

## Column

In the Bible – both testaments – there are many inspiring stories about God acting outside expected norms. We call these miracles. Often, we assume – consciously or unconsciously – that was then, way back in Bible times, and we don't expect any such dramatic display of God's power today. Are we wrong?

I suspect we are. I love the line from the hymn "Go forward Christian Soldier" which says: "Fear not the secret foe; far more o'er thee are watching than human eyes can know." I believe the author, a man by the name of Laurence Tuttiett, was right on target when he penned these words, as numerous testimonies of Christian believers show.

One such testimony comes from a girl named Diana whose story was written up in "When Angels Appear" (1983) by Hope MacDonald. Diana was walking through a passageway between two buildings when she saw a suspicious man standing off to the side. She prayed for protection and passed by him unmolested.

The next day the news was full of a story about another girl being raped at the same spot, about 20 minutes after Diana spotted him. She contacted the police and was able to identify the suspect. When asked why he did not attack the first girl, he said there were two men with her.

A similar story comes from an Anglican bishop by the name of Edward King (1829-1910). One evening after sunset he received an urgent call to visit a dying person. He set out on foot, only to find after arriving at the residence that it was dark and empty. Perplexed he returned home.

A few days later two young men arrived at his door and asked to speak to him. No sooner than in his study, they confessed to organizing a hoax to get the bishop out alone so they could rob him. When he asked why they had not carried out the crime, they said that there was a tall man walking beside him.

If these two stories seem distant, I know someone who had a remarkably similar experience. In a dangerous situation, those who could have done him harm saw a second person walking beside him, they later confessed.

These three stories line up nicely with one found in the Old Testament book of 2 Kings. The Syrian army had surrounded Dothan where the prophet Elisha and his servant were lodging. The servant was alarmed, but Elisha reassured him by saying that they had a greater army with them. Then, the

young man's eyes were opened and he saw the city surrounded by the 'army of the Lord'.

Wishful thinking or true? I choose the latter option. The God who watched over Diana, the God who provided protection for Bishop Edward King, the God who brought deliverance for Elisha and who ultimately raised Jesus remains on the job. Things beyond human explanation still happen.

"Threats and oppression shall not blunt our mission," says an unknown poet. "Let all the world hear. God is in control!" Fear not.

*LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Collect for the 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Trinity, Book of Common Prayer)*

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At times, even the best of us, as we read the wonderful accounts in the Bible of God doing powerful thing on behalf of His people to

Laurence Tuttiett was born at Colyton, Devon, in 1825; was educated at Christ Hospital, and at King's College, London; ordained Deacon, 1848, Priest, 1849; entered upon the living of Lea Marston, Coleshill, 1854, and subsequently was appointed Curate of S. Paul's, Knightsbridge, London. He is the author of several volumes and tracts. --Annotations of the Hymnal, Charles Hutchins, M.A. 1872.... [Go to person page >](#)

2 Go forward, Christian soldier!  
Fear not the secret foe;

Far more o'er thee are watching  
Than human eyes can know;  
Trust only Christ, thy Captain;  
Cease not to watch and pray;  
Heed not the treacherous voices  
That lure thy soul astray.

MacDonald, Hope 1982. When angels appear. Grand Rapids (Michigan): Zondervan.

Diane, a young Christian university student, was home for the summer. One evening she returned late from a visit to her friends. She walked quite alone through an alley and asked God to keep her from harm and danger. Halfway down the alley she noticed a man, looking like he was waiting for her. She prayed for protection and instantly a comfortable feeling of quietness and security surrounded her, as if someone was walking with her. She walked right past the man and arrived home safely. The following day she read in the paper that a young girl had been raped in the same alley, just twenty minutes after she had been there. She decided to go down to the police station. She could identify the man at a line-up. The man was arrested. She asked the policeman if he would ask the man why he had not attacked her. His answer was as simple as it was surprising: "Because she wasn't alone. She had two tall men walking on either side of her."

The following story is told of Bishop Edward King: One evening, he received an urgent call to visit someone who was dying. He Christian Story-Telling in a Modern World [www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol20](http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol20) 30 left his house, alone, and set out for the address he had been given, but on arriving found nobody in and the place in darkness. Puzzled, he returned home. Some days later, two youths

came to his door. Agitated, they wanted to make a clean breast of something, so King let them in and heard them. They told him that it was a hoax and that they had rigged it up in order to catch him alone and rob him. Ever since, they had felt a pressure to come and confess. "I was quite alone and unprotected." "No", they said, "we were about to make our move when we realised that there was someone walking beside you who stayed with you all the way, so we dared not set about you. Now we have come to ask your forgiveness." ANGELS OR GHOSTS The story about the Anglican bishop h