The Hand that Intervenes

by

William A. Spicer

“He is the Living God, and steadfast forever . . He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.” Daniel 6:26-27.

There are 260 remarkable stories of God’s care for His earthly children in this special book. It will provide you with renewed courage and trust in God—every time you open its pages.
Some of the features in this book, not in the original:
Large print edition • Gloss hardback binding • All the pictures in the original edition, plus many more • 43 full-size pictures, 75 illustrations in all • Over 100 helpful Bible promises scattered throughout the book • Plus: God’s Hand in History, and The Basic Steps to Christ (in the author’s words).

About the cover: We are presented with two familiar Biblical scenes. Daniel and David were young people who had dedicated their lives to God; and both were repeatedly guided in the midst of serious personal crises in their lives.

How often we worry ourselves out of the protecting hand of God! This book will inspire you with that which you so much need: a deepened trust in God’s care and a determination to remain faithful to Him amid all the problems of life.

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A Psalm of Deliverance

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress:  
My God; in Him will I trust.
Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,  
And from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with His feathers,  
And under His wings shalt thou trust:  
His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
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 noonday.
A thousand shall fall at thy side,  
And ten thousand at thy right hand;  
But it shall not come nigh thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold  
And see the reward of the wicked.
Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge,  
Even the Most High, thy habitation;  
There shall no evil befall thee.
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For He shall give His angels charge over thee.  
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands,  
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder:  
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon Me,  
Therefore will I deliver him:
I will set him on high, because he hath known My name.  
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 will I satisfy him,  
And show him My salvation.

Psalm 91
And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.” Luke 22:43.
Introduction

The author of this book, William A. Spicer (1865-1952) went as a missionary to England in 1887; and later, in 1892, he became foreign mission secretary. As part of his work for the next 30 years until 1922, he traveled all over the world, encouraging and helping foreign missionaries. During his visits, he would ask if the missionaries and their workers knew of incidents in which God had especially protected His earthly children.

From a large collection of carefully prepared notes, Elder Spicer eventually wrote the book you now have in hand. You will find it to be a real treasure-house of encouragement!

This book is full of examples of God’s intervention in the affairs of men down through the ages. Many times God has stepped in and saved His followers from great perils. (He has very likely protected you many times, sometimes without your knowing it.)

This is a book which will rejoice your heart and bring you fresh courage. It is a book to share with your loved ones.

— The Publisher
DANIEL PROTECTED

“My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.” Daniel 6:22.
The Hand of a Living God in the Earth

Speeding by train at night to join fellow workers beset with perplexity and peril, a missionary in India asked God to send a message for the hour as he should open the Bible and place his finger upon a text. It was the one such appeal, he says, of a lifetime. Lifting the open Book close to the lamp dimly burning at the top of the railway carriage, he found his finger resting upon words that he seemed never to have read or heard before—a message of comfort and assurance for the hour:

“He is the living God, and steadfast forever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” Daniel 6:26, 27.

We open the Word of God, and what do we find? From cover to cover, the Scriptures bear witness to a living God who is guiding, intervening, watching over His children, stretching forth His hand to deliver in time of need, showing Himself “a very present help in trouble,” overruling in human affairs, and working
signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.

Believers too often—perhaps almost unconsciously—feel in their hearts that it was all divinely natural that in Bible times angelic messengers were sent to help and deliver, prison doors were swung open, food was sent by ravens, or the deadly viper was shaken off the apostle’s unscathed hand; but that now, since Bible times, these special interpositions of God’s providence are hardly to be expected.

But the God who led His people of old, who actually did things on earth for those who needed help and put their trust in Him, is the living God today. He is able to send deliverances and to work wondrously by His intervening providences. In the words of the good old hymn, our souls may call to Him:

“Is not Thy grace as mighty now
As when Elijah felt its power?
When glory beamed from Moses’ brow,
Or Job endured the trying hour?

“Remember, Lord, the ancient days;
Renew Thy work, Thy grace restore;
And while to Thee our hearts we raise,
On us Thy Holy Spirit pour.”

The preservation of the stories of providential deliverances and interventions in the Bible narrative show that God desires His people to keep these things in remembrance, that they may learn to know Him as a God “at hand” and “not a God afar off.” Jer. 23:23. Israel of old were to sing of these mercies,—how over and over, in time of need, the Lord had sent deliverance.

“Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.
“And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

“O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”—Psalm 107:5-8.

And the inspired psalmist closes this recount of providential deliverances on land and sea, from the wrath of men and from the misfortunes of life, with the exhortation:

“Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.”—Psalm 107:43.

“O My people, remember now,” saith the Lord in the later history of Israel (Micah 6:5), reminding them of the providential deliverances in the days of their fathers. It was ever the basis of the appeal to believe and trust in times of crisis. On Mt. Carmel, Elijah appealed to the people to stand by the God of their fathers—“God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel”—whose wonders in the days of old every parent was to teach his children.

In his poem, “Elijah,” Robert Davidson puts into the prophet’s mouth an appeal which lists some of these ancient providences more graphically and briefly than prose can do:

“I charge you by these grand old memories Which cluster round our nation’s history: Can you forget the wonders and the signs; The land of bondage, and the pilgrim march; The pillared cloud; the separated sea; The thundered law, and Sinai in a blaze; The manna and the rock; the swollen flood Of Jordan parted in the midst; the walls Of Jericho at seventh circuit fall’n;
The giant Anakims, the banded kings, 
Vanquished by Israel’s victorious arms?

“Can you forget, O Israel! who nursed 
Your weakness into strength, on eagle’s wings 
And bear you, like a mother overwatched, 
And to your present greatness led your steps? 
Will you forsake Jehovah, Lord of hosts?”

“O My people, remember,” is the Lord’s word concerning all His mercies. In every age of which we have the story, we shall find the bright record of inspiring providences. Especially in times of crisis in God’s work and of darkness, divine providences shine out like stars on a dark night. “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.”

The truth of a living God, able to save, was joy and comfort to believers in the days of the Reformation struggles. In the reign of Queen Mary of England, a believer named Woodman was brought before the Bishop of Chichester’s court for his faith. He used the phrase “living God.”

“There,” said Dr. Story, the prosecuting chancellor; “this is a heretic indeed! He hath the right terms of all heretics, ‘the living God.’ ”

“Be you angry with me,” replied Woodman, “because I speak words which are written in the Bible?”

“Bible-babble, Bible-babble!” retorted the learned ecclesiastic. “What speakest thou of the Bible? There is no such word written in all the Bible.”

“Woodman quoted the scripture, ‘My heart and my flesh crieth for the living God.’ The doctor only abused him the more violently for his acquaintance with Scripture, and cried out, ‘Send him to prison!’

How was it that this phrase, “the living God,” had become to the persecuting ecclesiastic a sign of her-
esy? Evidently the believers of that day, turning from the far-removed, unseeing deity of scholastic theology, had laid hold with all their hearts upon the truth that the true God is the living God, a present help, a Saviour in time of trouble, one with whom a needy sinner may commune in prayer, with no order of priests, or saints, or angels between.

In those times of storm and stress they needed a living God who is able to do things for His children, to bring actual salvation from sin, deliverance, or sustained comfort and grace amid peril and persecution.

We may rejoice that the bishop's chancellor has left the record that those early confessors loved that blessed truth so much that the phrase, "the living God," came ever naturally to their lips. We, too, need to know by experience that God is the living God, whose voice speaks in the living Word.

The story of modern missions especially abounds with instances of providential deliverance. As missionaries have gone forth into the wilds, following in the footprints of the apostolic missionaries of the days of the book of Acts, they have found the same Master with them, the same hand of Providence stretched forth that appears everywhere in the ancient story. Speaking of these experiences, Professor Warneck, one of the historians of modern missions, says:

"The reader of missionary news will frequently come upon instances of such things, reminding him of the experiences of Old and New Testament messengers of God. Such experiences strengthen the faith of missionaries and their helpers in their many trials, striving with the dark powers of heathenism, unsupported by Christian fellowship.

"The critic will find it easy to assail these acts of God, but they are precious to those who experience
them, mission workers, Christians, and heathen, and they produce blessed and permanent results."—*The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism*, p. 176.

True it is that the critic may easily question these stories of providences, whether of the mission fields or of other fields of experience. The narratives are generally personal testimonies to experiences that cannot well be argued about. The experience is recorded, and the narrative must be its own witness. It is easy to say a thing merely “happened so;” but to the believer in need of help or comfort, there comes in the experience a precious token that there is One who knows and who cares.

In mercies and deliverances, where the worldly sees perhaps only good fortune, a happy chance, the believer recognizes a providential hand and gives thanks to God. The prophet Isaiah (in the language of the Revised Version of Isaiah 65:11) rebuked those who in ancient times regarded the god of fortune, or chance:

“Ye that forsake Jehovah, that forget My holy mountain, that prepare a table for Fortune [Gad, the ancient god of chance], and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny.”

What a failure to honor God it would be should the Lord send an angel from heaven to clear the way for a child of God or to bring about some favoring condition or deliverance, and that child of His fail to see His hand and take it all as a mere working of chance!

Men of state affairs, as well as religious workers, have left their testimony to providential interventions. More than once Abraham Lincoln told of special interpositions of a divine hand in the midst of the great crisis through which he was called to hold the helm of
state. He once said:

“That the Almighty does make use of human agencies, and directly intervenes in human affairs, is one of the plainest statements of the Bible. I have had so many evidences of this, so many instances of being ordered by some supernatural power, that I cannot doubt this power is of God.”—L.E. Chittendon, Recollections of President Lincoln, p. 450.

Speaking of timed messages for the hour of need, Mr. Gladstone said:

“Who doubts that, times without number, particular portions of Scripture find their way to the human soul as if they were embassies from on high, each with its own commission of comfort, of guidance, or of warning?”

It is special, revealed providences, so to speak, that we recount in these pages. We recognize the daily care, the continual providences, of life; but we may not always, or even often, be able to read these unrevealed providences. Some day we shall understand them all; not now.

“Sometime, when all life’s lessons have been learned,
And sun and stars forevermore have set,
The things which our weak judgments here have spurned,
The things o’er which we grieved with lashes wet,
Will flash before us out of life’s dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue;
And we shall see how all God’s plans are right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true.

“But not today. Then be content, poor heart!
God’s plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the chalices of gold.
And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
When we shall clearly see and understand,
I think that we will say, ‘God knew the best!’ ”
It has been truly said of these unrevealed provi-
dences:

“We can never by searching find out God. He does
not lay open His plans to prying, inquisitive minds.
We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand
the curtain behind which He veils His majesty. The
apostle exclaims, ‘How unsearchable are His judg-
ments, and His ways past finding out!’ It is a proof of
His mercy that there is the hiding of His power, that
He is enshrouded in the awful clouds of mystery and
obscurity; for to lift the curtain that conceals the di-
vine presence is death. No mortal mind can penetrate
the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works.

“We can comprehend no more of His dealings with
us and the motives that actuate Him, than He sees fit
to reveal. He orders everything in righteousness, and
we are not to be dissatisfied and distrustful, but to
bow in reverent submission. He will reveal to us as
much of His purposes as it is for our good to know;
and beyond that we must trust the hand that is om-
nipotent, the heart that is full of love.”—*Testimonies

The story of special providences is surely a timely
theme in these stressful days. We gain confidence and
strengthen faith by recounting the delivering and guid-
ing mercies of the Lord as He has wondrously worked
in all past ages. The Lord Himself puts into the mouths
of believers the prayer for these latter days:

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;
awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of
old. Art Thou not it that hath cut Rahab [Egypt], and
wounded the dragon? Art Thou not it which hath dried
the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made
the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass
over?"—Isaiah 51:9-10.

And the Lord responds to this prayer of His own
teaching:

“Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return,
and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy
shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness
and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

“I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou,
that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die,
and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;
and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched
forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the

Reviewing the providential deliverances of past
days, we may the more confidently, in the eventful days
before us, rest our hearts upon the steadying truth:

“The world is not without a ruler. The program of
coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Maj-
esty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as
the concerns of His church, in His own charge.”—5
Testimonies, p. 753.

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising
God for all the things that they had heard and seen.”
—Luke 2:20

“Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion:
declare among the people His doings.”
—Psalm 9:11

“Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His
doings among the people, and make mention that
His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath
done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.”
—Isaiah 12:4-5
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL
“The angel of His presence saved them.” Isaiah 63:9.
"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Hebrews 1:14.

Through all Scripture we catch frequent glimpses of angels, tireless in their ministry for God to man. At times they appeared in form visible to the natural eye; but more often they were seen in vision or dream. Sometimes they came in the guise of men; so that, as the apostle says, men entertaining strangers “have entertained angels unawares.”

The men and women of Bible times to whom the angels ministered have passed away. But where are the angels who wrought with them, seen and unseen? Still alive, thank God; and still ministering spirits,—“all” of them, the whole “innumerable company,”—going to and fro between heaven and earth as in ancient days.

**A TIMELY VISITANT**

Discussing the ministry of angels, in his commentary on the book of Daniel, Melanchthon, the associate of Luther, tells of the providential deliverance of
Simon Grynaeus, of the University of Heidelberg. Grynaeus had come to the Diet of Spires, in the year 1529. This was the year in which the famous protest of the Protestant princes was presented.

The clerical champion of the Catholic side at the council was Faber, bishop of Vienna, who violently opposed the reformed teaching. Grynaeus one day remonstrated privately with Faber concerning positions he had taken. Faber, on learning the name of his visitor, who was famous as a scholar and reformer, pretended he desired to confer with him more at leisure, and invited him to come to his lodging next day. Grynaeus gladly promised to do so. Melanchthon says:

“When he was departed from Faber, he came straightway unto us, and was scarcely set at the table (for it was supper time), reciting a part of his talk with Faber unto me and others there present, when I, sitting with my company, was suddenly called out of the parlor by a certain ancient fatherly man, who, showing a singular gravity in his countenance, words, and behavior, spake unto me, and said that the sergeants would by and by come unto our lodging, being sent by the king’s commandment, to carry Grynaeus to prison, whom Faber had accused to the king: commanding that Grynaeus should straightways depart out of the town; and exhorted me that we should in no case delay the time.

“And so, bidding me farewell, departed. But what old man this was, neither did I know then, nor afterward could I understand.

“I, returning again unto my company, bade them rise, and told them what the old man had said unto me.

“By and by, we, taking Grynaeus in the midst of us, carried him through the street to the river Rhine,
where after we had staid [stayed] upon the hither bank awhile, until Grynaeus with his companion were carried over in a small boat. Returning again to our lodging, we understood that the sergeants had been there, when we were but a little way gone out of the house.

"Now in what great danger Grynaeus should have been, if he had been carried to prison by this cruelty of Faber, every man easily may conjecture: wherefore we judged that that most cruel intent and purpose of him was disappointed by God's merciful providence. And as I cannot say what old man it was that gave me that warning, even so likewise the sergeants made such quick speed, that except Grynaeus had been covered and defended by the angels, through the marvelous providence of God, he could never have escaped.

"Concerning the truth of this matter, there be many good men yet alive, which know both the same, and also were present at the doing thereof. Therefore let us give thanks unto God, which hath given us His angels to be our keepers and defenders."—Acts and Monuments, by John Foxe, Vol. VIII, pp. 568, 569.

The calm scholar and theologian of the German Reformation, Melanchthon, was not the man to be misled by fancy; and all the setting of the case convinced him, beyond a doubt, that an angel of the Lord had brought the warning and pointed the way of escape.

**A COMPANION IN TROUBLE**

In the early days of Methodism, a minister of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, John Jones, of Flintshire, was traveling on horseback through a desolate region in northern Wales. According to his account, reprinted years ago in the London Christian Herald, he observed a rough-looking man, armed with a reaping hook, following him on the other side of a hedge,
aiming to come up with him at a gate where it was necessary for the horseman to dismount.

The minister had a bag of money which he had collected for a chapel building, and felt that not only the money, but possibly his life, was in danger. He stopped his horse, and bowed his head to pray for special aid and protection. The horse was restive to go on. And, on looking up after a moment of silent prayer, Jones saw a horseman on a white steed immediately alongside. He was surprised and unable to account for the sudden and welcome appearance of a companion at such a moment. He says:

“I described to the stranger the dangerous position in which I had been placed, and how relieved I felt by his sudden appearance. He made no reply; and on looking at his face, I saw that he was intently gazing in the direction of the gate. I followed his gaze, and saw the reaper emerge from his concealment, and run across a field to our left. He had evidently seen that I was no longer alone, and had given up his intended attempt.

“All cause for alarm being now removed, I endeavored to enter into conversation with my deliverer, but again without the slightest success. Not a word did he give me in reply. I continued talking, however, as we rode toward the gate, though I utterly failed to see any reason for, and indeed felt rather hurt at, his silence. Only once did I hear his voice. Having watched the reaper disappear over the brow of a neighboring hill, I turned to my companion, and said, ‘Can it for a moment be doubted that my prayer was heard, and that you were sent for my deliverance by the Lord?’ Then the horseman uttered the single word, ‘Amen.’ Not another word did he give, though I continued endeavoring to get from him replies to my questions,
both in English and in Welsh.

“We were now approaching the gate. I hurried on my horse for the purpose of opening it, and having done so, waited for him to pass through; he came not. I turned my head to seek for him—he was gone. I was dumbfounded. I looked back in the direction from which we had just been riding; he was not to be seen. He could not have gone through the gate, nor have made his horse leap the high hedges which on both sides shut in the road. Where was he? Could it be possible that I had seen no man or horse at all, and the vision was but a creature of my imagination? I tried hard to convince myself that this was the case, but in vain; for unless someone had been with me, why had the reaper, with his murderous-looking sickle, hurried away? No; this horseman was no creature of mine. Who could he have been?

“I asked myself this question again and again, and then a feeling of profound awe began to creep over my soul. I remembered the singular manner in which he first appeared. I recollected his silence, and then again that single word to which he had given utterance had been elicited from him by mentioning the name of the Lord, and that this was the only occasion on which I had done so. What could I then believe? But one thing, and that was that my prayer had been heard, and that help had indeed been sent me at a time of peril. Full of this thought, I dismounted, and throwing myself on my knees at the side of the road, offered up a prayer of thankfulness to Him who had so signally preserved me from danger.

“I then mounted my horse and continued on my journey. Through the years that have elapsed since that memorable July day, I have never for an instant wavered in the belief that I had a special providential
There is the ring of genuineness in this testimony. Not a few times in the Bible story were human eyes opened to see the presence of the angel messengers. But our faith in the ministry of angels rests on no visible signs or impressions of the senses. We have the far-surer word of the Lord that all the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.

ANGELS ON GUARD

The following story of deliverance is preserved in the records of missionary pioneering in the Dutch East Indies, the populous islands which give Holland a dominion in the Orient. The incident occurred in the life of Von Asselt, a Rhenish missionary in Sumatra from 1856-1876, and was related by him when on a visit to Lübeck. The account was recently reproduced in the *Sontags-blatt fürs Hans*.

“When I first was sent to Sumatra, in the year 1856, I was the first European missionary to go among the wild Battaks, although twenty years prior, two American missionaries had come to them with the gospel; but they had been killed and eaten. Since then no effort had been made to bring the gospel to these people, and naturally they had remained the same cruel savages.

“What it means for one to stand alone among a savage people, unable to make himself understood, not understanding a single sound of their language, but whose suspicious, hostile looks and gestures speak only a too-well-understood language,—yes, it is hard for one to realize that. The first two years which I spent among the Battaks (at first all alone and afterward with my wife) were so hard that it makes me shudder even now when I think of them. Often it seemed as if
we were not only encompassed by hostile men, but also by hostile powers of darkness; for often an inexplicable, unutterable fear would come over us, so that we had to get up at night, and go on our knees to pray or read the Word of God, in order to find relief.

"After we had lived in this place for two years, we moved several hours' journey inland, among a tribe somewhat civilized, who received us more kindly. There we built a small house with three rooms,—a living-room, a bedroom, and a small reception-room;—and life for us became a little more easy and cheerful.

"When I had been in this new place for some months, a man came to me from the district where we had been, and whom I had known there. I was sitting on the bench in front of our house; and he sat down beside me, and for a while talked of this, that, and the other. Finally he began: ‘Now, tuan [teacher], I have yet one request.’

" ‘And what is that?’

" ‘I would like to have a look at your watchmen close at hand.’

" ‘What watchmen do you mean? I do not have any.’

" ‘I mean the watchmen whom you station around your house at night, to protect you.’

" ‘But I have no watchmen,’ I said again; ‘I have only a little herdboy and a little cook, and they would make poor watchmen.’

"Then the man looked at me incredulously, as if he wished to say: ‘O, do not try to make me believe otherwise; for I know better.’

"Then he asked: ‘May I look through your house, to see if they are hid there?’

" ‘Yes, certainly,’ I said, laughing; ‘look through it; you will not find anybody.’ So he went in and searched in every corner, even through the beds, but came to
me very much disappointed.

"Then I began a little probing myself, and requested him to tell me the circumstances about those watchmen of whom he spoke, and this is what he related to me:

" 'When you first came to us, Tuan, we were very angry at you. We did not want you to live among us; we did not trust you, and believed you had some design against us. Therefore we came together, and resolved to kill you and your wife. Accordingly, we went to your house night after night; but when we came near, there stood always, close around the house, a double row of watchmen with glittering weapons, and we did not venture to attack them to get into your house. But we were not willing to abandon our plan; so we went to a professional assassin [there still was among the savage Battaks at that time a special guild of assassins, who killed for hire anyone whom it was desired to get out of the way], and asked him if he would undertake to kill you and your wife. He laughed at us because of our cowardice, and said, 'I fear no God and no devil. I will get through those watchmen easily.' So we came all together in the evening; and the assassin, swinging his weapon about his head, went courageously on before us. As we neared your house, we remained behind and let him go on alone. But in a short time he came running back hastily, and said, 'No, I dare not risk it to go through alone; two rows of big, strong men stand there, very close together, shoulder to shoulder, and their weapons shine like fire.' Then we gave it up to kill you. But, now, tell me, tuan, who are those watchmen? Have you never seen them?'

" 'No, I have never seen them.'

" 'And your wife did not see them?'

" 'No, my wife did not see them.'
‘But yet we have all seen them; how is that?’

‘Then I went in and brought a Bible from our house, and holding it open before him, said:

‘See here; this book is the Word of our great God, in which He promises to guard and defend us, and we firmly believe that Word; therefore we need not to see the watchmen. But you do not believe, therefore the great God has to show you the watchmen, in order that you may learn to believe.’ ”

May none of us lose the blessedness and the comfort of the doctrine of the ministry of angels in this unbelieving age.

THE HEAVENLY MESSENGER TO THE JAPANESE INQUIRER

In 1869 the missionary George Ensor landed in Japan, the pioneer agent of the Church of England missions to the newly opened “Empire of the Rising Sun.” One of the first sights that greeted his eyes was the public notice posted along the highways:

“So long as the sun shall continue to warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan.”

“Another notice of the period offered rewards for information if any Japanese became a Christian, declaring, ‘The Christian religion has been prohibited for many years. If any one is suspected, a report must be made at once.’ ”

The premises of Mr. Ensor were watched, to detect any inquirers, so that really serious searchers after light were rare. He says:

“I was sitting by myself in my study, and heard, in the darkness, a knock at the door. I went myself to answer it; and, standing between the palm trees of my gate, I saw the dark figure of an armed Japanese. He paused a moment, and I beckoned him to enter; and
he came in and sat down, and I asked him what his business was. He replied, ‘A few days ago I had a copy of the Bible in my hands, and I wish to be a Christian.’ I said, ‘Are you a stranger in these parts? Don’t you know that thousands of your people are being detained as prisoners for this?’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I know. Last night I came to your gate; and as I stood there, thinking of the terrible step I was about to take, fear overpowered me, and I returned. But there stood by me in the night one who came to me in my dreams, and said I was to go to the house of the missionary and nothing would happen to me, and I have come.’ And drawing his long sword, he held it up to me in a form signifying the Japanese oath, and promised that he would ever keep true to me, and I received him.”—Stock’s History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol. II.

In receiving this first convert into the church in Japan, Mr. Ensor renamed him Titus; “for God,” he said, in Paul’s words, “who comforteth those who are cast down, comforted me by the coming of Titus.”

The man himself, it is said, never became an efficient evangelistic helper, as later converts did, but he held to the Christian profession; and his breaking through the barriers led the way for others.

UNSEEN PROTECTORS IN PERIL

A narrative of early times in America, which appeared years ago in the Boston Christian, bears witness to the fact that sometimes the heavenly watchers have been made visible to human eyes in these modern days, even as in olden times. One C.G. Steinhofer was a faithful Lutheran pastor in a frontier region of one of the Eastern States. In his pastoral labors it came to his knowledge that a member of the congregation was living a double and wicked life. He labored with the man, but to no avail. Then he told the offender he
would have to rebuke the sin publicly.

The man threatened the pastor, and finally, just before the public service, gave him notice that he would surely do him violence if he made the matter public. The pastor, however, discharged his duty, and called on the congregation to pray that the evil might be removed from their midst. The offender was so enraged that he immediately prepared to take the pastor’s life. Knowing that he would pass through a wood to visit a sick member, the furious man lay in wait for the minister, with a gun in his hand and murder in his heart. The narrative continues:

“...In due time the clergyman came in sight; but to the dismay of the watcher, two men appeared to be with him, one on either side. This, for that time, baffled his intention; but being determined to effect it, he concluded to do it when the visit was over, and therefore remained waiting in the wood. Steinhofer, after a short period, returned; but, to the surprise of his enemy, the two men who had appeared to accompany him as he went were still apparently beside him. And thus he again passed safely through the wood, not knowing that it concealed an enemy.

“Perplexed in mind and uneasy in conscience, the offender felt an earnest desire to know who the men were whose presence had protected his intended victim. To obtain that knowledge, he sent a servant maid on some trivial errand to the house of the minister, telling her to find out who the strangers were who accompanied him on his afternoon visit. She made inquiry, and was told that he went out alone, and took nothing with him but his Bible, which he carried under his arm.

“This return to his question startled the man more than ever. He immediately dispatched a messenger to
the clergyman, demanding who those two men were; who was one on his right and the other on his left side, accompanying him to visit the sick man. The messenger was also instructed to say that his master had seen them with his own eyes.

“C.G. Steinhofer, knew not what peril he had escaped; yet he felt convinced that the Lord’s hand was in the thing, and also that He had, by His preserving providence, been round about him that day. He bade the servant tell his master that he knew of no man’s having accompanied him. ‘But,’ he added. ‘I am never alone; the Lord whom I serve is always with me.’

“This message, faithfully delivered by the servant, produced a powerful effect on the master. His conscience was alarmingly awakened. He immediately complied with the requisitions of duty. And the next morning, as a humble penitent, he called on his faithful reprover; with tears he confessed his past crime and also his wicked intention so providentially frustrated.”

What more precious promise of divine watchcare do we have than that of Psalm 91:11? “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”—Ps. 91:11. Unseen, they are there, according to the promise—angels that one moment behold the Father’s face in heaven, and the next come swiftly to stand by the side of a child of God on earth.

DELIVERANCE AT A RAGING RIVER

It was from those who had heard the story at first hand that the writer learned, while in Africa, of the truly providential deliverance of a missionary family, by whatever agency wrought.

Mrs. Armitage, of the Spion Kop Zulu Mission, said: “When you meet Mrs. Blaine, you must have her tell you about the deliverance of her father and mother in
the early missionary days, when the Kafirs were on the warpath. I have heard Mother Lange tell it. She always said, 'Nothing will ever convince me that God did not send angels to deliver us in that night of peril.' ”

So when we met the daughter, Mrs. Blaine, I asked for the story, as her mother had told it to her, and transcribed it as follows:

“My mother and father were missionaries of the Church of England. After my father’s death, Mother became a Seventh-day Adventist. She told us many stories of their early missionary experiences.

“Once there was unrest among the Kafirs. For some days they had been ‘sharpening their assagais,’ which was a sign of a raid.

“Mother could speak Kafir like a native, and knew of the trouble. Friendly Kafirs warned Father and Mother to flee; for they said they could not protect the mission from the raiders. At last, with the warnings more urgent and an invitation to come to the kraal of a friendly chief beyond the river, for refuge, Father and Mother started out by ox wagon. As they traveled, the uprising broke upon the country; and they had to push on for their lives with all the speed that could be urged into the slow-moving oxen.

“ ‘Where are you going?’ asked friendly Kafirs whom Father and Mother met.

“ ‘We are going to Umdushani’s kraal,’ my mother answered. As she spoke Kafir well, she most often did the talking.

“ ‘You will never get there,’ came always the reply; ‘the Kafirs will kill you all.’

“But my father and mother pressed on to the river. There they found that the water had ‘come down,’ and the river was a torrent. The steep banks were full to the brim. Their native ‘boys’ said it was no use; they
never could get across. It was raining; and night was coming on. In front was the swollen river; and the next morning light was sure to bring the Kafir *impi* down upon them.

“My mother was ill, and could not be moved from the wagon. There they were, in the rain and the gathering darkness, the Kafirs on the warpath behind, and the torrent closing the way of escape. The native boys were in terror; and the oxen were very nearly unmanageable. My parents could only lift their hearts to God for help.

“Just then, my mother said, two black men stepped up; and, in a calm and forceful voice, they said, ‘Do you want to cross over the river?’

“‘Yes,’ said my mother, ‘we must sleep at Umdushani’s kraal tonight. But the river is so full we cannot cross.’

“‘We will take you over,’ said the men.

“They asked my mother to sit perfectly still. Then these men took charge and quieted the frightened oxen. They guided them into the river and across, and up the banks to safety on the other side. It was wonderful to those who saw it done. When the wagon stopped on the other side, my father and mother wanted to thank the men for what they had done; but they were gone. They had disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared at the critical moment. The native boys, who had come through on the wagon, had never seen the men before. They did not know where they came from, nor did they see them as they withdrew.

“It had all been so sudden, and quiet, and providential that my father and mother could see in it only the direct hand of Providence bringing deliverance as they called upon God for help. They soon reached Umdushani’s kraal.
"'Where are you going?' the chief said to them.
"'We are going to sleep here tonight,' they said.
"'All right,' he said, 'I will protect you.'

Father and Mother often said that they believed the angels of God were sent to them that day of their flight, to deliver them."

Whether angels or men, they were agents of the watchful Providence who has so often wrought in the work of modern missions even as in the ancient Bible times. And who that believes in the God of the angels could have found it in his heart to question the faith that led Mother Lange to always say: "Nothing will ever persuade me that God did not send His angels that night"?

The angel at the brook Jabbok appeared in guise that led Jacob at first to think him only a wandering robber of Gilead. To Abraham the angels appeared as ordinary Bedouin travelers calling at his tent door. These heavenly visitants have commonly appeared as men of the country or tribes where their ministry brought them to earth. Whether angels or men, we recognize agents of God's direct providence in these deliverers of the missionary family by the swollen African river.

**KEPT SAFELY ON THE NORTHLAND STEEP**

The following experience comes from out of the Far North, where a Christian colporteur was seeking to carry gospel literature into the remote valleys of the Scandinavian Northland.

“Missionary Jens J. Hokland, in the summer of 1913, was on a colporteur tour in the Northland. One day, in order to reach some homes in a valley, he had to pass over a mountain which was very difficult to cross. In order to be more sure of his footing, he removed his shoes and stockings. Descending into the
valley, he had to cross a place so steep that he feared he could not make it. He was reminded to pray. There, clinging to the rocks, he asked God to send His angel to be with him and keep him. Then, putting his trust anew in God, he made his way down the perilous steep, and safely reached the valley below.

“At the first cottage he met a man and his wife, who, it seems, had been watching him as he came over the mountain.

“‘What has become of your companion?’ was their first question, after the ordinary salutation.

“‘What companion?’ asked the missionary.

“‘The man who was with you.’

“‘But there was no one with me; I am alone.’

“‘Is that possible?’ they exclaimed in surprise. ‘We were watching you as you came; and it really seemed to us that there were two men crossing the mountain together.’

“‘Then,’ reported Missionary Hokland, ‘I was reminded of my prayer to God for help and of the word of the Lord in Psalm 34:7: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.”

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.”

—Isaiah 12:2

“I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.”

—Judges 5:3

“And when He [Christ] was come nigh . . . the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.”

—Luke 19:37
THE LITTLE ROOM THAT THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN MADE FOR THE PROPHET ELISHA

“Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.” 2 Kings 4:10.
THE GOOD SAMARITAN

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. Luke 10:33.
“That saith of Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid.”—Isaiah 44:28.

Long before the birth of Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, the Lord had called him by name to be His agent in the restoration of Israel from captivity. “I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.” Even so Cyrus’s own record, dug up in recent years by the excavator’s spade in old Babylonia, tells how he entered Babylon “without battle.” The Lord moved upon his heart, for the protection of His own children and the accomplishment of the work of restoring Jerusalem. “For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have sur-named thee, though thou hast not known Me.” Isa. 45:4.

Many a time, in history, heathen hearts have been moved upon to act as deliverers of God’s children: sometimes apparently with no consciousness of merciful sympathy, at other times evidently with hearts touched by the love of God that reaches to every soul on earth. One writer says:

“In the depths of heathenism, men who have had
no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The ‘Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (John 1:9) is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.’—Mrs. E.G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 385.

IN CANNIBAL ISLANDS

In the year 1878, Oscar Michelsen went from New Zealand to the New Hebrides Islands, to engage in missionary work. He found himself alone among savage cannibals. In the book, Cannibals Won for Christ, he says that he once found himself destitute, all his goods for barter with the natives gone, and a long wait ere the mission ship would return with supplies. He says:

“In such circumstances as these, God tried my faith. When temporal prospects were very dark, I committed my cares to the Lord. Not many days afterward, and before we were actually in want, a tribe of natives came along, carrying taro, yams, bananas, and coconuts. I was not a little surprised to see them at this time; as, with others, they had lately ceased to come, because they knew I had nothing to buy with. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘you have come; but I have nothing to pay you with.’

“They replied, ‘We know that; but these things were sent down to us by Mari-marki [a bitter enemy of the teaching], who requested us to bring them over to you as a present.’

“So our wants were supplied by the least likely man on the island—a man who afterward showed himself
to be of the meanest disposition. The God of Elijah can feed His servants by gifts from a savage black man, as well as by meat conveyed by voracious ravens."

Commenting on other deliverances, the editor of Michelsen's book says:

"Some 'trust in princes,' but Mr. Michelsen had not had any such uncertain protection . . During the first year of the work, when his life was in danger, and help from man could not be expected, and therefore was not sought, a chief came on his own initiative, and walked about the house night after night, carrying a loaded gun, and every now and then blowing his Pan's pipes to break the monotony of the still hours. That same man proved, at a later period, his personal opposition to the gospel by threatening to shoot the missionary. His act of rendering protection to Mr. Michelsen was in obedience to an impulse which no one could account for; except by concluding that, for the moment, he was doing God service without knowing it."

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord," says the proverb, "as the rivers of water: He, turneth it whithersoever He will." Testimonies from those who have tried the Lord in the dark places of the earth and found Him able to save and to deliver in the trying hour, are good for us to ponder. God's resources are never exhausted.

**PRAYER IN EXTREMITY**

In an article in the *Missionary Review of the World*, October, 1913, under the title, "God's Hand as I Saw It in Arabia," John Van Ess, a missionary of the Lutheran Church, tells how deliverance came to him at a moment of peril as he called on God for help. It was in the year 1910. The tribesmen of the Mesopotamian border, by the junction of the Tigris and the
Euphrates, were in conflict with the Turkish forces. All was tumult and violence in the district. In journeying from Bagdad to his mission station at Nasiriyeh, southward on the Euphrates, Mr. Van Ess found himself in the hands of men evidently intent on killing and robbing him. They wanted him to push on out of their village, but he had insisted on resting for a time in a hut, with the tribesmen waiting outside. He says:

"My cook, who was an Arab, had in the meantime been sitting outside of the hut hearing the conversation among the tribesmen. Partly to give him something to eat, and mostly to hear what he had heard, I called him in. He understood the situation at once, and sat with his back to the door. Then he broke off a piece of the bread. As he raised it to his mouth, he whispered, 'By no means leave the hut; for they have planned to shoot us.' Toward three o'clock in the afternoon, they became impatient at our stubbornness, and one of their number began to insult me. This was a signal for the rest. In my extremity I lifted my heart to God, and asked Him to show His face.

"Scarcely had the petition left my heart when a shadow darkened the doorway, and a tall Arab, with face closely muffled, entered the hut. He was a member of the tribe, and a man of some consequence, judging by the respect paid him. He at once spied me sitting in the corner and looked me over a minute or two, and then came forward and said: 'Salaam, sahib, I am glad to see you here.'

"I must have looked puzzled; for he unmuffled his face, and said: 'I was a patient in your hospital at Busrah two years ago. Your doctor there performed an operation on me; and I was a guest in your hospital for thirty days. Welcome to our camp! Then he began to tell the Arabs of our work at Busrah, and of
how he was fed and nursed and healed. He added: ‘O Arabs, do these men no harm. They and their companions are disciples of Isa el Messiah. They fear Allah, and are our best friends.’

“A deep silence fell on those assembled, and I thanked God for His great deliverance. Then I told them I wanted to reach Nasiriyeh if possible before sunset. Mohammed at once took his rifle and cartridge belt; and with him and five other Arabs we rode until we reached a ditch about half a mile outside of Nasiriyeh. They dared not enter, for fear of the soldiers, but said they would hide in a ditch, and see that I reached the Turkish line in safety. Just as I turned the corner to enter the town, I looked back; and there stood those six Arabs, faithful to their word. They waved their rifles in farewell; and thus I rode into the town and into safety.”

No wonder the missionary says that he saw God’s hand in Arabia. In many other perils on this journey he was sensible of the Lord’s protecting care over him; but of the crisis in the experience he could truly say with the psalmist, “I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me.”

A STORY FROM EAST AFRICA

In his *Sketches from the Dark Continent*, Willis R. Hotchkiss, of the Friends’ Missionary Society, tells of an experience that came to him in British East Africa. The society had sent him, with others, to open work in that land, in 1895. The region was then a wilderness, and the people were embittered by fear of European aggression. Mr. Hotchkiss settled in a certain place, two Swahili boys being his only companions. A great crowd had gathered one day on the hillside near his house to determine what should be done with the stranger. After long counsel, word was sent
him that he must leave within three days or he would certainly be killed. Mr. Hotchkiss says:

“I sent word back that I was there to tell them about God, and I intended to stay; they would find me at the end of the three days if they wanted me. Throughout this time they threatened all manner of things, but did not resort to actual violence. Seeing that they did not frighten me, they resorted to the plan of starving me out, issuing an order that anyone found bringing food to me was to be put to death. For over a month this was rigidly enforced.

“But mark the hand of God. It would have fared ill with me had it not been for a divine supply to meet my need. An old woman frequently passed my hut, going to and from her work in the fields. I had seen her but two or three times, but every time she passed she managed in some way to drop a root of cassava in the path before my door. This I roasted; and it enabled me to eke out my slender supply of provisions through this trying period.

“What prompted this old heathen woman, under penalty of death if caught, to drop that food before the despised and then-hated white man’s door? The very same power that caused the ravens to bring meat to the famished prophet by the brook Cherith. Is God changed? Depend upon it; He has His ravens for every Cherith still.”

**THE SOUTH SEA STRANGER**

Two Samoan teachers had been left on the cannibal island of Erromango, in 1840. Only the year before, John Williams had been killed as he landed on those shores. But now a chief in another district had promised to protect the teachers, and a new effort was to be made for the island. This chief, however, quickly turned against the workers when he saw that their
teaching rebuked his vicious practices. He gave orders that none should have dealings with the teachers or go near their hut. They fell ill with privations, and expected nothing but a lingering death unless God specially intervened to save them. And the intervention came, as related by Gill, in his Gems from the Coral Islands:

“At the time of their deepest extremity, the providence of Him in whom they trusted appeared for their deliverance. The same God who in ancient days was with the prophet, who guided him to the brook, and who commanded the ravens to feed him, was the teachers’ God.

“In the day of their distress, a native, quite a stranger to them, had his heart stirred up with compassion toward them. Day by day, for the space of five months, this stranger came secretly to their hut; and, lifting up the thatch, he gave them necessary supplies of daily food, and in this way was the means of saving alive the men whom his savage brethren had designed should die of starvation. Under the influence of what motives this kind heathen man acted, it is impossible to conjecture; but, in what he did, we recognize the hand of God.”

We see in these things not only the Lord’s deliverance of His servants, but His loving call to darkened hearts to follow on to know Him unto life eternal.

**HOW PRAYER BROUGHT A HELPER IN ANTIQUE SHECHEM**

At a meeting in Olten, Switzerland, in 1911, Missionary T. Hoerner, who was formerly a medical evangelist in Palestine, under the Mission Board of Seventh-day Adventists, told of an occasion of peril among robbers when prayer brought quick deliverance.

In March, 1904, Mr. Hoerner was journeying with
others in Palestine. They had traveled from Joppa by carriage to Tiberias, on Galilee. Of the journey toward Jerusalem he said:

“We procured a place with a caravan, drawn by mules, which took fish from Tiberias to Jerusalem. After four days we arrived at Shechem, where, by the blessing of God, we were able to secure accommodations in an English hospital; and there we celebrated the holy Sabbath day. The evening after the Sabbath I wanted to get some necessaries for the journey, and went down into the market. It was getting dark, and the market was not a safe place to go about in. But I felt I ought not to go back; for we needed a supply of drinking water, this being a difficult thing to get while journeying.

“In making my purchase I took out my money to get a ten-franc gold piece changed. Now I noticed that I was being surrounded by robbers, with every plan to rob me, or even to kill me. I sent up a prayer to God for help, as I saw that I was in real peril; and the answer came quickly.

“As the robbers pressed nearer, a big, strong Arab came breaking his way through the circle, and stood by my side, defending me from them and leading me out of danger. It seems that he was impressed to go into the market just at this time, with no particular object; and as he came, he at once saw my danger. Strange to say, he recognized me; for he had once been employed in a mill that we had operated in connection with our little institution at Joppa, and I had also treated his brother when sick. This made him glad to come to my help. He had left Joppa and secured employment in Shechem, working in this very market, where he had just come to my rescue like an angel of deliverance.
“When I returned to the caravan, and asked if we were to prepare to start, the leaders cried out, ‘What are you thinking of? traveling in the night in such a place as this, infested with robbers!’

“In this experience we could not but recognize the hand of God in delivering me from the perilous situation in which I had unwittingly placed myself.”

The old town of Shechem is well-known in sacred history. There Abraham came first, as he journeyed from Haran into the Land of Promise; and there Joshua gathered the tribes as he rehearsed to them God’s wonderful dealings with them and with their fathers. It is good to have this modern testimony that the Lord who met with patriarchs at Shechem is still the living God, with angels just as quick to bring deliverance as in the days of old.

MINISTERS OF THE WINTER WILDERNESS

It was in the dead of winter, in the year 1635, that Roger Williams fled from Salem, having been banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for his defense of liberty of conscience. He was alone in the New England wilds. “I was sorely tossed for one fourteen weeks,” he wrote, “in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean.”

All his life long he carried the lively remembrance that God indeed helped him and delivered him. He saw the intervening providence of God in influencing the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to help him privately in getting away, and the hand of God also in turning the hearts of the wild Indians toward him. Thirty-five years after his flight, he wrote to his friend Mason:

“Governor Mr. Winthrop privately wrote to me to steer my course to Narragansett Bay and Indians, for many high and heavenly and public ends encouraging
me, from the freeness of the place from any English claims or patents. I took his prudent motion as a hint and voice from God; and waiving all other thoughts and motions, I steered my course from Salem (though in winter snow, which I feel yet) unto those parts, wherein I may say ‘Peniel,’ that is, I have seen the face of God.”—Letter, Vol. VI, p. 335.

He felt that as truly as God sent food to Elijah by the ravens, so He had sent succor to him by the Indians of the forest wilds. Dropping into verse, he wrote:

“God’s providence is rich to His;
Let none distrustful be;
In wilderness, in great distress,
These ravens have fed me.”

And continuing in song his story of delivering providence, he bore testimony:

“God makes a path, provides a guide,
And feeds in wilderness!
His glorious name, while breath remains,
O that I may confess!

“Lost many a time, I’ve had no guide,
No house but hollow tree!
In stormy winter night no fire,
No food, no company.

“In Him I found a house, a bed,
A table, company!
No cup so bitter, but’s made sweet,
When God shall sweet’ning be.”

—Key into the Language of America

Well may we know that angels of God went with him; for Roger Williams was the agent in God’s providence for the first planting of the standard of full religious liberty in the New World.
In Judges 6 to 8, we read of Gideon and his tiny army, who, with God’s help, used pitchers, trumpets, and torches to defeat the immense army of the Midianites.
PROTECTION FROM AN INVADING ARMY

In 2 Kings 6:8-20, we read the story of how God surrounded Elisha with an army of angels to protect him from the hosts of the Syrians.
Deliverance from Armed Hosts

“Escaped the edge of the sword.”—Hebrews 11:34.

From out of the centuries, when armed ecclesiasticism sought to overrun and subdue every land where the plant of reformed truth was taking root, come stories of deliverances that read like chapters out of the history of ancient Israel. As the Syrian army before Samaria fled in panic, when the Lord “made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses” (2 Kings 7:6), so, more than once, a supernatural terror set to flight invading forces that had expected easy conquest.

THE PANIC-STRICKEN INVADERS

It was the old-time view of defending the truth for which Huss was burned at Constance that led the Bohemians who loved his memory to take up arms to defend the truth of God. Luther caught the true idea when, at the beginning of his work, he insisted that it was by the Word of God alone that error was to be met. But a hundred years before Luther, this truth was imperfectly recognized; and it must be admitted that the carnal weapons were sometimes drawn in essentially religious conflicts. However, at this special time it was not any ordinary conflict over religion, but a vast scheme of invasion of their whole land, that the Bohemian people were called to meet. And evidently
it was not to be allowed by Providence that the forces of intolerance should overrun the region where the early glimmerings of the light of reformation had begun to appear.

Pope Martin had organized a great crusade, which entered Bohemia in June, 1427. Electors, princes, and counts led the invading host, with a special papal legate in charge. The little army of the Hussites, under Ziska, the “one-eyed,” went out to meet the invaders. The historian, J.A. Wylie, says:

“They were now within sight of them; and the two armies were separated only by the river that flows past Meiss. The crusaders were in greatly superior force; but, instead of dashing across the stream and closing in battle with the Hussites whom they had come so far to meet, they stood gazing in silence . . It was only for a few moments that the invaders contemplated the Hussite ranks. A sudden panic fell upon them. They turned and fled in the utmost confusion. The legate was as one who awakens from a dream. His labors and hopes at the very moment when, as he thought, they were to be crowned with victory, suddenly vanished in a shameful rout.”—History of Protestantism, book 3, chap. 17.

Urged on still by the Pope, a yet greater crusade was organized and entered Bohemia in 1431, “chanting triumph” as they marched. Wylie again says:

“The enemy were encamped near the town of Reisenberg. The Hussites were not yet in sight, but the sounds of their approach struck upon the ears of the Germans. The rumble of their wagons, and their war-hymn chanted by the whole army as it marched bravely forward to battle, were distinctly heard. Cardinal Cesarini and a companion climbed a little hill to view the impending conflict. Beneath them was the host
which they expected soon to see engaged in victorious fight. It was an imposing spectacle, this great army of many nationalities, with its waving banners, its mail-clad knights, its helmeted cavalry, its long lines of wagons, and its numerous artillery.

"The cardinal and his friend had gazed only a few minutes when they were startled by a strange and sudden movement in the host. As if smitten by some invisible power, it appeared all at once to break up and scatter. The soldiers threw away their armor and fled, one this way, another that; and the wagoners, emptying their vehicles of their load, set off across the plain at full gallop.

"Struck with consternation and amazement, the cardinal hurried down to the field and soon learned the cause of the catastrophe. The army had been seized with a mysterious panic. That panic extended to the officers equally with the soldiers. The Duke of Bavaria was one of the first to flee. He left behind him his carriage, in the hope that its spoil might tempt the enemy and delay their pursuit. Behind him, also in inglorious flight, came the Elector of Brandenburg; and following close on the elector were others of less note, chased from the field by this unseen terror. The army followed, if that could be styled an army which so lately had been a marshaled and bannered host, but was now only a rabble rout, fleeing when no man pursued."—Idem.

The comment of the historian Wylie expresses the conviction that must come to every heart:

"There is something more in the facts we have related than the courage inspired by the consciousness of a good cause, and the feebleness and cowardice engendered by the consciousness of a bad one. There is here the touch of a divine finger—the infusion of a
preternatural terror.”—Idem.

**ARMIES OF THE ALIENS** PUT TO FLIGHT

In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a decree, or bull of extermination, against the Vaudois people of the Piedmont valleys of Italy. Their consistent refusal to accept Romish doctrine, long prior to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, had made them objects of papal hatred.

The Inquisition had been refused permission to set up its machinery of espionage and torture in the valleys, the people turning its agents back by force of arms. This brought the papal bull ordering total destruction.

Troops came in thousands, eighteen thousand regulars of France and Piedmont, joined by a host of plunderers and brigands who were after the spoils of the happy valley homes. Some of the accounts of deliverances that saved the people from total destruction, in this first general persecution of the Vaudois, read like stories from the days of Israel.

The campaign of massacre, watched by a legate named Cattanée (or Cataneo), in behalf of the Pope, began in an attack on the valley of Angrogna. The enemy was breaking the line of the Vaudois defense, at a point behind which were the women and children and aged. Dr. Mauston says:

"Seeing their defenders yield, these families threw themselves upon their knees with many tears; women, and children, and old men united together in fervently crying, 'O Dio aiutaci! O Lord, help us! O my God, save us!' This cry of prayer was the only cry which broke from their hearts in their distress, and arose to heaven. But their enemies laughed at it; and, seeing this company upon their knees, they hastened their advance. 'My fellows are coming—they are coming to
give you your answer,' exclaimed one of their chiefs, surnamed 'the Black of Mondovi,' because of his swarthy complexion. And immediately, joining bravado to insult, he raised the visor of his helmet, to show that he was not afraid to encounter the poor people whom he insulted. But at that moment a steel-pointed arrow, let fly by a young man of Angrogna, named Peter Revel, struck this new Goliath with such violence that it penetrated into his skull, between his eyes, and laid him dead. His troop, struck with terror, fell back in disorder; a panic seized them; the Vaudois took advantage of the moment and impetuously rushed forward, hurling their adversaries before them. And, eagerly continuing the pursuit, they swept them into the very plain, where they left them vanquished and dispersed. Then, reascending to their families so miraculously delivered, they likewise flung themselves upon their knees, and all together gave thanks to the God of armies for the victory which they had just gained."—*History of the Waldenses*, Vol. I, pp. 33, 34.

But the invaders were by no means defeated; they had only been turned back and angered. On they came the next day, fiercer than ever. This time let Wylie tell the story:

"It seemed impossible for their prey to escape them. Assembled on this spot, the Waldensian people had but one neck; and the papal soldiers, so Cataneo believed, were to sever that neck at a blow.

"But God was watching over the Vaudois. He had said of the papal legate and his army, as of another tyrant of former days, 'I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will cause thee to return by the way by which thou camest.' But by what agency was the advance of that host to be stayed? Will some mighty angel smite Cataneo's army, as he did
Sennachcrib’s? No angel blockaded the pass. Will thunderbolts and hailstones be rained upon Cataneo’s soldiers, as of old on Sisera’s? The thunders slept; the hail fell not. Will earthquake and whirlwind discomfit them? No earthquake rocked the ground; no whirlwinds rent the mountains. The instrumentality now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the pass and brought the march of the host to an instant halt.

“A white cloud, no bigger than a man’s hand, unobserved by the Piedmontese, but keenly watched by the Vaudois, was seen to gather on the mountain’s summit, about the time the army would be entering the defile. That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. It began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain’s side, wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven—a sea of murky vapor. It fell right into the chasm in which was the papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick, black fog. In a moment the host were in night; they were bewildered, stupefied, and could see neither before nor behind, could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering on terror.

“The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of Providence in their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of the Pra, and issuing from all their hiding places in its environs, they spread themselves over the mountains, the paths of which were familiar to them; and while the host stood riveted beneath them, caught in the double toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up huge stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into the ravine.
“The papal soldiers were crushed where they stood. Nor was this all. Some of the Waldenses boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front. Consternation seized the Piedmontese host. Panic impelled them to flee; but their effort to escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois or the rocks that, swift as arrow, came bounding down the mountain. They jostled one another. They threw each other down in the struggle. Some were trodden to death; others were rolled over the precipice and crushed on the rocks below or drowned in the torrent, and so perished miserably.”—History of the Waldenses, chap. 5.

“This decisive defeat, which is to be ascribed to the will of God rather than to the arms of the Vaudois, accomplished the deliverance of that valley, in which the troops of Cattanée never appeared again. The detachment, which was destroyed in so complete and unexpected a manner, was the last which showed itself upon the banks of the Angrogna before the period of the Reformation. The captain who commanded it was called Saguet de Planghère; and the chasm into which he fell is called to this day, after the lapse of four centuries, the Toumpi de Saguet—Saguet’s hole.”—Mauston’s History of the Waldenses, Vol. 1, pp. 34, 35.

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” The Reformation history shows that it was by witnessing and suffering, and not by fighting, that the light of truth was caused to shine. But in these experiences of deliverance we see God’s providence in keeping alive the little band of witnesses in the Piedmont valleys until the time of Reformation should come.

A COVERING CLOUD

The Vaudois of the Piedmont valleys had been all
but exterminated. While the Reformation was spreading in Northern Europe, the papal forces visited the Vaudois villages with fire and sword. The remnant, driven out, had found refuge in Switzerland and southern Germany. After several years of exile, they were endeavoring to return to their homes. Spies sent into the valleys had reported the fields untilled and the villages deserted; and now a pioneer band of eight hundred men was making “the glorious reentry,” as it was ever afterward called.

Against the assaults of their enemies, they had pressed on from Lake Geneva, through Savoy, near to their own country. But on the slopes of a mountain called the Balsigia, they were surrounded by the French and Piedmont troops sent to make an end of them. Their last stand apparently had been made; and now the enemy, with artillery in position, rested as evening drew on, confident that the next morning would deliver the little band to the slaughter. Wylie says:

“Never before had destruction appeared to impend so inevitably over the Vaudois. To remain where they were was certain death, yet whither could they flee? Behind them rose the unscalable precipices of the Col du Pis, and beneath them lay the valley swarming with foes. If they should wait till the morning broke, it would be impossible to pass the enemy without being seen; and even now, although it was night, the numerous camp fires that blazed beneath them made it almost as bright as day.

“But the hour of their extremity was the time of God’s opportunity. Often before it had been seen to be so, but perhaps never so strikingly as now. While they looked this way and that way, but could discover no escape from the net that inclosed them, the mist be-
gan to gather on the summits of the mountains around them. They knew the old mantle that was wont to be cast around their fathers in the hour of peril. It crept lower and yet lower on the great mountains. Now it touched the supreme peak of the Balsiglia.

“Will it mock their hopes? Will it only touch, but not cover, their mountain camp? Again it is in motion; downward roll its white, fleecy billows. And now it hangs in sheltering folds around the war-battered fortress and its handful of heroic defenders. They dared not as yet attempt escape; for still the watch-fires burned brightly in the valley. But it was only for a few minutes longer. The mist kept its downward course; and now all was dark. A Tartarean gloom filled the gorge of San Martino.

“At this moment, as the garrison stood mute, pondering where-unto these things would grow, Captain Poulat, a native of these parts, broke the silence. He bade them be of good courage; for he knew the paths, and would conduct them past the French and Piedmontese lines, by a track known only to himself. Crawling on their hands and knees, and passing close to the French sentinels, yet hidden from them by the mist, they descended frightful precipices and made their escape. ‘He who has not seen such paths,’ says Arnaud in his Rentrée Glorieuse, ‘cannot conceive the danger of them, and will be inclined to consider my account of the march a mere fiction. But it is strictly true; and I must add, the place is so frightful that even some of the Vaudois themselves were terror-struck when they saw by daylight the nature of the spot they had passed in the dark.’

“When the day broke, every eye in the plain below was turned to the Balsiglia. That day the four hun-
dred ropes which Catinat had brought with him were to be put in requisition; and the _feux-de-joie_ so long prepared were to be lighted at Pinerolo. What was their amazement to find the Balsiglia abandoned! The Vaudois had escaped and were gone, and might be seen upon the distant mountains, climbing the snows, far out of the reach of their would-be captors. Well might they sing, ‘Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken, and we are escaped.’ ”—*History of Protestantism, book 16, chap. 15.*

They reached their own valley of the Pra del Tor; and to their joy found, all unexpectedly, agents of the Duke of Savoy, their prince, with a message of good will, giving authority to bring back their families and fellow believers from all places whither they had fled. Thus again the Waldensian people found homes among the mountains that had hidden their fathers away from Rome’s wrath in the days of old.

**THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN**

The armies of Spain and the Inquisition were seeking to subdue Holland. The city of Leyden was invested until its inhabitants were famishing. In order to send relief and food to the starving city, William of Orange conceived the desperate plan of opening the dykes to the sea, flooding the land to drive away the enemy, and allowing a flotilla of relief ships under Boisot to sail to the gates of the city.

The great dykes were broken through, but the waters failed to flood the country deep enough to be effective. The investing army scoffed at the failure of the plan. “As well might the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky,” the Spaniards taunted, “as bring the ocean to the walls of Leyden for your relief.”

Their taunts were heard by One who holds the
Deliverance from Armed Hosts

oceans in the hollow of His hand. And still Leyden held out and prayed to Heaven to send succor, determined to die one by one within the walls rather than to yield religion and liberty to the invader. Wylie says:

“At last Heaven heard the cry of the suffering city, and issued its fiat to the ocean. On the first of October, the equinoctial gales, so long delayed, gave signs of their immediate approach. On that night a strong wind sprang up from the northwest, and the waters of the rivers were forced back into their channels. After blowing for some hours from that quarter, the gale shifted into the southwest with increased fury. The strength of the winds heaped up the waters of the German Ocean upon the coast of Holland. The deep lifted up itself; its dark flood, driven before the tempest’s breath with mighty a roar like the shout of a giant loosed from his fetters and rushing to assail the foe, came surging onward and poured its tumultuous billows over the broken dykes. At midnight on the second of October the flotilla of Boisot was afloat and under weigh for Leyden, on whose walls crowds of gaunt, famished, almost exanimate men waited his coming.”—Idem, book 16, chap. 21.

But a mile distant from the gates of the city the Lammen fort, held by the enemy, blocked the way, towering high and strong, and full of soldiers. Night fell with hope well-nigh gone. Again Wylie continues the story of the providential deliverance:

“Seldom has a blacker night descended on a more tragic scene, or the gloom of nature been more in unison with the anxiety and distress of man. At midnight a terrible crash was heard. What that ominous sound, so awful in the stillness of the night, could be, no one could conjecture. A little after came a strange apparition, equally inexplicable. A line of lights was seen to
issue from Lammen and move over the face of the deep. The darkness gave terror and mystery to every occurrence. All waited for the coming of day to explain these appearances.

“At last the dawn broke; it was now seen that a large portion of the city walls of Leyden had fallen overnight, and hence the noise that had caused such alarm. The Spaniards, had they known, might have entered the city at the last hour and massacred the inhabitants; instead of this, they were seized with panic, believing these terrible sounds to be those of the enemy rushing to attack them. And so, kindling their torches and lanterns, they fled when no man pursued. Instead of the cannonade which was this morning to be opened against the formidable Lammen, the fleet of Boisot sailed under the silent guns of the now evacuated fort and entered the city gates. On the morning of the third of October, Leyden was relieved.

“The citizens felt that their first duty was to offer thanks to that Power to whom exclusively they owed their deliverance. Despite their own heroism and Boisot’s valor they would have fallen, had not God, by a mighty wind, brought up the ocean and overwhelmed their foes. A touching procession of haggard but heroic forms, headed by Admiral Boisot and the magistrates, and followed by the “Zealanders and sailors, walked to the great church, and there united in solemn prayer. A hymn of thanksgiving was next raised; but of the multitude of voices by which its first notes were pealed forth, few were able to continue singing to the close. Tears choked their voices and sobs were mingled with the music.”—Idem, book 16, chap. 21.

We may even at this late day recognize with thankful hearts the overruling Providence that rolled back the forces of intolerance in the Netherlands; for there
first, in modern times, the principles of religious liberty were clearly enunciated by the head of a state. And it was from the soil of Holland, in part at least, that these principles were transplanted to the New World.

**DELIVERED FROM THE SPANISH ARMADA**

It was with purpose to subdue a stronghold of Protestantism that Philip II of Spain prepared his great Armada. That his invasion failed was ascribed by the British people to the delivering hand of Providence, and not to their own prowess. In the old verse of William Warner, born in the year of the Armada,

> "Howbeit force, nor policy, but God's sole providence
> Did clear fore-boasted conquest and benighted thraldom hence."

It was in May, 1588, that the mighty Armada, composed of one hundred and fifty ships, set sail from Spain, expecting to be joined at Calais by a hundred flat-bottomed vessels prepared in the Netherlands to carry a vast army to invade England. When at last the Armada was descried heading up the English Channel, the British folk knew that their hour of trial had come. Macaulay's never outworn lines tell as none others how the warning was spread from Land's End to Scotland's coasts:

> "Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.
> From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay,
> That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day;
> For swift to East and swift to West the ghastly war-flame spread.
> High on St. Michael's Mount it shone: it shone on Beachy Head.
> Far on the deep the Spaniard saw, along each southern
shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.

"The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of blood-red light;
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the deathlike silence broke.
And with one start and with one cry, the royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates arose the answering fires;
At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reeling spires.

"All night from tower to tower they sprang; they sprang from hill to hill:
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwen's rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills of Wales.
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle."

The historian Wylie tells of the famous work of Drake with his little fleet, hanging on the edges of the Armada as it came up the Channel, sinking a boat now and then. When the Armada was at last in the roadstead of Calais and sending fireships into it by night, that startled the great fleet into flight for the North Sea. The fleet from the Netherlands, with its army of invasion, had not been able to join the Armada, as the Dutch easily drew a line of warships along the Netherlands' coast which the flat-bottomed boats could not pass. Wylie says:

"It was strange that this had not been foreseen and
provided against. The oversight reveals the working of a Hand powerful enough by its slightest touches to defeat the wisest schemes and crush the mightiest combinations of man.”—History of Protestantism, book 23, chap. 19.

The vast Armada bore out into the North Sea. Wylie tells how the winds now laid hold of it:

“The mostly rudderless ships could do nothing but drift before the rising storm into the northern seas. Drake followed them for a day or two. He did not fire a gun. In fact, his ammunition was spent. But the sight of his ships was enough; the Spaniards fled and did not even stay to succor their leaking vessels, which went down unhelped amid the waves . .

“No sooner did Drake turn back from the fleeing foe than the tempest took up the pursuit. At that moment a furious gale burst out; and the last the English saw of the Armada were the vanishing forms of their retreating galleons, as they entered the clouds of storm and became hid in the blackness of the northern night. In these awful solitudes, which seemed abandoned to tempests, the Spaniards, without pilots and without a chart, were environed by bristling rocks and by unknown shallows, by currents and whirlpools. They were 'driven from light into darkness;' they were 'chased out of the world' . .

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“Now they were whirled along the iron-bound coast of Norway, now they were dashed on the savage rocks of the Shetlands, and now they found themselves in the intricate friths and racing currents of the Orkneys. Carried on the tempest's wings round Cape Wrath, they were next launched amid the perils of the Hebrides. The rollers of the Atlantic hoisted them up, dashed them against the black cliffs, or flung them on the shelving shore. Their crews, too worn with toil and
want to swim ashore, were drowned in the surf and littered the beach with their corpses. The winds drove the survivors of that doomed fleet farther south, and now they were careering along the west coast of Ireland. The crowd of sail seen off the coast caused alarm at the first; but soon it was known how little cause there was to fear an Armada which was fleeing when no man was pursuing . .

"Nor was this the worst; new horrors awaited them on this fated coast. The storm had returned in all its former violence; to windward were the mighty crested billows of the Atlantic, against which both themselves and their vessels were without power to contend; to the leeward were the bristling cliffs of the Irish coast, amid which they sought, but found not, haven or place of rest. The gale raged for eleven days; and, during that time, galleon after galleon came on shore, scattering their drowned crews by hundreds upon the beach . .

"The few galleons that escaped the waves and rocks crept back one by one to Spain, telling by their maimed and battered condition, before their crews had opened their lips, the story of their overthrow . .

"The tragedy of the Armada was a great sermon preached to the Popish and Protestant nations. The text of that sermon was that England had been saved by a divine hand. All acknowledged the skill and daring of the English admirals, and the patriotism and bravery of the English sailors and soldiers. But all, at the same time, confessed that these alone could not have saved the throne of Elizabeth. The almighty arm had been stretched out, and a work so stupendous had been wrought, as to be worthy of a place by the side of the wonders of old time. There were a consecutiveness and a progression of acts, a unity in the drama, and a sublimity in the terrible but righteous
catastrophe in which it issued, that told the least reflective that the Armada's overthrow was not fortuitous, but the result of arrangement and plan. Even the Spaniards themselves confessed that the divine hand was upon them; that One looked forth at times from the storm-cloud that pursued them and troubled them. Christendom at large was solemnized, the ordinary course of events had been interrupted, the heavens had been bowed, and the great Judge had descended upon the scene . .

"The deliverance was a common one to the Protestant kingdoms. All shared in it with England, and each in turn took up this song of triumph . .

"It seemed as if the days of Miriam, with their judgments and songs of triumph, had returned and that the Hebrew prophetess had lent her timbrel to England, that she might sing upon it the destruction of a mightier host than that of Egypt and the overthrow of a greater tyrant than he who lay drowned in the Red Sea. England began the song, as was meet; for around her isle had the Armada been led, a spectacle of doom. But soon, from beyond the German Ocean, the foot of the Alps, and the shores of Scotland, other voices were heard swelling the anthem and saying, 'Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.'—History of Protestantism, book 23, Chap. 23.

King Philip said: "He sent his Armada to fight with men, and not to combat with the winds." But the winds had intervened; and this disaster broke the power of
the forces of repression, and proved a turning point in the progress of the world toward light and liberty.

PRAYING TO THE GOD OF HEZEKIAH

In his History of the Church Missionary Society (Church of England), Mr. Eugene Stock tells of an experience of God’s delivering mercies in the early history of mission effort in the Yoruba country of West Africa, generally known now as the Lagos country.

There was war between Dahomey and Yoruba. It was in 1863. The Dahomans had massacred the inhabitants of one town where there were Christians, and were marching unopposed upon the capital, Abeokuta, where the missionary headquarters and training school were established. The British naval officer on the coast had given his decision in the quarrel in favor of Dahomey,—an act deeply deplored in England,—and ordered all Europeans out of Abeokuta. This, in native eyes, was full license to the savage Dahomans to do their worst; and it was considered that Abeokuta was “doomed.”

The missionaries in Abeokuta felt that they could not forsake their people and their work. They sent word that they would remain. The mission committee in London realized the peril of the situation, and felt that only by God’s intervention could the mission be saved. They issued a call to prayer throughout England while the Dahomans were gathering to the siege of Abeokuta. This call to prayer quoted the words of Hezekiah when the king of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, “With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God,” and the promise of God through Isaiah the prophet:

“Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank
against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return.” 2 Kings 19:32, 33.

There was earnest and continual prayer throughout the constituency of the society in England. Mr. Stock says:

“The committee’s circular had invited prayer that ‘Dahomey might be restrained and be compelled to return to his own land, if it might be without bloodshedding.’ ‘We felt,’ wrote Ridgeway in the Intelligencer, ‘that in asking this we were asking a hard thing, but not too hard for the Lord.’ Yet He so ordered it. The Dahoman army did return to its own country without a battle, and almost without bloodshedding. And Buehler, in writing from Abeokuta, quoted the very passage which the committee had quoted in their circular: ‘The king of Dahomey has not come into this city, nor has he shot an arrow there, nor has he come before it with shields, nor has he cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same has he returned, and has not entered into this city.’

“The details, when received, seemed almost incredible. For sixteen days in March, the Dahoman army had remained encamped about five miles from Abeokuta. Night after night an attack was expected; morning after morning dawned without a gun having been fired; and on the seventeenth morning the camp was found deserted. The whole Dahoman army had gone off, no one knew why. Certain words of St. John occur to the mind: ‘But the servants which drew the water knew.’

“Mr. Buehler, one night when alarm was given, overheard an Egba Christian woman praying aloud. He quietly took down the words, translated them literally into English, and sent the translation home. All over England were that woman’s simple heart-outpourings
read with thankful sympathy:

“‘O Lord Jesus, lift up Thine arm; lift up, lift up, O Lord, Lord Jesus our Redeemer, lift up Thine holy arm, and deliver us from the cruel Dahomans. O Lord Jesus, remember what they have done to Thy saints in Ishagga, how much innocent blood they have shed. O Lord, Lord, deliver us, that we may not fall into their hands. Thou hast sent Thy messengers to us with Thy Holy Word. We trust in Thee, O Lord our God; do not forsake us. Thou didst deliver Thy people Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, and hast overthrown his army. Thou didst deliver Hezekiah and his people from the hand of Sennacherib, who blasphemed Thy holy name. Do also remember us, O Lord; remember Thy church, remember Thy servants, remember our children. O Lord God, deliver us for Thy dear Son’s sake. Amen.’” —Vol. 11. p. 437.

“According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let mount Zion rejoice.”

—Psalm 48:10-11

“The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

—Psalm 46:11

“Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give to every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing.”

—Jeremiah 32:19.

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”

—Nahum 1:7

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom . . I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation . . The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet.”

—Habakkuk 3:17-19
THE DESTRUCTION OF AN IMMENSE ARMY

“And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria.” 2 Chronicles 32:21.
PROVIDENTIALLY RESTRAINED

“And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee . . Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good . . And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.” Genesis 32:9, 11-12; 33:4.
“He suffered no man to do them wrong.”—Psalm 105:14.

In his New Acts of the Apostles the late Dr. Arthur T. Pierson tells this story of the South Seas:

“Kaipo, a native of the New Hebrides, confessed that he watched to waylay Dr. Geddie; and when, with club in hand, he had him in his power, he became unable to deal the blow at the crisis when the man he hated and had followed, in order to kill, was at his mercy. He confessed that a strange new sensation came over him, and convinced him that a higher power held him back.”—New Acts of the Apostles, p. 311.

Another testimony to the efficacy of the restraining arm comes from the early Methodist circuit days in America. Thomas Smith was a tireless and fearless servant of God, keeping to the saddle, and going into the hardest and most irreligious places, winning souls to Christ on the right hand and on the left. In The Story of Methodism, Dr. A.B. Hyde tells this story of Smith, in the days of 1802:

“At one place, a band of young men blocked the door, with clubs to maul him. After meeting, he came brushing through them, and every hand hung helpless. Four bound themselves soon after ‘to spill his blood that day.’ ‘I will put my trust in God,’ he said,
and rode through and past them, while they cursed each other as cowards.”—New Acts of the Apostles, p. 456.

They did not understand as clearly as the islander Kaipo that they were surrounded by the invisible agents of a higher power than man's.

**THE EYES OF PERSECUTORS HELD**

When the Nazareth mob thought to hurl Jesus over the precipice, He “passing through the midst of them went His way.” Again, in the temple at Jerusalem, He was about to be stoned; “but Jesus hid Himself . . . going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” The same power that smote a whole army with temporary blindness, in the days of Elisha, evidently held the eyes of Jesus' persecutors so that they might not recognize Him as He passed through their midst. His time had not yet come.

Such a delivering providence is reported by John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*. While many were witnessing with their blood in the times of papal persecution, a multitude of others were spared, amid continual manifestations of providential care. Writing in the year 1558, Foxe tells us:

“If our story should proceed so wide and so large as did the exceeding mercy of God's providence in helping His servants out of wretchedness and thraldom of those bloody days, our treatise (I think) would extend to an endless process. For what good man or woman was there, almost in all this time of Queen Mary, who, either in carrying a good conscience out of the land or tarrying within the realm, could escape the papists' hands, but by some notable experience of the Lord's mighty power and helping hand working for him?

“What should I here speak of the miraculous deliv-
erance of Thomas Bryce? who, being in the house of John Seal, in the parish of Horting, and the bailiff with other neighbors coming in, sent by Sir John Baker to search and apprehend him, and knowing perfectly both his stature and color of his garments, yet had no power to see or know him standing before their faces. So mightily the Lord did blind their eyes, that they asking for him and looking upon him, yet notwithstanding he quietly took up his bag of books, and so departed out of the house without any hand laid upon him.”—Acts and Monuments, Vol. VIII, pp. 578-579 (8 Vol. ed, London, 1839).

When Foxe compiled the records of Queen Mary’s day, he was dealing with times that he and his associates well knew. He himself had fled from the persecutors in those same days of tribulation, and thus there was a very personal note in his words of praise to God for delivering providences.

In a history of the Moravian and Bohemian believers, M. Bost records an experience in Austria, two centuries later, in which a Moravian fugitive felt convinced that only the covering of the Lord prevented those in pursuit of him from seeing their prey, so very slight was his opportunity for concealment. Bost says:

“Another brother, named John Nitschmann, who had already lived some time at Herrnhut, returned into Moravia to fetch his sister. He succeeded; and one of his brothers, who had remained behind, was on the point of being seized by the officers of justice who came to search the house and found some books which would have caused his condemnation.

“As soon as they were gone, therefore, he fled; and, on being pursued, he leaped over a hedge and hid himself in a ditch. His pursuers reached the spot; and one of them also jumped over the hedge and passed
by the ditch without perceiving him, though it was
daytime, and he had searched the place for a long
time.

"Nitschmann heard them cry out repeatedly, 'He
must be here.' Weary of the search, they at last re-
turned to the village. He then got out of the ditch and
hid himself till the evening in a barn, when he contin-
ued his journey without further hindrance and arrived
at Herrnhut."

So the testimonies to God's overshadowing pro-
tection come to us from out the dark centuries.

**AN INFORMER'S LIPS SEALED**

The authorities of Leeuwarden, Holland, were mak-
ing a savage effort to rid the district of Baptists. In
1542 an edict had been published against Menno
Simons, a godly and scholarly man, leader of this sect
in that time. It was declared that any who sheltered
him should forfeit goods and life; and "one hundred
gold Carolus-guilders were promised to any one giv-
ing information leading to his arrest. Menno Simons's
daughter told of one providential deliverance at that
time; and it was recorded by E.C. Pike in his *Story of
the Anabaptists*:

"A man agreed with the magistrates to deliver her
father up for a sum of money, or lose his head. One
day he went with an officer to arrest him. Menno
passed by in a boat, but the man said nothing until he
saw Menno land some distance off; and then he ex-
claimed, 'See! the bird is flown.' The officer called him
a villain. 'Why did you not speak before?' He answered,
'I could not speak; for my tongue was held.' The would-
be informer lost his head. The sleuth-hound persecu-
tors of Menno Simons missed their prey. He died a
natural death at the age of sixty-five."

The same God who sent His angel to shut the
mouths of lions, in Daniel’s day, must have sent His angel to seal the lips of this would-be informer.

**UNABLE TO ACT**

A young woman, Mrs. Bosome, visiting at Richmond, near London, in the time of the cruel Queen Mary, was pressed by her mother to attend church. While there, she refused to turn and bow with the congregation, according to Catholic form, and was arrested by the church warden and constable, and ordered to appear next day before these officers at Kingston, across the River Thames. Suspected heretics were being burned all about in those times. Foxe says:

“The next day, according as they were assigned, they came to Kingston to appear before the foresaid officers, who, at the same time (as it chanced) were going over the ferry. And meeting them by the way [leading up from the ferry], they saluted them by their names; but, at that time, they had no further power to speak unto them. Afterward, as they [the officers] were in the boat going over, they knocked their hands, stamped, and stared, lamenting that they had let them so pass their hands.”—*Acts and Monuments, Vol. VIII, p. 553 (ed. 1839)*.

The ferryman reported the occurrence afterward. The young woman, going on to London, Foxe says, “escaped their cruelty through the secret working (no doubt) of the Lord, who in all His works, and evermore, be praised. Amen.”

**A WOULD-BE MURDERER’S ARM paralyzed**

A prominent minister in Canada, says an Australian religious journal, relates the following remarkable instance of God’s miraculous care over His people:

“I am frequently impressed by the Spirit to perform actions at the time unaccountable to myself. These impressions are so vivid that I dare not dis-
obey them.

“Some time ago, on a stormy night, I was suddenly impressed to go to the distant house of an aged couple, and there to pray.

“So imperative was the call that I harnessed the horse and drove to the spot, fastened the horse under the shed, and entered the house unperceived by a door which had been left open. There, kneeling down, I poured out my petitions to God in an audible voice, for the divine protection over the inmates; after which I departed and went home.

“Months after, I was visiting one of the principal prisons in Canada; and, moving among the prisoners, I was accosted by one of them, who claimed to know me. I had no recollection of the convict, and was fairly startled when the latter said: ‘Do you remember going to such a house one night, and offering prayer in the dark for the inmates?’ I told him I did, and asked how he came to know anything about it. He said: ‘I had gone to that house to steal a sum of money known to be in the possession of the old man. When you drove into the yard, I thought you were he, and intended to kill you while you were hitching your horse. I saw, when you spoke to the horse, you were a stranger. I followed you into the house and heard your prayer. You prayed God to protect the old people from violence of any kind, especially from murder; and if there was any hand uplifted to strike them, that it might be paralyzed.’ Then the prisoner pointed to his right arm, which hung lifeless by his side, saying, ‘Do you see that arm? It was paralyzed on the spot, and I have never moved it since. I left the place without doing any harm, but am here now for other offenses.’

A PROVIDENCE OF MODERN GREECE

The Boston Advent Herald of April 21, 1849,
printed an article on divine providence, written by the late Dr. Josiah Litch, a minister of Philadelphia, from which we take the following:

“The sacred history is full of illustrations of God’s direct interference with the affairs of men, supplying their wants, protecting them in dangers, delivering them from great perils, healing their maladies, instructing them in ignorance, and saving them when lost. But it is not the Bible alone which furnishes us with evidence and illustrations of divine interference; modern history, and everyday experience and observation, bear witness that He ‘is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.’ The history of each Christian proves that ‘the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.’

“The following touching incident, related by the late Richard Watson, in a sermon preached before the Wesleyan Conference, in England, which he says is authenticated by Pastor Arundel, author of *A Visit to the Seven Churches in Asia*, who was in the village at the time of the occurrence, will illustrate and impress the doctrine of ‘divine providence:’

“During the late struggle of the Greeks to gain their independence, a body of Turks were, in 1824, encamped in a part of Greece and committed every kind of excess against the inhabitants. One of the barbarians, an officer, had pursued a young Greek girl, who took refuge in the house of a widow. The widow met him at the door, and mildly attempted to dissuade him from forcing his way to seize the girl. Enraged, he drew his saber; but when in the act of attempting to cut down the widow, it snapped in two pieces before it reached the victim. The wretch paused. But he drew a pistol to accomplish his purpose in that manner; but
it misfired. And when in the act of drawing a second, he was forcibly dragged away by one of his companions, who exclaimed, ‘Let her alone! Do you not see that her time is not yet come?’ Resolved, however, to take some revenge, he carried off her infant child to the camp. But as though Providence designed to accomplish its work on this occasion, while the officer was asleep the child was carried back to the widow by one of his own men.”

**MEETING AN ARMED ATTACK BY PRAYER**

An old account of missionary experiences, published by the Religious Tract Society, of London, contains the following:

“During the rebellion in Ireland, in 1793, the rebels had long meditated an attack on the Moravian settlement at Grace Hill, Wexford County. At length they put their threat into execution; and a large body of them marched to the town. When they arrived there, they saw no one in the street nor in the houses. The brethren had long expected this attack; but true to the Christian profession, they would not have recourse to arms in their defense. They assembled in their chapel; and, in solemn prayer, they besought Him, in whom they trusted, to be their shield in the hour of danger.

“The ruffian band, hitherto breathing nothing but destruction and slaughter, were astonished at this novel sight; where they expected armed hands, they saw them clasped in prayer, and the whole body of men bending before the Prince of Peace. They heard the prayer for protection, the request for mercy to be extended to their murderers, and the songs of praise and confidence in the sure promise of the Lord. They beheld all in silence and were unable to raise a hand against them; After having for a night and a day lingered about, they marched away, without having in-
jured a single individual or stolen a loaf of bread.”

THE HAND THAT “CAME BETWEEN”

An evangelist in South America tells of the testimony of a man who had been persuaded to try to assassinate the evangelist’s wife. She had been active in visiting work, and had won the enmity of a bitter opposer of the gospel. Once the woman had been stricken down unconscious by a blow dealt with a knife. The evangelist continues:

“Several weeks passed; and various other attempts were made on my wife. On two occasions the man who was to do the deed was dressed in female attire; another time the attempt was made by two men on horseback, armed with revolvers. But in each case she escaped unharmed. One afternoon, while distributing tracts in the town, she found herself before a group of men; and, on handing a tract to one of them, she suddenly recognized in him her would-be assailant. She therefore invited him to come to the gospel meeting the next evening, which was a Sunday. I was the preacher that night, and had barely commenced my address when word was passed to me that the man himself was listening outside the door.

“After a while my wife went out and spoke to the man, telling him that she knew who he was. Thereupon he told her everything and said: ‘If you like to send for the police to take me now, I will make no attempt to resist or escape’ . .

“The man then said that he and a cousin had arrived at the town just before the first attempt made on her life. They were anarchists and had been in many evil deeds; so that to take a person’s life was not at all against their inclinations or their consciences. They were approached by someone who offered them a large sum to kill a bad woman who was doing a lot of
harm in the town. Not knowing anything about us, they jumped at the offer; and so the affair began. He said that they followed her over and over again; and, many a time, they were on the point of dealing the fatal blow, when ‘some hand came between to prevent it.’

“Not being able to do what they wished, they had received two hundred pesos to keep quiet, which they did until this confession was made.”

“Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall not slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.”

—Psalm 121:4-5

“Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me . . Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.”

—Isaiah 49:14-16

“For the Lord your God is He that goeth before you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”

—Deuteronomy 20:4

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”

—Psalm 27:14

“They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and break their bands in sunder.”

—Psalm 107:13-14

“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

—Luke 12:40

“The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

—Psalm 144:9