

SURROUNDED BY HEAVENLY HOSTS

– 2 KINGS 6:8-23. – APRIL 9. –

"He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." – Psalm 91:11.

WHEN war was declared by Syria against Israel the invaders sought to gain an entrance into Israel's army in the mountain passes, but God through the Prophet Elisha forewarned the Israelites. When this had happened several times the Syrian king concluded that there were traitors amongst his counsellors, but was answered, No! the Prophet Elisha surely warns Israel's king of anything that you plan secretly.

Learning that the Prophet was living at Dothan, near the Syrian border, the king sent a detachment of soldiers to capture him. They came by night. Elisha's servant, arising early, saw that the little city was surrounded. He ran to his master in fear, but the latter, unperturbed, answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. These words sounded strangely untrue to the servant, until the Prophet prayed for him an opening of eyes, which revealed a vision of angels, chariots and horses, with the appearance of fire.

The lesson to us is that whoever are God's servants, and wherever they may be, Divine power, like a mighty army, surrounds them. Modern inventions and discoveries are more and more revealing to us secrets of nature and hinting at far more beyond. Whoever has knowledge of wireless telegraphy, X-rays, radium, etc., can readily believe that the Almighty God may have thousands of agencies and powers invisible to men whereby he can work all things according to the counsel of his own will.

"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ENCAMPETH ROUND ABOUT THEM THAT FEAR HIM AND DELIVERETH THEM"

Angels are beings of a grade a little higher than man – beings with spirit bodies instead of flesh bodies. "Thou madest man a little lower than the angels." The Scriptures declare that the angels are sent forth to minister to or serve all those who are heirs of salvation. They encamp around about God's servants in the sense that Divine agency and power are everywhere and ready at any instant to be exercised as much as need be for the accomplishment of God's will. The same God who willed that Elijah should flee before Jezebel arranged that Elisha should be specially protected. But we are to remember that only those who are in covenant relationship with God are under this special watch-care and protection.

We are to remember also that there are fallen angels, called "wicked spirits," and that these are on the alert to entrap and ensnare humanity through spirit mediums, spirit rappings, tippings, clairvoyants, ouija-boards, etc. God's people are warned against these, and they in turn should warn the world of the great danger resulting from any association with these fallen angels, who misrepresent themselves to be our dead friends.

Many are being misled by these evil spirits. They have introduced various false doctrines and continually seek to entrap the human will and, if possible, to gain control over it – through obsession. Curiosity is one of the main baits to the hook of spiritism.

Spiritists, including mediums, are being deceived. They think that they converse with the dead. They will indeed acknowledge that there are "wicked spirits," "lying spirits," as the Bible says; but they do not acknowledge that they are *all* wicked. The fact is that they have only partially realized the depth of Satan's power and deceit in this direction. The Bible indicates that shortly, in the ending of this Age, there will be a great time of trouble, which, to a considerable degree,

will be brought about by these evil spirits. It is the duty of those who know to warn those who understand not the situation.

FROM DOTHAN TO SAMARIA

When the Syrian army corps drew near to Dothan, Elisha with his servant went out to meet them, praying that God would blind them. They were not blinded literally, but, as it were, hypnotized. Doubtless there is a hypnotic power, but as it interferes with the wills of others, none of God's people should have anything to do with it, unless, as in Elisha's case, specially commissioned of God. Elisha met the guard and told them that he knew the man they were seeking and that he would lead them to him in another city, if they would follow him. He did lead them several miles, right into the capital city of Samaria. There, surrounded by Israel's men of war, with the king at their head, Elisha again prayed and the hypnotic **[R4770 : page 61]** spell dissolved, and they beheld themselves prisoners and that the Prophet had fooled them. At Elisha's suggestion the King made them a feast and sent them on their way back to Syria. The effect of this treatment was that for a long time, at least, there were no further incursions into Palestine from Syria.

The King's suggestion was that the King of Syria should be killed. But the Prophet in reply said, If you had captured them in war at the risk of your life, you would not kill them. Now, seeing that God's providence has placed them where they are, consider them as your guests and treat them kindly. How many enemies could be won by kind treatment, who would be made bitter by what might even be termed just treatment! After all, **[R4770 : page 62]** love is the great conquering power of the world – love is the greatest thing in the world. It is the "love Divine, all love excelling," which constrains or draws us to God.

COMPARATIVELY FEW HAVE YET LEARNED OF GOD'S LOVE

Only God's consecrated people have yet learned of his love, and they very imperfectly. The tactics of Satan and his demon hosts for centuries has been to blind the whole world and, as much as possible, God's people respecting his true character. By misrepresentations of the Scriptures and some interpolations and some mistranslations they have succeeded to a wonderful degree in putting light for darkness and darkness for light. This is shown in the creeds of all denominations – some in a greater and some in a less degree.

A century or more ago, when the creeds were believed more fully than today, the effect was terribly demoralizing. Good men and women, under the delusions of those creeds, tortured one another, often to death, with thumb-screws, racks, burning-irons, the stake, etc. Their hearts were not so much worse, perhaps, than ours; but their heads were more deluded. Believing thoroughly in the doctrine of eternal torment, etc., they sought to copy this misconception of the Divine character and dealing.

More and more let us see, realize, appreciate, the love of God which passeth all understanding. More and more let us appreciate the length and breadth and height and depth of this love of God. Let us get the proper focus upon the Divine Word. Let us obtain the reading of the most ancient manuscripts. Let us secure the best translations, that we may not be deceived, but understandingly appreciate the love of God in full co-operation with his Justice, Wisdom and Power – all co-operating now for the blessing of the saints with heavenly salvation, as it will by and by bless all the world of mankind, *through* this Seed of Abraham. – Gal. 3:29.

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