

"UNDER HIS WINGS."

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find shelter." – Psa. 91:4.

In the midst of the "perilous times" of this "evil day," and of the warning voices of prophets and apostles pointing out snares and pestilences and subtle dangers on every hand – and in the midst, too, of a realizing sense of the actual existence of such evil besetments and perils – how precious to the saints are the assurances of divine protection and care and personal love.

We call to mind the gracious promises of our Lord – "The Father himself loveth you;" "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom;" and "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him;...and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him....Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." – John 16:27; 14:21,23,27; Luke 12:32.

But warning voices and wholesome counsel are also necessary; and he is not wise who turns a deaf ear to them, and takes cognizance alone of the comforting assurances which are designed only for those who faithfully "watch and pray lest they enter into temptation." Every soldier of the cross needs to heed the Apostle's warnings – "Take unto you the whole armor of God, *that ye may be able to withstand* in the evil day, and having done all to stand;" and again, "Let us *fear* lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;" and fear also "lest, as the serpent [Satan] *beguiled* Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;" "for *grievous*

wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." "Behold," said our Lord, "I send you forth as sheep *in the midst of wolves*: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." – Eph. 6:13; Heb. 4:1; 2 Cor. 11:3; Acts 20:29,30; Matt. 10:16.

It is necessary for the discipline, trial and final proving of the Church of God that they should be subjected to these adverse influences; for to him that *overcometh* them is the promise of the great reward. If we would reign with Christ, we must prove our worthiness to reign by the same tests of loyalty to God, of faith in his Word, of zeal for the truth, of patient endurance of reproach and persecution, even unto death, and of unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt his Church in due time. To such faithful ones are the blessed consolations of Psa. 91. Hearken –

Verse 1. "He who abideth in the secret place of the Most High [typified by the Most Holy or Sanctuary] shall rest under the shadow of the Almighty." We thus place ourselves under the divine protection when, having come to a knowledge of God's willingness to accept **[R1432 : page 228]** us as his children, we gratefully accept the invitation and approach in his appointed way, through Christ our Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves fully to his service. Such may sweetly rest in the precious promises of God, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 1:20.) The world does not see the overshadowing wings of divine protection, but the faithful have a blessed secret realization of it. Praise the Lord!

Verse 2. "I [Christ Jesus, whom David here, as elsewhere, personifies, and who thus addresses his body, his Church] will say of Jehovah, who is my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I ever trust" (John 20:17) –

Verse 3. "That he will surely deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, [From the deceptions of Satan, in which all those not protected shall stumble; for our Lord said that so subtle and deceptive will they be that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. But this is not possible, for those who are making their calling and election sure abide under the protection of the Almighty.] and from the pestilence of destruction." [Not from the destructive pestilences of physical disease, but from the moral and spiritual pestilences of destruction – from the sinful propensities of the old nature which in unguarded moments are liable to assert their mastery and overwhelm the souls of those who are not *abiding* under the secret protection of the Most High; and from the spiritual pestilences of false doctrine which, with subtle sophistry, destroy the faith of the unwatchful. Such pestilences are already abroad in the shape of so-called Christian Science, Spiritualism and the various no-ransom theories which take the name of The Larger Hope, and which bid fair, both from present prospects and from the prophetic outlook, ere long to become epidemic. From all these pestilences the Lord's elect shall be protected, resting sweetly under the shadow of the Almighty.]

Verse 4. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find shelter. [So close to his heart does Jehovah gather his loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of his love, and the responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in thy tabernacle" – under thy protection – "forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings; for thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy; for thou hast heard my vows" – my consecration – "thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name." – Psa. 61:4,3,5.] His truth shall be thy shield and buckler" – thy protection. Yes, his truth – that grand system of truth comprised in the divine plan of the ages – is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is the armor of God which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on – to appropriate, to meditate upon

and to store up the truth in mind and heart – that they may be able, by its use, to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day.

Verse 5. "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night [the dark night of which the Prophet Isaiah and also the Lord spoke, saying, "The morning" – the Millennial morning – "cometh, and also the night" – the great time of trouble which shall immediately precede it, the night "wherein no man can labor" for the dissemination of divine truth: so great will be "the terror," the tumult and trouble and persecution of that night – Isa. 21:12; John 9:4]; nor for the arrow ["even bitter words" of the opponents of the truth – Psa. 64:3] that flieth by day" [at the present time, which, in comparison with the dark night that is coming, is called day];

Verse 6. "Nor for the pestilence [moral and spiritual] that walketh in darkness [that spreads and makes its victims among those who are ignorant of the truth, or who are unfaithful to it and hence unworthy of it, and who therefore lack the divine protection and are subject to the "strong delusions" of error – 2 Thes. 2:11]; nor for the destruction [caused by these pestilences] that wasteth at noon-day [that subverts the faith and hope of many, just when the light of divine truth is shining clearest upon the faithful, as it is shining upon us to-day].

Verse 7. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand [so great **[R1432 : page 229]** will be the falling away from the truth, even among those who, like ourselves, received it once with joy and who did for a time run well]; but it shall not come nigh thee." – Because of thy loyalty and uncompromising faithfulness and because of the ample armor of truth and righteousness, thou shalt stand and not fall.

Verse 8. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the recompense of the wrongdoers" – who reject the truth or who prove unfaithful to it.

Verses 9,10. "Because thou hast said, 'The Lord is my protection;' because the Most High thou hast made thy refuge, no evil shall befall thee" [no evils of the kind above referred to; and any other seeming evils shall, under divine providence, work together for your good – Rom. 8:28].

Verse 11. "For he shall give his angels [his messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways. [That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give an account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart God's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord our Shepherd will care for the true sheep.

Verse 12. "They shall bear thee [all the members of the body of Christ, individually and collectively] up in their hands [using their strength], lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" – any stumbling-stone of false doctrine, and especially that great fundamental rock-doctrine of the redemption through the precious blood of Christ; – that "rock of offence and stone of stumbling" to both the houses of nominal Israel (fleshly and spiritual). (Isa. 8:14.) The "feet" of the body are its last members: the saints now living are members of the "*feet* of Him" (Christ), the ones who are now in danger of being stumbled, as the feet of the Jewish house of servants were in danger in the end or harvest of the Jewish age.

How do such messengers of the Lord bear up the feet of Christ? By helping them to a clear understanding of the truth, and teaching and encouraging them by word and example how to be faithful to the truth, and how to run so as to obtain the prize of our high calling.

Verse 13. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." – Thus borne up in the hands of the Lord's faithful messengers and guarded by their vigilant watchfulness, and under the constant protection of the Most High, God's trusting, faithful children shall triumph over every device of Satan either to overpower or to beguile them – whether he boisterously goes about as a roaring lion, or, whether, serpent-like, he stealthily lurks about to insert his venomous poison.

Verse 14. "Because he hath set his love upon me [saith Jehovah], therefore will I deliver him [from the pestilence, etc.]: I will set him on high [exalt him to joint-heirship with Christ, make him a member of the "Royal Priesthood," and a "partaker of the divine nature"], because he hath known [appreciated] my name."

Verses 15,16. "He shall call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life [eternal life – John 10:28,29; Rom. 2:1] will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation" – make him understand my plan.

Praise the Lord for such assurances of his loving care! Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name!

The great Infidel-Philosopher *Herbert Spencer* sees the trouble coming and helps fulfil our Lord's prediction, Luke 21:26. He says: –

"Since I began to write there has been a clear reaction against individual liberty. We are certainly tending toward State Socialism, which will be a worse form of tyranny than that of any government now recognized in civilization. At present the State is absorbing the individual activity of men. It is intermeddling in all manner of ways in what should be private enterprise. Gradually the State will usurp the functions of private enterprise to such an extent that the people will one day awake to it; but it will be long before they will make an effective resistance. I can not but think that the trouble will be severe – something terrible to contemplate; but I do not begin to set a date for the catastrophe, or to anticipate its horrors."

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RESIGNATION

Source of my life's refreshing springs,
Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad, but not in Thee.

Well may Thine own beloved, who see
In all their lot their Father's pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
Their living, everlasting treasure.

Well may Thy happy children cease
From restless wishes prone to sin,
And, in Thine own exceeding peace,
Yield to Thy daily discipline.

We need as much the cross we bear
As air we breathe – as light we see:
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in Thee.
