

# THE WONDERFUL WORK OF GOD IN THE GUIDANCE OF BULLETS

Nehemiah Wallington (1598–1658)

*Nehemiah Wallington, a London wood-turner, kept two concurrent diaries throughout the 1640s. In one, he daily recorded events relating to his personal life and business. His other diary recorded his reflections on national events. Rather than arranging this second diary chronologically, he created chapter headings in a blank journal, and then recorded events in their appropriate chapters. The battles below he recorded as illustrations of “The Wonderful Work of God in the Guidance of Bullets”.*

1642

*I will praise the LORD with my whole heart. I will speak of all His marvelous works — Psalm 9:1*

23 August, being Tuesday, at eight o'clock, there was a skirmish for three hours at Southam (in Warwickshire) between the army under the conduct of the Lord Brooks, the Lord Grey, Colonel Hampden, Colonel Hollis, and Colonel Cholmley and the army under the command of the Earl of Northampton, Lord Saville, and Lord Paget.

The enemy discharged three times their two pieces of ordnance upon the very body of our army, but not a man hurt, by God's great mercy. Nay, God's wonderful mark was observed in the guidance of the adverse party's bullets. For one went over the Lord Brooks' head, as also another bullet went close to the Lord Grey. Some went on one side and some flew clean over their heads, both horse and foot, touching no man nor doing any harm at all.

And some bullets grazed along, and some bullets fell down flat upon the ground before them and struck or spattered dirt in some of their faces; but not a man hurt, which shows the protection of God is over them that trust in Him. Which, after command given on our side to discharge one of our pieces of ordnance, which was charged with musket bullets, which with the scattering many of the adverse party were dangerously wounded, a drummer, with two others, was slain, and supposed many others; and five very good horses found dead....

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23 October, being the Lord's day in the forenoon, both the armies met in the midway between Banbury and Stratford-upon-Avon.<sup>1</sup> And they had a very hot skirmish, their ordnance playing very hot from twelve o'clock till three in the afternoon and made a great slaughter, and then the main forces joined battle, both Horse and Foot, and had a furious skirmish on both sides, which continued for all that day.

But that which I would take notice of is God's great mercy and providence, which was seen to His poor despised children that, although the enemy came traitorously and suddenly upon them and unexpectedly, and four of our regiments falling from us, and our soldiers being a company of despised inexperienced youths and never using to lie in the fields on the cold ground before the enemy, they being strong, old, experienced soldiers. But herein we see God's great mercy, for all that to give us the victory. For, as I hear, that the slaughter in all was 5.517; but ten of the enemy's side were slain to one of ours. And observe God's wonderful works, for those that were slain of our side were most of them run away; but those that stood most valiantly to it, they were most preserved. So that you may see the Lord stands for them that stand for Him.

If I could but relate how admirably the hand of Providence ordered our artillery and bullets for the destruction of the enemy, when a piece of ordnance was shot off, what a lane was made in their army. But when the enemy shot their ordnance against us, O how did God guide the bullets (as I wrote afore at Southam) that some fell down before them, some grazed along, some bullets went over their heads, and some one side of them. Oh how seldom or never almost were they hurt that stood valiant to it, by their bullets; you would stand and wonder. Those that rode most gallantly among an hundred thousand bullets and faced and charged the enemy were first

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<sup>1</sup> The Battle of Edgehill

His Excellency the Lord Bedford; Sir William Balfour; Sir John Meldrum, commander of the Lord Say's Regiment; Sir Philip Stapleton; Sir Arthur Haslerig; Sir Samuel Luke; Sergeant-Major Hurny; and Captain Hunt, though left all alone. These are some of those that are chiefly spoken of for their valour, which God did assist of His great mercy. And it is a sweet passage of His excellency, it is worth the noting, that when Mr. Marshall was speaking of the success of the battle, His Excellency replied twice together that he never saw less of man in anything, nor more of God.

Again, consider one wonderful work of our God more; which is that many of our youths that went forth were weakly and sickly, some with the king's evil, some with agues, and some with the toothache, which their parents and friends were in great care and grief for; yet, when they have lain days and nights in the wet and cold fields, which one should think should make a well body sick, much more to increase their misery and pain that were ill, yet they have testified that their pain has left them and never better in all their lives.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in my eyes.

I did forget to write this remarkable passage, how the King's army shot off thirty pieces of ordnance and killed not passing four of our men. And the first time we shot, we made a lane among them, cutting off two of their colours.

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5 November, being Saturday, that treacherous, cruel, and bloody fight was at Brentford, where the enemy took Captain Lilburn away prisoner. But how the great God and Lord of Hosts did preserve us and gave us at last the victory that they were glad to steal and run away. But of this I do intend to write more at large in my book, called *The Wonderful Working God, or The God Working Wonders*.

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About the latter end of December, at Twyford, three miles from Reading, the cavaliering rebels set upon some of the Parliament army, and they perceiving the wind against our army and a water mill being by them, they set that on fire, to the intent that the wind might blow the smoke and so smother in our armies, that so they might have the victory over them. But mark the wonderful works of the Lord, Which has the command of the winds, that at the very time when the mill began to smoke our God commanded the wind and smoke to turn back in the faces of His and our enemies so that fourscore of our army beat three troops of their dragoons, and two men of us, through God's help, slew sixteen of the rebels, and not one of us, our army, was killed. No, nor hurt, that I could hear of; but made the rest of our enemies to run away.

This also comes from the Lord of Hosts, Which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in works — Isaiah 28:29

Nehemiah Wallington, *Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I* (London: Bentley, 1869), II:152–157.  
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