our English annotations say, that these angels are as porters to receive men into heaven: howsoever Adam was kept out of paradise by cherubims, yet cherubims, and seraphims, and all the host of heaven, are ready to receive the saints into this glorious city. O what a joy will be in heaven at the first admission of these souls! what clasping, closing, kissing, embracing, will be at this entrance betwixt saints and angels! Welcome, say the angels; and welcome, say archangels; yea the principalities triumph, and powers rejoice, and virtues shine, and thrones glitter, and cherubims give light, and seraphims burn in love at the soul's arrival; what congratulations are those amongst the angels, that now the worst of their service is past, that now the poor souls they had in charge, are by their good help escaped, and freed from all the miseries of the world, and snares of the devil, and pains of hell, and are now entered through the gates into the city, where they and their charge shall live together, and love together, and sing together, Jehovah's praise! Never had the saints such welcome in this world, as at this day they have, or shall have, by the angels of God, into the kingdom of God.

5. The angels present the souls of saints before Christ in his throne, and there immediately they receive their sentence. This must needs follow, the angels cannot leave their charge, till they bring them to him, who gave them the charge of them; away therefore they fly to the Lamb in his throne, and covering their faces with their wings, there they present with cheerfulness of spirit his redeemed ones;—*q. d.* 'Glorious King of saints,

hither we bring these souls which thou gavest us in charge to keep, their dusts are indeed returned to earth as they were, but their spirits must needs return to God who gave them; come take them into thy bosom and glory, they are spirits, yea, spirits sublimated, (as being born again of water, and of the Spirit,) and therefore assimilated to thyself; they are pure sparks, now freed and severed from their dust and ashes, and therefore they fly up, or they come up hither on our wings, unto thee the great Spirit, that element of spirits; O that they may find union and coalition with thee! O that they may be with thee where thou art, and that they may for ever behold the glory which thou hast given them! To whom answer is given, as from the throne, Welcome, dear souls, into this glorious kingdom of mine, this is that inheritance I prepared for you before the foundation of the world: Why, you are they whom I created in my own image, after my own likeness; you are my offspring, created immediately by my hand, and in my image, as to your very substance. It is true, I made all the world, and something I made out of nothing, as the chaos was made, but my image other creatures did not bear; you only are spiritual substances, and vital-light; you only have those luminous substances, or substantial lights, from the gift of your creation, which is a degree above the angels, for they have not any light genial and inherent to their essence, but are only mirrors of the increased light: And though a taint came upon you by reason of sin, so that this image wherein you were created, was exceedingly marred, yet by works of grace I renewed this image, and thereupon, that original affinity to me, the God of Spirits, is not only restored, but endeared.' And now this is my sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servants, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things: enter you into the joy of your Lord."

6. The angels now begin to join in concert with the souls of saints, and to sing those halleluiahs that never shall have end. "And round about the throne were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind,—and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! And when these beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks, to him who sits on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sits on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy sake they are and were created.—And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of the angels was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength,

and honour, and glory, and blessing.—After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; and all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen.” Lo, here, all God’s saints of the Old and New Testament, called twenty-four elders, comprehended under the twelve patriarchs; and twelve apostles, and all the ministers of Christ, called four beasts, or living weights, comprehended under the four evangelists: and all the angels of heaven, an innumerable company of angels—all joining in one concert: Oh what joys are here! what harmonies are these! what warbling of saints and angels! If Francis (as Bonaventure stories it) hearing but one angel play upon an harp, was so transported with the melody, that he thought himself in another world; how are the souls of saints transported, who no sooner arrive in glory, but they hear more than twelve legions of angels, accompanied with a numberless number of glorious saints, all singing at once, Halleluiah; Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! praise, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto God, and Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, for ever and ever!

### SECT. III.—*Of the Experiences of this Truth.*

I SHALL add some experiences of this blessed truth:—

1. They help us and ease us in the pangs of death.

Mr. Hawkes, being entreated of his friends, that in the midst of the flame, wherein he must die, he would shew them some token, if he could, that the fire was not so intolerable, but a man might therein keep his mind quiet and patient; this he assented to, and promised, that if the rage of the pain were intolerable, he would lift up his hands above his head, before he gave up the ghost. At the stake, he mildly and patiently addressed himself to the fire, and, after his fervent prayers made to God, fire was put to him; in it he continued long: and when his speech was taken away by the flame, his skin drawn all together, and his fingers consumed with the fire, so that all men thought he had been dead; he being mindful of his promise, suddenly lifted up his hands burning of a light fire, and with great joy clapped them three times together; whereupon there was such shouting amongst the people, especially by those who knew the meaning of it, as the like had scarce been heard; and so the blessed mar-

tyr, presently sinking down into the fire, gave up his spirit unto God.—*Fox's Martyr.*

Mr. James Bainham, being at a stake to be burnt, in the midst of the flames, which had half consumed his arms and his legs, he spake these words: O ye papists, behold, ye look for miracles, and here now ye may see a miracle, for in this fire I feel no more pain, than if I were in a bed of down; yea, it is to me as a bed of roses.—*Idem. ibid.*

There was in Mechlin one Andrew Thissen, who had three sons, whom he carefully brought up in the knowledge of the truth: two of them were condemned to the fire, and one of them, feeling the violence of the flame, said, O what a small pain is this, compared to the glory to come! and so committing their spirits into the hands of god, they finished their race.

Henry Voes and John Esch, being brought to the stake, for their testimony to the Protestant religion, when the fire was kindled at their feet, one of them said, Methinks you do strew roses under my feet; and presently after they quietly slept in the Lord.

William Cowper, being ready to die, said, Now, my soul, be glad, for at all parts of this prison the Lord hath set to his pioneers to loose thee; head, feet, milt, and liver, are fast failing, yea, the middle strength of the whole body, the stomach, is weakened long ago; arise, make ready, shake off thy fetters, mount up from the body, and go thy way.

## 2. They inspire our souls with divination, or comfort.

A child of a christian gentlewoman was so given to prayer from its infancy, that before it could well speak, it would use to get alone, and go to prayer; and as it grew, it was more frequent in prayer; at last, when the child was but five years old, and whipping of his top, on a sudden he flung away his scourge, stick, and top, and ran to his mother, and with great joy said unto her, Mother, I go to God; will you go with me? She answered, My dear child, how dost thou know thou shalt go to God? He answered, God hath told me so; for I love God, and God loves me: mother, will you go with me? She answered, Dear child, I must go when God pleaseth; but why wilt thou not stay with me? The child answered, I will not stay, I must go to God. And the child did live about a month after, but never cared for play more, and then fell sick, always speaking, that he must go to God; and died in that sickness.—*White.*

Charles Bridgeman prophesied his departure; and how strange a prophecy! not only that he must die, but foretelling the very day. On the Lord's day (said he) look to me; neither was that a word of course, which appeared by his often repetition, every day asking, till the day came indeed, What, is Sunday come? At last the looked-for day came on, and no sooner had the sun beautified that morning, but he fell into a trance: What (think you) meant his blessed soul, whilst the body itself used such an

action? his eyes were fixed, his face cheerful, his lips smiling, his hands and arms clasping in a bow, as if he would have received some blessed angel, that there was at hand to receive his soul; but he comes to himself, and tells them about him; how he saw the sweetest boy that ever eyes beheld, and bids them be of good cheer, for he must presently go with him: One standing near, as now suspecting the time of his dissolution, bids him say, Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Yes, said he, Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit, which is thy due; for why, thou hast redeemed it, O Lord my God most true. And presently after he died.

If a man, without all observation of physical criticisms, shall receive and give intelligence, many days before, what day or hour shall be his last, to what cause can we attribute these but to our attending angels.

A good gentlewoman, laying on her death-bed, Mr. Dodd was sent for to her, who spake of heaven; and to fit her for that glory, she told him, that she felt the comforts of God, and that she could as hardly at that time forbear singing, as formerly in child-bearing she could forbear crying; and shortly after she died.—*Clarke Mart.*

Mr. Holland, the day before his death, calling for a bible, continued his meditations and expositions on the eighth to the Romans, for the space of two hours; but on the sudden he said, O stay your reading! what brightness is this I see? And they said, It is the sunshine. Nay, (saith he) it is my Saviour's shine: now farewell world, welcome heaven, the day-star from on high hath visited my heart; I doubt not but you all see that light, but I feel a light within me, that none of you all can know. And then turning himself to the minister who preached his funeral sermon, he said, Sir, I desire you would preach my funeral sermon, for this night I die, and speak this from me, that God deals familiarly with man; I feel his mercy, I see his majesty; whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, but I see things that are unutterable. And being thus ravished in his spirit, he roamed towards heaven with a cheerful look, and soft sweet voice; but what he said was not understood: at last raising himself on his bed, as Jacob did upon his staff, he ended his blessed life with these blessed words: O thou fiery chariot, that camest down to fetch up Elijah, carry me to my happy hold; and all you blessed angels, that attend the soul of Lazarus, to bring it to heaven, bear me, O bear me into the bosom of my best beloved, Amen. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and so he fell asleep.—*Leigh.*

Mrs. Drake, a woman of great temptations and desertions, at last growing sickly, and free from her desertions, she became incessant in her discourses of heaven, and of the things of God. The Lord's day before her death, she called all her children

together, and with many admonitions, and zealous instructions, and heavenly discourses, she spent much time that day with them; the Tuesday following, Mr. Dodd came, and spent some time in heavenly discourses, and then went to prayer; and suddenly as prayer was done, she brake forth in a wonderful manner in these expressions: Oh, ho, ho, what is this? what is this? what is this? I am undone, undone, undone, I cannot endure it; O, O, O, let me be gone, let me be gone, I must be gone, I cannot tarry? Oh what shall I do? Lo, lo, the angels are come, they wait, and stay for me: O dear mother, why hold you me? I must be gone: Oh he is come, he is come, he is come; now you have it, you have it, you have it, (meaning that now they had the issue and fruits of all their prayers,) why hold you me? let me be gone, my work is done: O call, call, call! where is my crown, fetch me my crown, bring me my white robes, quickly, quickly, quickly; why run ye out? the angels stay. O it overcomes, overcomes, overcomes me: what shall I do? what shall I do? what shall I do? with innumerable such swift expressions as could not be remembered; and withal she heaved up still all the time with fixed eyes towards the house-top, as though she had seen some vision, and would have flown away from them all.—*Idem.*

Robert Milner, on his death-bed, was so filled with joy for many days together, that he could not hold, but proclaimed the sweetness and goodness of God from day to day: he professed his joys were unutterable; he carried, as if he had been in heaven aforehand; only once talking with some Christians about him, he cried out, Oh I have lost it! But presently he added, Oh I have it again, it is come, it is come! At last, drawing near his end, he sent for the relator as formerly, and desired his prayers; and whilst he was in duty, commending his soul unto God, he suddenly roused and stirred up his body, crying and saying aloud with much vehemency, “The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sin:” and in the very act and heat of his proclaiming the name, and goodness, and sweetness, and mercy of God, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Lord Henry Otto, being sentenced to death for religion, he told the minister waiting on him, I was troubled, but now I feel a wonderful refreshing in my heart; adding, with his hands lifted up to heaven, I give thee thanks, O merciful Father, who hast been pleased to fill me with so much comfort; O now I fear death no longer, I will die with joy. As he was going to the scaffold, he said to the minister, I am sure that Christ Jesus will meet my soul with his angels, that he may bring it to an everlasting marriage, where I shall drink of a new cup, a cup of joy for ever. Upon the scaffold, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Behold, I see the heavens open; pointing with his hand to the place, where others also observed a certain brightness

which dazzled their eyes.—And so he received the stroke of the sword. *Clarke's Mart. in Bohemia.*—In like manner, Bandicon being on the scaffold with his father, fixing his eyes upon heaven, said to his father, Behold, I see the heavens open, and millions of angels ready to receive us : Father, let us rejoice and be glad, for the joys of heaven are open to us.—*Idem, in his Persecution of the Church in the Low Countries.*

3. They stand ready to receive us into their embraces, and convey us through the air into heaven.

Romula being trained up by Redempta, fell into a palsy, that she was fain to keep her bed ; but the sickness of her body being sanctified, and tending to her soul's health, on a certain night she hastily called for Redempta, saying, Come mother, come mother ; who straitways, with her other disciple, rose up ; and as they were about midnight by her bedside, suddenly there came a light from heaven which filled all the room, and then they heard a noise, as if it were of many that came in ; the door being shaken, and thrust open, as though there had been a great press of people : straight after that light followed a wonderful pleasant smell, which did greatly comfort their trembling hearts. Romula perceiving that they could not endure that abundance of light, with sweet words comforted Redempta, that stood trembling by her bedside, saying, Be not afraid, mother, for I shall not die at this time. And when she had often repeated those words, by little and little the light vanished away, but yet the sweet smell remained still. Upon the fourth night after, she called again for Redempta, who coming in with her other disciple, as formerly, suddenly they heard two choirs, singing before the door without, the one as the voices of men, that began the psalms, and the other of women that answered ; and while those heavenly funerals were in celebrating before the door, the holy soul departed this life, and was carried in that manner up into heaven ; and the higher these two choirs did ascend, the less did they hear that celestial music, until at length they heard no more. And then also that sweet and odoriferous smell vanished away—*Greg. Dialog. l. 4.*

Fructuosus, bishop of Tarracona in Spain, with his two deacons, Augurius and Eulogius, suffered martyrdom ; the cause of their punishment was, for professing of Christ's name ; their judge and condemner was Emilianus ; their death was by fire, into which they were all cast, with their arms bound behind them ; but their bands and manacles being loosed by the fire, they lifted up their hands to heaven, praising the living God, to the great admiration of them that stood by ; praying also, that the element which seemed to fly from them, might work his full force upon them, and speedily dispatch them, which was after their request obtained. In the mean space, as they were in the fire, there was a certain soldier in the house of Emilianus, who

did see the heavens above to open, and these aforesaid martyrs to enter into the same; which soldier likewise shewed the sight the same time unto the daughter of Emilianus the president, who beholding the same sight with the soldier, was a present witness of the blessedness of them whom her cruel father had condemned.—*Fox Acts and Monuments, vol. 1.*

Philip de Mornay, L. of Plessis Marly, lying on his death-bed, in the midst of his prayers was heard to say, I fly, I fly to heaven; the angels of heaven are carrying me into the bosom of my Saviour.—*Clarke's Life of Philip de Mornay.*

Mrs. Stubbs, on her death-bed, speaking to them that were by, said; 'Oh would to God you saw but what I see! for behold I see infinite millions of most glorious angels stand about me, with fiery chariots ready to defend me: these holy angels, these ministering spirits, are appointed of God to carry my soul into the kingdom of heaven, where I shall behold the Lord face to face, and shall see him, not with other, but with these same eyes.'—*Life and Death of Mrs. Katharine Stubbs.*

4. They welcome us into heaven, and present us before Christ in his throne.

Helmont, in his Vision of the Soul, tells, that in the year 1610, after a long weariness of contemplation, that he might acquire some gradual knowledge of his own mind, fallen by chance into a calm sleep, and rapt beyond the limits of reason, he seemed to be in a hall sufficiently obscure; on his left hand was a table, and on it a fair large viol, wherein was a small quantity of liquor, and a voice from that liquor spake unto him, Wilt thou honour and riches? At this unwonted voice he became surprised with extreme amazement; and by and by, on his right hand, appeared a chink in the wall, through which a light invaded his eyes with unwonted splendour, which made him wholly forgetful of the liquor, voice, and former counsel. Presently he awakened, but his ancient intense desire of knowing the nature of his soul, in which he had panted incessantly for thirteen years together, constantly remained with him. At length, amidst the anxious afflictions of various fortunes, when yet he hoped a sabbath of tranquillity, he had in a vision a sight of his soul: it was a transcendant light, in the figure of a man, whose whole was homogeneous, actively discerning a substance spiritual, crystalline, and lucent by its own native splendour. And then it was revealed to him, that this light was the same which he had a glimpse of before. If the demand be, what becomes of this light after its separation from the body? Dr. Charleton, who translated that book of Helmont, gave it in this poesy; *Lumen de Lumine*, "Light of light, and, Light to light." The angels of light take these luminous substances, or substantial lights, and present them before that uncreated Light, the Lord of glory. What the estate of this life is, and what it will be, is sung by Mr. Moor, in his *Pre-existency of the Soul*:

Like to a light, fast lock'd in lantern dark,  
 Whereby by night our weary steps we guide  
 In slabby streets, and dirty channels mark,  
 Some weaker rays through the black top to glide,  
 And flusher streams perhaps from horny side :  
 But when we've past the peril of the way,  
 Arriv'd at home, and laid that case aside,  
 The naked light how clearly doth it ray,  
 And spread its joyful beams as bright as summer's day.

Even so the soul, in this contracted state,  
 Confin'd to these straight instruments of sense,  
 More dull and narrowly doth operate ;  
 At this hole hears, the sight may ray from thence,  
 Here tastes, there smells ; but when she's gone from thence,  
 Like naked lamps, she is one shining sphere,  
 And round about has perfect cognizance :  
 Whate'er in her horizon doth appear,  
 She is one orb of sense, all eye, all airy ear.

So nothing now in death is to be dread,  
 Of him that wakes to truth and righteousness,  
 The corpse lies here, the soul aloft is fled,  
 Unto the fount of perfect happiness ;  
 As earth returns to earth, this light no less  
 Returns to him that gave it, where it is  
 Presented by the angels with excess  
 Of strange melodious music, joy, and bliss,  
 O then how doth that Great Light this light greet and kiss !

5. They joy in sweet harmony of praises that never shall have an end.

A certain man, called Servulus, drawing near his end, called for all such strangers as lodged in his house, desiring them to sing hymns with him : and as he was singing, all on a sudden he cried out aloud, saying, Do you not hear the great and wonderful music which is in heaven ? and even in that instant his soul departed this mortal life. All that were present felt a most pleasant and fragrant smell, whereby they argued the verity of his saying ; and that he and angels were then in concert singing hal-leluias together in heaven.—*Gregor. Dialog.* 1. 4.

Another, called Guthlake, drawing near his end, told Berterline his scholar : The time is come, my dear son, wherein I must pass to Christ : and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he yielded up his soul ; when, at the very instant, Berteline saw as it were a fiery tower reaching from heaven down to the earth, the brightness whereof was so wonderful, that the pale sun might envy so great a lustre, whilst the angels themselves were heard to sing melodious tunes of joy.—*Felix.*

SECT. IV.—*Of the Duties that concern us in this respect.*

2. For the several duties that concern us in this respect:—

1. Weigh not the pains or pangs of death, as if they were intolerable; but rather pitch we the anchor of our hope on the firm ground of the word of God, who hath promised “in our weakness to perfect his strength,—and not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear,—and to give his angels a charge to bear us up in their hands.” If the Lord lay one hand upon us, he puts another hand under us; yea, he chargeth his angels to bear us up in their hands, and to allay our pains; it proves so to many, that the very thoughts of death more pains than the pangs of death; howsoever, it may comfort us that the angels stand by us, who either will help us in, or help us through, those pangs of death, that we be not swallowed up by them.

2. Take we no care of our bodies after death, save only to commit them to the earth. Methinks the angels might take off that carking care which many have: what if thy body be used as the Irish papists used the bodies of dead Protestants, who cast some into ditches, and left others to be devoured of ravenous beasts; yea, and digged up others that have been formerly buried, and then left them as dung on the face of the earth; yet the angels see and take care that every part, and piece, and member of thy body shall be preserved and kept safe unto that day of our Lord; the earth in her womb, or the sea in her gulfs, or beasts in their bellies, or whatever is the grave of the bodies of saints, they are but as God’s close chests, to keep in them a part of the Lord’s own treasure; and when these chests shall be opened, (as they shall be in that great day of the resurrection of saints,) then shall those bodies be brought out again by the holy angels; and then shall they be as good, nay, better than ever they were before; “for our vile body shall be made like the glorious body of our Lord and Saviour, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

3. The nearer we draw to our end, let us draw nearer to God and his holy angels. This is done by having a special care of our souls, and by doing those duties that we owe both to God and his angels. I list not to enter into controversies; I deny that any worship is to be given them, or that we ought to pray to them; yet (as the contemplative bishop said) this devotion we do gladly profess to owe to good angels, that though we do not pray unto them, yet we do pray to God for the favour of their assistance and protection, and we do praise God for the protection and ministration that we have from them. And yet further, we come short of our duties to these blessed spirits, if we entertain not in our hearts an high and venerable conceit of their wonderful majesty, glory, and greatness, and an awful

acknowledgment, and reverential awe, of their glorious presence; an holy joy, and confident assurance, of their vigilant care; and lastly, a fear to do ought that might cause them to turn away their faces in dislike from us. All these dispositions are copulative; for certainly, if we have conceived so high an opinion of their excellency as we ought, we cannot but be bold upon their mutual interest, and be afraid to displease them by our heinous and abominable sins. The man that is going out of the world, and within a step or two of death, should, methinks, be very fearful of neglecting the angels, or of grieving the angels: Why, alas, if they watch not over him now, if now they inspire not the soul with blessed motions and pious thoughts; if now they fail of their office, when there is more need of it than ever was or ever will be; oh what will a poor soul do? Come, think we of this, ere it be too late; yea, the nearer we draw to our end, the more tender let us be of our care, and to respect these blessed spirits; and who can tell, but as in the very agony Christ was comforted by an angel, so these ministering spirits may at such a time minister comfort and consolation to our souls? We have seen an heaven of joy entering into some, before they entered into the joy of heaven.

4. Make to ourselves friends of the angels, that when we die, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. Thus Christ advised us in respect of riches;—make use of them by your beneficence to the poor, that they may pray for you, and make your advantage of being rewarded by God: this is the meaning of “make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” And if worldly riches, that either in getting, using, or keeping, do administer matter of sin, (and therefore are called unrighteous mammon,) may be so improved, how much more may we improve the angels, and gain by the angels, if we make them our friends! But how should we make them our friends? I answer: 1. Let us resemble them in their purity, piety, innocency. Suitableness of spirit and life, will breed friendship: if we are but pure in our measure as they are pure, they will delight to befriend us here, and to lay a foundation for a far more familiar acquaintance in heaven hereafter. 2. Let us apply ourselves to them, as desirous and willing of their friendship: let us converse with them as friends, assenting to what they say, and making up holy conclusions with them, and replies, which they will find ways to understand. O the blessed motions that they make continually to our souls! Is it not their joy to gain us, and to win upon us? and to that purpose are they not suggesting this and that good thought to save our souls? O then let us answer them in their motions, and receive whatever they administer!

5. Though we go through the valley of the shadow of death, let us fear no evil, for the angels will be with us. It is natural for us to fear death; and indeed, as it is the destruction of the

creature, and parts body and soul ; as it leads the body through a dark, dirty way, the grave ; and as it leads the soul through the devils territories, the air,—it is no wonder if nature startle, and be afraid of it. But the Christian hath many considerations to allay his fear, and to cheer up his spirit : as, 1. Death is but the separation of the soul and body ; it is not the annihilation of soul and body, but a fair shaking hands between two parting friends : it is as if the wife should take leave of her husband to go see her father ; to whom the husband says, that he will follow after her, and be with her in the morning : Farewell, my dear, says the soul, I must go to my father ; And farewell, my dear, says the body, I will come after thee, and be with thee in the morning of the resurrection. It is true, they cannot part without many a tear and kiss ; but what needs fear ? the morning comes, as well as the night. 2. The body's passage through the grave, though dark and dismal, yet is safe and secure, and fit for rest and sleep : “ He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds.” When a righteous man dies, or his body is buried, he is but gone to bed ; and therefore we call those places where the dead are laid up and buried, dormitories, or sleeping-places ; they sleep for a time ; but they shall awake, and rise up again at the last day. 3. The soul's passage through the air, though full of devils, yet it is accompanied with a safe convoy : there is a white regiment of glorious angels that will bring the souls of saints through all perils “ to mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” Now, can the wife fear an enemy, when the husband hath sent a puissant army to convey her safely to himself ? How then should we fear the way, or fear death, or devils, when the angels (who are stronger than all enemies) have a charge to conduct us to the Bridegroom of our souls ? and they will not, cannot fail of what they have in charge : they are the army of heaven, the saints' own guard, the officers and soldiers of the Lord of hosts ; and therefore they will be sure to perform their trusts, we need not fear it.

6. Let us prepare and make ready for that glorious welcome which the angels will give us into glory : would you know how to prepare ? 1. Procure their joy by your conversion ? “ There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” The conversion of a sinner is the gratulation of angels ; and if they joy at your repentance, how much more will they joy to see you in heaven with them ! 2. Procure their love by the strictness and holiness of your lives ; live like angels ; bring soul and body, as near as may be, into a spiritual frame ;

this is the way of friends to procure welcomes here on earth, if they will but maintain a familiarity, and sympathy, and nearness, and likeness to one another in mind and manners: O thus do you, and then you may expect angels' welcome into that city of glory.

7. Wait upon God, with encouragement that one day the angels will present us to Christ in his throne without spot and blameless. It is now our complaint, Oh the sin whereof we are guilty! and oh wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death! but the day is coming when we shall be freed from these complaints. As Christ's ministers have a charge, and when they have done their work they will present to us Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 2. ; and as Christ himself hath a charge, and when he hath done his work, he will present us to himself, Judg. 24. and to his Father, Colos. 1. 22.: so the holy angels have a charge also, and when they have done their work, they will present us to Jesus Christ; how? even as ministers do, "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;" or as Christ himself doth, "that he might present us to himself a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish:" so will the angels do, "even present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Let us press on to perfection, even upon these hopes, that howsoever it is with us now, surely we shall be faultless, we shall be equal unto the angels, equal in grace, and equal in glory; for to that end will they present us to Christ in his throne, and accordingly will Christ pronounce his sentence, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

8. Praise we God for his mercy of angel-ministration from first to last. This we must do in heaven, only begin we this tune and ditty while we are upon earth; and if we cannot do it as we would, let us call in angels to join with us in blessing, praising, and admiring God: this was David's practice; "Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise ye him in the heights; praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts." The angels desire no better employment than such as this; they love to sing the tune of the gospel most; and therefore stir we up them, and stir we up ourselves with them, to be much in praises of our God. Surely he deserves a thousand thousand halleluias, and that we should bless him upon a thousand stringed instruments. Here is fuel enough; the Lord kindle a great fire in every one of our hearts, to inflame them with the love of such a God as this is! It was the last speech of dying Chrysostom; Glory be to God from all creatures! And if I should die this hour, I could wish my soul in no better temper: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in

strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul."

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CHAP. V.

SECT. I.—*Of the Ministration of Angels at our Resurrection.*

THE last period wherein the angels minister to saints, is, from the resurrection to the glorification of their souls and bodies in heaven. In this last, as in all the former, I shall observe,  
1. Their ministration. 2. Our duties.

I. For their ministration, we may consult these texts:—

“And he shall send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.”

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.—So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.—And I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

SECT. II.—*Of the Kinds of Angel-ministration at this Time.*

FOR the kinds of their ministration at this time:—

1. The angels will summon all the saints to appear before Jesus Christ, in his judgment-seat. This is done by the sound of a trumpet: “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.—The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” What this trumpet is, I have discussed elsewhere; and I take it to be metaphorical, viz. a sound formed in the air like the sound of a trumpet; and for the archangel, it is not so limited to one, but that all the archangels, and all the angels of God, are thereby understood. O the day, when all the angels shall be sent of Christ to bid all the world to appear before him! This is that voice on which Jerome so often meditated: Whether I eat, or drink, or whatsoever I do, methinks I always hear that voice of the trumpet sounding in mine ears, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” This is that voice, of which Chrysostom said, O the terrible trumpet, that all elements shall obey! it shall shake the world, rend the rocks, break the mountains, dissolve the bonds

of death, burst down the gates of hell, and unite all spirits to their own bodies. This voice shall take from death all her spoils, and cause her to restore again all that she hath taken away from the world. In this ministration the saints may rejoice; be it never so terrible to the wicked, it is nothing to them but an awakening out of a sleep; as if the angels should shout and say, Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the time of the singing of birds is come; arise, arise, ye saints, and come away.

2. The angels will gather all the saints together to the judgment-seat of Christ. In this are involved these particulars:

1. That the angels will collect the dust of all the bodies of the saints. This all the schoolmen hold. The collection of the dusts of the blessed is by the ministry of the blessed angels. They can move and remove bodies as they please. As gross and inferior bodies are in order governed by those that are superior and more subtle; so are all bodies ruled and disposed of by spirits endowed with life. Augustine goeth further, and says, that irrational spirits are governed by rational; and rational creatures that transgress, are governed by rational creatures that are just. Gregory joins with him, saying, invisible creatures do give motion and sense to carnal bodies which are visible; and so nothing is disposed of in this visible world, but by another creature which is invisible. Hence Aquinas concludes, that in all things which are corporally done of God, he is pleased to use the ministry of angels, and that therefore the gathering of the dust and the reparation of the bodies of all the saints, is only by the ministry of the angels at the resurrection-day. Come, Christians! keep faith and a good conscience; though men prevail over our bodies to kill them, and so scatter the ashes of them all the world over, let never any uncomfortable damp of slavish fear vex your blessed hearts: be not you afraid of evil tidings, or of destruction when it cometh; for the angels have a care of every piece, and part, and particle, of your bodies; not one hair of your heads, not one atom of the substance of those bodies you bear about you, shall be left in the grave, or in any part of the world, but it shall be gathered by angels, and brought together into one heap or lump.

2. That the angels will form, and fashion, and organize, those dusts so brought together, into perfect, complete, and solid bodies; this also is affirmed by schoolmen: 'Whatsoever appertains to the transmutation of bodies, as to the condensation of some parts, God is pleased therein to use the ministry of angels.' Indeed, the animation or enlivening of the body by the infusion of the soul, is (as they say) immediately of God, without any operation of angels; for as the soul was immediately created of God, so must the soul be again united to the body by the immediate hand of God himself; yet the collection, preparation, and reparation, of our bodies, are done by angels. O the power of

angels ! This eye shall be put to this head, and this hand to this arm, and this arm to this body, and so every part to part, and member to member, by the ministration of angels : What need we care if all these be eaten of worms, or serpents, or other creatures, yea, of cannibals, or savage men ? Certainly they must all be restored again ; I shall not want this eye, this hand, this finger, this joint, this nail on my finger's end, at the resurrection-day. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, (saith Ezekiel,) and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones ; and he caused me to pass by them round about, and behold there were very many in the open valley, and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live ? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest."—Then the Lord bade him prophecy, and as he prophesied "there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone, and then the sinews of the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them ;" and then the Lord bade him prophecy unto the wind, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." Why, thus will it be at the resurrection-day : the angels' ministry will be like the prophet's prophecy ; they will give a shout, and collect the bones, and then put them together, bone to his bone, and then cover them with sinews, and flesh, and skin ; only the breath or soul must be infused immediately by God himself, and then shall the saints live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

3. That the angels will bring the saints, thus raised, organized, and quickened, to Christ's judgment-seat. The apostle speaks home to this, "The dead in Christ shall rise first ; and then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." A willing welcome-force is here upon the saints, to transfer them, or carry them into the air, where Christ is in his throne : Now, how shall this be done ? Why, they shall be caught up, saith the apostle. By whom ? Some think by the clouds, as if the clouds should first descend, and then enwrap the saints, and so serve as chariots to carry them up to Christ in the air ; but I would rather think, by angels, as if the apostle should say, All the saints at the last day, both those raised and those changed, shall be caught up by the holy angels into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : And is not this agreeable to the words of Christ, that angels shall gather together his elect ? Whither together, but to the clouds, or to that place in the air where they shall meet the Lord ? O the blessed ministry of endeared angels ! They that before carried up Lazarus's soul into Abraham's bosom, must now carry up Lazarus's soul and body, yea, all the souls and bodies of all the saints, into the air, where shall be the blesseddest meeting that ever was ; there shall Christ meet with his saints, and never part again : indeed, here sometimes we meet, and anon we part ; now

he comes, and gives us the kisses of his mouth, but ere while he is gone, and we cry after him, "O where is he whom my soul loveth? I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I am sick of love: but when the angels shall bring us together at this day, we shall never part more; for we shall meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord."

4. The angels will separate the good and the bad, the sheep and goats. "They shall gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.—They shall sever the wicked from amongst the just." This separation is sometimes given to Christ, "he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set his sheep on the right-hand, but the goats on the left." Christ shall do it originally, but the angels ministerially, derivatively, and by way of execution; Christ commands it, and the angels accomplish it. O the joy, and O the horror, of this particular!—horror to the wicked, but O what joy will it be to the saints to meet together, and to see all the wicked in the world thrust out of their society! they were before thorns in their sides, and pricks in their eyes; many a tear did they cost the saints to see their wickedness; "Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because man keep not thy laws:" many a heart-grieving heart-vexing thought hath pierced the saints, to know their sinfulness; just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. Ah poor man, it was an hell to him, to dwell with Sodomites, for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. Well, but now they shall never grieve them, trouble them, vex them any more; the angels will not only deliver just Lot out of his ill neighbourhood for a time, but they will free all the righteous from all the unrighteous in the world for ever and ever: Not one Sodomite, nor one impenitent sinner, shall stand with Christ's sheep on his blessed right hand; never more shall the saints cry out, and say, "Woe is us, that we are constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have our habitations amongst the tents of Kedar;" but rather shall they go on with the Psalmist, and say as in the next verse, "Our souls have long dwelt with them that hate peace and holiness, but now we shall never dwell with them any more." This will be the angels' work at the last day, they will gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, all scandalous wretches, and vile persons, all froward hearts, and privy slanderers; all that have high looks, and proud hearts, all that David said he would throw out of his house, and from the city of the Lord, will they also throw out of the kingdom of God, and of Jesus Christ, that they molest not Christ's sheep any longer.

4. The angels will be spectators, admirers, witnesses, approvers, of the mystery of godliness, in the sentence of Christ on his saints. This piece or part of Christ's meditation in absolv-

ing saints, is amongst the rest of those great mysteries of godliness seen of angels. Seen? how seen? It is not a bare sight, but such a sight as astonisheth the understanding, and takes up the heart of blessed angels, "which things the angels desire to look unto;" their whole spirits are taken up with it, they cannot look off it, but stand, and view, and admire, and leap for joy to see the passages; they are wrapt up above themselves, to hear the blessed sentence coming out of Christ's mouth, "Come, ye blessed of my Father;" nor is that all, but as they see, so they witness and approve the acts and passages of Christ in rewarding saints, "I will confess them (saith Christ) before the angels of God;" that is, at the last day I will take them for mine, I will confess them to belong to me, I will pronounce on them the sentence of absolution, I will do to them as if a king should come in company, and choose out one, and salute him familiarly, and call him by his name, and take him by the hand, and confess him before all to be his friend; so will I confess the saints to be "my friends, my jewels, my peculiar treasure, my temple, and tabernacle, where I place my name, the dearly beloved of my soul, children of the kingdom, yea, the kingdom of heaven itself;" or, if more honour can be given them, I will confess them to be "my garden, my vineyard, my spouse, my second self, one with me, as I and my Father are one:" And be ye witnesses of this my sentence, O ye angels! I would have you to take notice of it, to see it, behold it, hear it, admire at it, and to witness with what equity and proportion I deal with saints; they confessed me before men, I confess them before angels: they are not ashamed of me, nor of my name, before kings and princes, and therefore now I am not ashamed of them, nor of their name; so far am I from blotting their name out of the book of life, that now I "confess their name before my Father, and before his angels!" Witness it, O ye angels, yea, and approve of it, consent to my sentence, acknowledge my goodness, justice, mercy, in saving these souls, by saying Amen, and bidding them welcome into heaven, and then you have done with your ministration.

At this last passage the angels receive that augmentation of joy, of which some divines have written. Hall and Andrews, stars of great magnitude in this orb of the English church, have both supposed, that angels themselves shall receive an augmentation of happiness at the day of the last judgment, when they shall be freed from all their charge, and employments. As rest is the end of all motion, so the perfection of blessedness consists in rest, and therefore the angels being now discharged of that charge which they took at the beginning, they have no more to do, but in one choir to join with the saints, and everlastingly to sing halleluiah, and again halleluiah, and amen halleluiah.

SECT. III.—*Of the Duties that concern us in this respect.*

II. FOR the duties that concern us in this respect:—

1. Meditate as if you heard the angels sounding their trumpets, and saying, Come out of your graves, and appear before Jesus Christ your judge. Surely these ministering spirits, these especial messengers, these new-covenant officers, that now wait on us, and as tender nurses will ere long lay us asleep in the bed of the grave, will in the morning of the resurrection awake us out of sleep, and say to us, as the angel to John, Come up hither. And is not this worthy our morning thoughts, or evening thoughts, or midnight thoughts? When we are awake in the night, and compassed with darkness, and all is quiet and still, suppose then we heard the sound of angels shouting in the air, Now, souls, come to your sentence, either of eternal weal, or eternal woe. Methinks this meditation should work and make every one of us say, Lord, if it were thus, what would become of my soul? In what case were I? In what condition were I, if the angel now sounded? Was my repentance such when I went to bed, as that now I dare look the Judge in the face? was my faith so active, or is it now so strong, that I can with confidence go to Christ, and say, Speak, Lord, speak out the doom that thou intendest to pass upon my soul, for I trust in thee. If so, it is well; the Lord keep us continually in such a prepared frame: but if it be otherwise, O let us think of it, and prepare for it; let us not put off repentance from day to day, but let the instant or present moment be the time of turning from all sin to God, and let us become now, even now, as we would wish to be then, “when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” It were a blessed meditation that would work us into such a frame; now the Lord come in, and both set us at it, and appear to us in it.

2. Cheer up, ye saints, “Arise, shine, for your light is coming, and the glory of the Lord will rise upon you:—who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” No sooner is the summons given, but all the saints “shall be gathered together from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to another.” O what a sight will it be to see the eastern saints, and western saints, and northern saints, and southern saints, flying on the wings of angels, to Christ on his throne! Why, here is matter of joy: if our evidences are but clear, if we are but assured that he that is our Judge, hath shed his blood for us, and given himself for us, I wonder that we are not more spiritually cheerful. Come, though the world scatter us, persecute us, drive us to hills and holes, yet we shall meet together at the great marriage-supper of the Lamb, and there will be joy indeed; the very four-thoughts of this should, methinks, fill our hearts with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; “Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.—Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb; these are the true sayings of God.” Blessed sayings! in which, if we open the eye of faith, we may

see matter of truest joy, and spiritual ravishment: we are all invited, if we are but saints, to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. "Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God:" If you say, how should we come, that must die, and lie buried in graves, till we rot, and return to our first principles? I answer, these remoras will not, cannot hinder; for our very dusts shall be carefully gathered by the hands of angels; and when they are gathered and brought together, they shall be put into form and fashion, far better and perfecter than now they are, by the ministration of angels; and when they are formed, and fashioned, and revived, and spiritualized, we shall be caught up by the angels into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, thus far will the angels minister to us; and therefore, what should hinder but that we must all meet him, and feast with him? And if so, how merry should we be in the mean time, who are admitted, and invited, to this gracious and glorious feast! Away, away, all horrors of guiltiness, false fears, slavish terrors, damps, and droopings! Christians! we must part, and for a time lie and sleep in solitude and rottenness, but we shall meet again; there will be such a congregation of saints at the last day, as never was since the world's creation; and as we hope to be a part of that general assembly, and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, let us now rejoice in the Lord, and again rejoice.

3. Comply with the angels in separating yourselves from the society of the wicked. I know the command, "Let both grow together until the harvest;" the angels do not, nor must they separate the wheat and tares before the last day, but then will God say to his reapers, "Gather thee together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." Come then, and do you know on your part that which the angels will do on their part at the last day. You will say, What, would I have you separatists? I answer, not in opinions, or heterodox doctrines, but in conversation; my meaning is, I would not have you to run with the world into the same excess of riot; "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or extortioner, I would have you with such an one not to keep company, no, not to eat. And yet that I be not mistaken, some kind of society, or familiarity, I allow withal; there is a society, more common, and cold, and general, as in trading, bargaining, buying, selling, &c. And this, Christians must needs exercise with the men of this world, except they will go out of the world: but there is a society more special, dear, and intimate, and in this respect "I have written to you (saith the apostle) not to keep company with fornicators," (*i. e.*) not to have any ordinary, voluntary, friendly, dear, and intimate society with them. Alas! who in his right wits would run upon a man, whom he sees hath the plague-sore running upon him? And what Christian in his right mind spiritually, having any fear of God in his heart, life in his soul, or

tenderness in his conscience, would delightfully thrust himself into the company of wicked men? It was writ of Jesus Christ, that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." And such a separatist was David, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked." And indeed to think of the angels' work at the last day, it were enough to make us comply, and to prepare for such a work all the days of our life. Oh what should we do with them in our hearts, and dearest thoughts, who shall have no better companions hereafter than devils and the damned!

4. Confess Christ before men, that he may confess you at the last day before the angels of God; you may think you are in prosperity, and flourish, you fear not martyrdom, there is not the least occasion of the confession of Christ, his truth, and gospel, unto death, or danger, as the word imports: and therefore this last advice is not seasonable. But I answer, 1. We see the boldness of our common adversaries: error on all hands grows insolent, and proud, and daring; so that now God calls to us from heaven 'Who is on my side? who?' 2. We know not how soon occasion may be both for confession and martyrdom. One observes, that 'usually before any great persecution befell the church, the holy men of those times observed, that there was some great decay of zeal, and of the power of godliness, or some mutual contentions and quarrels amongst the people of God, or some such sin or other that provoked God against them; and then, as the shepherd sets his dog upon the sheep, when they go astray, to bring them in, so God lets loose wicked persecutors upon his own children, to bring them in unto himself. And he applies this to ourselves. It is true (saith he) through God's mercy, we yet enjoy the gospel of peace, and the peace of the gospel; but how short a time it may continue, no man knows—this we know, that schisms, heresies, and blasphemies, never abounded more in the church of England than at this day, that the spirit of division never raged more, that profaneness never more outfaced the glorious sunshine of the gospel, than at this day; and surely these are the forerunners of judgment.' O then let us learn this lesson, as we would have comfort at the last day! Come what will come, let us confess him before men; let no creature make us to deny the Lord Jesus Christ; if his truth call for it, let us stand it out against all his enemies, yea, even against the gates of hell, and devil and all. And then we may comfortably hope, that when Christ shall come in the clouds with his mighty angels, he will confess us, and pronounce a blessed sentence upon us, before God, angels, and men. *Amen, even so be it. Amen, and Amen.*