

4475. a. a. a. b. b.

9642  
*Success from GOD alone, and the  
Vanity of Human Endeavours  
without his Blessing :*

Considered in a

# S E R M O N

Preached at a Time of

## SOLEMN PRAYER,

On Account of the

## WAR and the REBELLION,

A T

Dr. GUYSE'S MEETING-HOUSE in  
NEW BROAD-STREET, *December*  
the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1745.

---

Published at the Request of several MINI-  
STERS and OTHERS that heard it.

---

By *DAVID JENNINGS.*

---

---

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. OSWALD, at the *Rose and Crown*  
in the *Poultry*; and J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's*  
*Head* in *Gracechurch-Street.* MDCCLXV.

[ Price Six-Pence. ]

## ECCLES. IX. II.

*I returned, and saw under the Sun,  
that the Race is not to the Swift,  
nor the Battle to the Strong, nei-  
ther yet Bread to the Wise, nor  
yet Riches to Men of Understand-  
ing, nor yet Favour to Men of  
Skill; but Time and Chance hap-  
peneth to them all.*

**T**HERE are two Things, which may often occur to our Observation in the Course of Providence; that have puzzled and perplexed the Minds of many Persons: Things which, at first Sight, have very much the Appearance of Faults and Blemishes in God's providential Government of the World, tho' in reality each of them is the Effect of infinite Wisdom. One is,

that Providence makes so little Difference, or rather indeed none at all, between good and bad Men; that here the best Men and the holiest often meet with as uncomfortable Providences as the worst and the vilest; God makes no visible Distinction, in the outward Dispensations of his Providence, betwixt those that fear him, and those that fear him not. This is what *Solomon* remarks in the Beginning of this Chapter, verse 2. *All Things come alike to all, there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked; to the Good and to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not, as is the Good, so is the Sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* This was the Thing, that so much perplexed the Mind of *Asaph*, that he was tempted upon it even to doubt whether there was any Providence at all, or indeed any Thing in Religion; and whether God had any more kind Regard to the Righteous than to the Wicked, to the Godly than to the Ungodly. We have the History of his Temptation, and of his Deliverance from it, recorded by himself, *Psal. lxxiii.*

THE other strange Mystery of Providence is, that the likeliest, and most promising Means of obtaining any End are, many Times, disappointed; while at sometimes, far more weak and unlikely Means prove very successful. This is the Observation in our  
Text.

Text. *I returned, and saw under the Sun*— that limits the Observation here made to worldly Matters; for those are the Things, which the wise Man evidently means by *Things under the Sun* several Times in this Book: As to spiritual and heavenly Matters, God has established a more certain Connection between the Means and the End; so that Success is far more sure: *He that believeth in Christ shall be saved*, and those, that by patient Continuance in Well-doing seek for *Glory, Honour and Immortality*<sup>a</sup>, shall certainly obtain and receive it. But in Things *under the Sun*, or in worldly Matters, it very often proves much otherwise, and the Success is not answerable to the Probability of human Means and Endeavours. *I returned*, says the wise Man, *i. e.* to make my Observation on the Course and Conduct of Providence, and on human Affairs, relating to this Life and World; and I have observed this further, that human Events, and the Success of Men's Endeavours, do not always answer their natural Tendency, and the most reasonable Expectation from them. As for Instance, one would naturally think, that he who could run fastest in a Race, should certainly get to the End soonest, and win the Prize; in any Combat or War one would suppose the strongest Side should undoubtedly gain the Victory: And yet it of-

ten

<sup>a</sup> Rom. ii. 7.



ten falls out quite otherwise, and the Swiftest and the Strongest loose the Day. So also, one would naturally imagine, that Bread, (which in the Scripture Phrase stands for all the Supplies and Conveniences of Life) should always be sure to wise Men; that the most ingenious Artists, and those who understand their Trades best, should certainly thrive the most; and also, that Men of the most Skill in Address, and who best know how to suit themselves to the Tempers and Humours of others, should always have most Friends: And yet in all these Cases we see it very often proves quite otherwise; we see that the Wise and Skilful in their Profession do not always prosper; and as we read in Scripture, so we often see *a rich Fool*, and *a poor wise Man*; and sometimes we see very worthless Men in high Favour, and promoted to Honour, while Men of better Genius and far more Wisdom are slighted and neglected. These Things *Solomon* had observed; and the same we may easily observe ourselves, *viz.* that the Success of human Means and Endeavours does not certainly answer to the most reasonable and probable Expectation from them. *But Time and Chance happeneth to them all*, there are certain Seasons when unexpected Accidents start up, and frustrate Men's Expectations; so that the Nimbleness of the Racer,  
and

and the Strength of the Warrior, prove ineffectual and unsuccessful.

By *Chance* we are by no means to understand here such a blind Power as the Heathens fancied Fortune to be, which disturbed human Affairs without any Sense, or Wisdom, or Conduct. There is no such Thing as *Chance* or *Fortune* in that Sense; but every Thing here is ordered, and every Thing comes to pass by the Direction and Providence of an infinitely wise God. The *Hebrew* Word for *Chance* in our Text is otherwise as well rendered *Occurrence*, in 1 Kings v. 4. *The Lord my God, says Solomon, hath given me rest on every Side, so that there is neither Adversary, nor evil Occurrent.* The Word comes from a Root, that signifies *to meet with* \*; and so it imports any Thing, that we meet with in the Course of Providence, that blasts our Endeavours, and disappoints our Expectations.

Now, though many Things, that we thus meet with, seem to us to be merely casual, such Things as we could have no Way foreseen, nor so much as guessed at beforehand; yet none of them are so to God. *A certain Man drew a Bow at a venture, and smote and killed King Abab, 1 Kings xxii. 34.* It was merely a Random-shot; therefore his Death might be looked upon as much accidental

\* פָּגַע Occursus; אֶפְסָה occurrit.

dental as any Man's could be ; but yet God directed the Arrow that smote *Abab* ; for he had appointed that *Abab* should fall in that very Place, in order to fulfill a Prediction and Threatening, which had before been pronounced upon him by the Prophet, *viz.* that *in the Place where Dogs had licked the Blood of Naboth, should Dogs lick his Blood,* 1 Kings xxi. 19. There is no such Thing as Chance with God, for he foresees and foreknows, and orders and directs every Thing that comes to pass. Nothing can be more Chance than *Lots*, as whether this Lot is drawn, or another ; yet *Solomon* asserts an over-ruling Providence even in those Matters, Prov. xvi. 33. *The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* In short he *worketh all Things*, the most casual Things not excepted, *after the Counsel of his own Will*, Eph. i. 11. and his Providence presides over the whole World, and all the Affairs of it.

Now it is the Observation of our Text, that this Providence does often frustrate Men's Endeavours, and disappoint their most probable Expectations, *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, &c.* *Solomon* does not mean that it never is, or that it is not so *ordinarily* and most commonly. Our Experience assures us that, *ordinarily*, the Providence of God works by Means, and by the most likely Means ; so that



that we are not to expect Success without Endeavours. And, generally speaking, God has established such a Connection between proper Endeavours and good Success, as is sufficient to encourage us to use them. Therefore, it may be said, *the diligent Hand maketh Rich*<sup>b</sup>, as well as *the Blessing of God maketh Rich*<sup>c</sup>; because this Blessing of God does ordinarily attend Diligence, and is not to be expected without it; and tho' sometimes indeed Diligence fails of Success, yet certain it is, we have no Reason to expect Success without it; *the idle Soul shall suffer Hunger*<sup>d</sup>.

OUR Text then is by no Means designed to discourage us from using proper Means and Endeavours to obtain desired Ends, but only to caution us against relying too much upon them. It is to teach us, that *the Way of Man is not in himself*<sup>e</sup>; for a sovereign Providence sometimes breaks Men's best concerted Measures, and blasts their most promising Hopes: We should use Means, but not trust in them; and, if they succeed, we should give God the Praise of all. It is to teach us to say concerning our Disappointments and Losses, who and whatever were the Means and Instruments, *the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away*<sup>f</sup>. And it is to teach us to say of our Successes and Victories,

B

as

<sup>b</sup> Prov. x. 4.<sup>c</sup> ——— x. 22.<sup>d</sup> ——— xix. 15.<sup>e</sup> Jer. x. 23.<sup>f</sup> Job i. 21.

as the Psalmist says of *Israel's* Conquest of *Canaan*, Psal. xliv. 3. *They got not the Land in Possession by their own Sword, neither did their own Arm save them: But thy Right-Hand and thine Arm, and the Light of thy Countenance, because thou hadst a Favour unto them.* In short, the main Instruction and Doctrine of our Text may be summed up in these few Words, SUCCESS IS FROM GOD. Therefore in all our Affairs, and in all our Endeavours, we should seek to God for it, and rely on his Providence. Having thus opened and cleared up the Sense of the Text, I would further propose, before I come to make an Application of it,

I. To prove and illustrate the Point that is here asserted, by some Examples out of Scripture, and later History.

II. To consider, whence it comes to pass, that the most promising human Endeavours, and the most likely Means, often fail of Success.

III. We shall humbly suggest, or at least guess at, some Reasons why God orders it so to be.

I. FIRST, I apprehend it may be useful to prove, and further to illustrate, the Point that is here asserted, by some Examples.

*THE Race is not to the Swift, that is, not always; the swiftest Runner may stumble*

ble and fall, or some other Accident may retard him. You know the Story of *Asabel*, who *was as light of Foot as a wild Roe*; and yet was slain by *Abner*, in a Pursuit after a Battle, 2 *Sam.* ii. 18, 23.

BUT I would more especially attend to the second Article in my Text; *the Battle is not to the Strong*; as that which comes nearest to the Purpose of our present Meeting; viz. *To beg of God, Success against our Enemies*; both those that are Abroad, and those which are risen up in our own Land. One would think, and we are apt to be too confident of it, that the most numerous and bravest Army by Land, and the largest; strongest, and best-man'd Fleet by Sea, should be certainly victorious; and yet it is not always so. Both *Scripture* and later History will furnish us with many Instances to the contrary. Sometimes *one hath chased a Thousand* §. A large Host of *Philistines* were put to Flight by *Jonathan* and a few Men, 1 *Sam.* xiv. *Gideon* with a little Army of three Hundred; routed the prodigious Host of the *Midianites* and *Amalekites*, and all the Children of the East, who lay along the Valley like *Grasshoppers* for Multitude; and their Camels were without Number, as the Sand by the Sea-side, *Judg.* vii. 12. When *Pharaoh* pursued after *Israel*, a poor weak, unarmed and defenceless People, with six Hundred chosen Chariots, and

§ *Josh.* xxiii. 10.

*Captains over every one of them*<sup>h</sup>, he was confident of Success and Victory; as indeed, to all probable Appearance, he well might be. He said, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil*<sup>i</sup>, he thought he had nothing to do but pursue, and conquer; and reckoned himself as sure of Victory, as if he had already obtained it. But you know what the Issue was; *Pharaoh* and all his Army perished in the *Red-Sea*, while *Israel* escaped in Safety. *The Battle is not to the Strong.*

AND many Instances may be gathered from later History, to illustrate and prove the same Thing. As when, in *Queen Elizabeth's* Time, the King of *Spain* fitted out a Fleet to invade *England*; a Fleet that was three Years in preparing, at an incredible Expence, and which consisted of such a vast Number of great Ships, and Men, and Arms, that they called it the *Invincible Armada* †; not at all doubting of Success, and of the Conquest of *England*, which had at that Time no Force to cope with such a Fleet. Yet *the Battle was not to the Strong. Time and Chance so happened to this Invincible*

<sup>h</sup> Exod. xiv. 6, &c.      <sup>i</sup> — xv. 9.

† THE *Armada*, according to the Account of it, that was published by the Court of *Spain*, in *Spanish, Latin, French, and Dutch*; consisted of 130 large Ships, besides 20 Tenders, and 10 light Gallies of six Oars a-piece, 19295 Soldiers, 8450 Mariners, 2088 Slaves, and 2630 Pieces of Brass Cannon.



*ble Armada*, that it was in a Manner all shattered, and broke to pieces, and destroyed. What by Storm, and Fire, and other Providences, but very few returned with the sad Tidings to their own Country; while *England* remained in Safety and Peace, a Monument of God's powerful Protection, and sparing Mercy. *Let not him that girdeth on his Harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off*<sup>k</sup>; for we have seen that *the Battle is not always to the Strong*. Nay, have we not known *a Run* of Successes for a considerable Time, at length disappointed and come to nothing? It is yet fresh in several of your Memories, with what a Series of Victories God blessed our Arms in the last *French War*; and yet, when we seemed to be just upon the Point of obtaining, and securing to ourselves, and our Posterity, all we had been fighting for, for several Years, at a vast Expence of Blood and Treasure, how was all blasted at once, by a *dishonourable Peace*. *The Battle* did not prove in the End to be *to the Strong*, nor the Success of the Victory to the Conqueror. But it would be endless to search History for Examples of this Sort; *Solomon's* Observation may easily be renewed in any, and in every Age, that *the Battle is not always to the Strong*. Let us now consider,

## II. WHENCE

<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings xx. 11.

II. WHENCE it comes to pass, that the most promising human Endeavours, and the most likely Means, often fail of Success; so that *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*. Now this comes to pass; often through the *Ignorance of Men* ——— and *always* through the wise and over-ruling *Providence of God*.

1<sup>st</sup>. THIS is often apparently owing to the *Ignorance and Unskilfulness of Men*: Many a Ship has been lost through the Ignorance of the Pilot; and many a Battle through the *Misconduct* of the *General*. The wisest Men are by no Means exempt from Mistake and Error: We are apt to expect too much from *Governours and Ministers of State*, and to look upon any Mistake of theirs as a Thing unpardonable; we seem to forget they are but Men, and that the wisest and honestest of them all are liable to Mistake and Error, as well as *other Men*. And how often has some more Inadvertency of such Men, some little Mistake, as it appeared at first, brought on fatal Effects to a whole Nation? So that, considering the Weakness and Ignorance of Men, of *all Men*, it is no Wonder, that human Means and Endeavours, however likely in themselves, should yet fail of Success. But we are chiefly to ascribe this,

2<sup>dly</sup>, To the wise, over-ruling *Providence of God*. God makes use of all Means and  
 Instruments

Instruments as he pleases; *he works all Things after the Counsel of his own Will*<sup>1</sup>. If he pleases *the Weak shall be as David*<sup>m</sup>; and the Walls of *Jericho* shall fall down flat at the Blast of a few Ram's Horns: The most unlikely Means shall effect the greatest Matters. Or if he so please, *the Men of Might shall not find their Hands*<sup>n</sup>. As all good Success is from God, so all Disappointments likewise are from his Providence: And how easy is it for God, to disappoint the best laid Schemes, and the most promising of all human Endeavours and Expectations, who has a sovereign, absolute and uncontrollable Power, not only over the whole *material World*, but over the *Hearts and Spirits of Men* themselves.

FIRST, God has an *absolute Power* over the whole *material World*, to order it, and to alter it, as he pleases. *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Wind and Storm* fulfill his *Word*<sup>o</sup>; all Nature is wholly at the Command and Beck of its Maker, God. What Dependance then can there be upon Nature, without the God of Nature? Or upon the Creature, upon *any* Creature, without the Blessing of the Creator? *The Race* is by no Means certainly *to the Swift*, for God can *weaken his Strength in the Way*<sup>p</sup>, and cause him to stumble and fall. Nor is *the Battle*  
to

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 11.      <sup>m</sup> Zech. xii. 8.      <sup>n</sup> Psal. lxxvi. 5.  
<sup>o</sup> — cxlvi. 8.      <sup>p</sup> — cii. 23.



*to the Strong*: For how easily, and how speedily, can God sweep away the gallantest Army, by a *Plague*, or a *Famine*, or the *In-clemency* of the *Seasons*! Who can endure his scorching Heat? Or, *who can stand before his Cold*? The great God of Nature could, in one Night, freeze a whole Army to Death; or at another Season, his sultry Heat should melt away their Lives. He can dismay them with his Thunder. *The very Stars in their Courses shall fight against Sisera*. *A Horse is a vain Thing for Safety* by Land, and so is also a Ship at Sea, without the Favour and Protection of God; *for if he commandeth, and raiseth up, the stormy Wind, the Mariners are presently at their Wits-end, their Souls are melted because of Trouble*. The *Invincible Armada*, as the Pride and vain Confidence of Man was pleased to call it; how soon is it shattered by a Storm, and broke to pieces! Thus when the pious King *Jehoshaphat* joined with the wicked King *Abaziah*, to build a Fleet of Ships, to go to *Tarshish*, it displeased the Lord that he should, in any respect, join himself to so wicked a Neighbour, therefore *the Lord has broken thy Works*, says the Prophet, *and the Ships were broken that they were not able to go to Tarshish*, 2 Chron. xx. 35. and there was an End of the Project. How easily could God disappoint it, after  
all

¶ Psal. cxlvii. 17.  
xxxiii. 17.

¶ Judg. v. 20.

¶ Psal.

¶ — cvii. 26, 27.



all their Expence of Building Ships, and all their Schemes of Trade and Profit. God who holds *the Winds in his Fist*<sup>u</sup>, as it were, sends out a Blast, and breaks the Ships to pieces. And our stoutest Men of War can no more bear the Force of such a Tempest as God could send, than *Jehoshaphat's* Ships could. *The Battle then is not to the Strong* without the Favour of God. There is no safe Dependence upon any human Strength whatever, not on the largest Army, nor the stoutest Navy; for God, who has absolute Power over the whole material World, can easily disappoint our Expectations from one or the other of them. And this may further appear, if we consider,

SECONDLY, That God has likewise an *absolute Power* over the *Minds* and *Spirits* of *Men*. *The King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord, and he turneth it whithersoever he will*<sup>w</sup>; and so is the Heart of every Man. The very Will of Man is subject to God's Controul; *thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*, is a Promise of the Father to Christ, *Psal. cx. 3*. God could not only promise what should be done, but what Men should be willing to do; his powerful Grace can make the stubborn Enemies of Christ to become his willing People. There is a remarkable Promise of God to *Israel*, in *Exod. xxxiv. 24*. which shows, what an ab-

C

solute

<sup>u</sup> Prov, xxx, 4.

<sup>w</sup> ~~Exod.~~ xxxi, 3.

solute Power he has over the Hearts and Wills of Men. In the Verse before, he had given them this Law, that *three Times in the Year, all their Males should appear before the Lord, in the Place which he should choose,* which was afterwards *Jerusalem*. Now it might be objected to this Law, and truly with a great Appearance of Reason, that as the *Jews* lived in the Midst of Enemies, it would be very dangerous for all their Men to leave their Towns, and go to *Jerusalem*; for that would be giving their Enemies the fairest Opportunity that could be, to make Incur-sions into the Land, and plunder their Houses and Families, when the Men had all left the Country. But God could undertake, and he does undertake, and promise, that he would so over-rule the Hearts even of their Enemies; that nothing of this should ever happen; *no Man shall desire thy Land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord, thrice in the Year.* So entirely are the Hearts and Wills of Men at the Dispose of God. As he can cause that *the Mighty shall not find their Hands,* so also that the *Wise and Valorous shall not find their Hearts.* He can *turn the Counsel of Abithophel into Foolishness* \*, or throw a Damp on the Courage of those who are to fight our Battles for us. He can, if he pleases, make our Enemies to be at Peace with us; or he can  
cause

cause our Friends to become our Enemies. One Thing remarked in our Text is, that *Favour is not to Men of Skill*. We depend it may be, a good deal, on the Favour, and friendly Assistance of *neighbouring Allies*, in case of encreasing Danger; but we should remember, that *Favour is not to Men of Skill*, without the Favour of God. There is a great deal more in that Scripture Expression, than we commonly think for, *God gave such an one Favour in the Eyes of such an one*. If God does not please to give us Favour in the Eyes of our Neighbours, their Friendship, however we may depend upon it, will fail us. It is not our Skill in Address, and all the Arguments or Perswasions we can use, that will engage their Favour and their Assistance, unless God is pleased to incline their Hearts. And thus you see how easy it is for God; by various Ways, and by a Thousand Ways more than I can tell you of, to disappoint the Designs and Projects of Men; and to render their best Endeavours, and the most promising Means, fruitless; and then we are not to wonder, that *the Race is not to the Swift; nor the Battle to the Strong*. We are now to enquire

III. INTO the Reasons of this, and such-like Dispensations of God's Providence. What Reason can we conceive, why God should

sometimes frustrate the best Endeavours and Means, that Men can use, and bring Disappointment on their Expectations and Hopes? We, it may be, such poor, short-sighted Creatures as we, are apt to think it would be a wiser and better Way, that Success should always be answerable to the Means; that so Men might be more encouraged to Diligence in the Use of proper Means. But God, who *seeth not as Man seeth*, has certainly wise Reasons to order it sometimes otherwise; so, that *the Race shall not be to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*. May we not humbly guess at such Reasons as these?

1<sup>st</sup>. To *humble the Pride and Arrogance of Men*, and to convince them of the Vanity of their Confidence in any Power, but God's. When *Pharaoh* says, *I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil*<sup>y</sup>, God will let *Pharaoh* know, and all *Egypt* and *Israel* shall know, that it is not for Man to talk thus proudly. I will do so and so, is proper for God to say, but not Man: he *resisteth the Proud*<sup>z</sup>, and will make them know there is a God above them. It is our Duty to use proper Means, for obtaining a desired End; but then we should remember they are but *Means*, and that after all that we can do, SUCCESS IS FROM GOD: and if we put our Trust in Means, and thereby put them in the room of God, it is a wise, as well

<sup>y</sup> Exod. xv. 9.

<sup>z</sup> Jam. iv. 6.



well as a righteous Thing, for God to blast them with Disappointment. *Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm, and whose Heart departeth from the Lord, Jer. xvii. 5.* It is a very affronting and provoking Sin to God, when we make any Creature to be that to us, which he alone can be, and which he has undertaken to be, to all that put their Trust in him; as when we put that Trust in the Wisdom, and Power, and Kindness, and Faithfulness of Men, which should be placed in those Attributes of God only. When we *make Flesh our Arm* that we stay upon, or under which think to shelter ourselves, in a Forgetfulness of God and his Providence, it is a departing from the Lord, it is a practical Denial of his Providence, and a Sort of renouncing our Share and Interest in the divine Protection and Care. Therefore, when Men are guilty of this Sin, God often takes humbling Methods, in the Course of his Providence, to convince them of it, and to bring down their Pride and Arrogance. Thus, when *Peter* trusted to the Strength of his own Resolutions, he was left to himself in an Hour of Temptation. So when we trust in Men, and trust in the Creatures of God, instead of God himself, it is no Wonder if he leaves us in a Time of Difficulty and Danger; or if, by some unexpected Providence, he blasts those

those

those Means which we so sinfully depended upon, and disappoints all our Expectations from them.

2dly, GOD may thus frustrate the Success of Means, and second Causes, to convince Men of his over-ruling Providence. For did Success always, and in all Cases, answer to natural Means, the Providence of God would not be near so conspicuous in his Government of the World. Men would ascribe all to the Means, and nothing to God, who gives them their Success. Therefore, he will sometimes disappoint the most likely and most powerful Means, and sometimes work by, and give Success to, more weak and unlikely ones; that it may appear to all, that there is a God and a Providence, which rules over the Children of Men, and that Means are nothing, but what he makes them. It is easy to observe, that God has sometimes very remarkably ordered the Concurrence of Events, especially in the greater Affairs of Kingdoms and Nations, so as on purpose to make the Hand of his Providence eminently conspicuous in them.

I CANNOT but, upon this Occasion, recollect the remarkable Appearance of God's Providence in favour of this sinful, unthankful Nation, by the REVOLUTION; when we were upon the very Brink of Ruin, when we had a *Popish King actually on the Throne*, which was worse than a *Popish Pretender to*  
the

the Throne. *Popery and Tyranny* were pouring in upon us like a Flood; and our *Liberties, both Civil and Religious*, were going apace. But God, in his Mercy, raised us up a Deliverer, the Great and Glorious King WILLIAM. I have been much affected with reading the Account, which a celebrated Historian † gives us, of the Voyage of our Deliverer and his Army from *Holland to England*. God and Providence were remarkably to be seen in it, from Beginning to End. Soon after the Fleet sailed out, they were taken with a Storm at Sea, which lasted a Night and a Day; by which they were shattered, and driven all back again. God would let them see, at their first setting out, that they could not proceed without his Permission, they could do nothing without him. Thus he gave them Notice to eye his Providence; and, at the same Time, by a very watchful Providence, guarded the Fleet from any real Harm; so that not one Ship was lost, and but one Man. This Delay gave Time and Opportunity for fitting out a strong Fleet, to oppose and hinder our Deliverer's coming to our Rescue; and so the Danger of the Expedition was now greater than before. But God is most seen in the Mount of Danger. At length the Fleet, with our Deliverer, sets out a second Time; and  

now

† Bishop *Burnet*, in his *History of his own Times*, Vol. I. pag. 782, &c.



now they have a fair Wind to bring them over; and at the same Time it is directly against their Enemies, so that they could not come out to meet them. The *Prince* and his Fleet are driven by a strong Wind in the Night, quite beyond the Place where they intended to land; which brought them into such imminent Danger, that the Admiral declared, *All was lost*. But on a Sudden, to our Wonder, (says the Historian, who was himself in the Fleet) it calm'd a little, and the Wind turned to the South, and a soft and happy Gale carried the whole Fleet safe into *Torbay*; where a Place was found (which they came to by mere Accident) so convenient for landing the Horse, that, if the whole Island round had been founded, no properer Place could have been found for it. No sooner were they landed, but the Wind turn'd about quite the contrary Way, and blew another Storm, from which their Fleet was well sheltered; but their Enemies Fleet, which was now got to Sea, was quite shattered by it, and rendered unfit for any more Service that Year; and so, says the Historian, we were Masters of the Sea without a Blow. He adds, " I never found a  
 " Disposition to Superstition in my Temper,  
 " I was rather inclined to be Philosophical  
 " upon all Occasions; yet, I must confess,  
 " this strange Ordering of the Winds and  
 " Seasons thus to change, as our Affairs re-  
 " quired



“ quired it, could not but make a deep Impression on me, as well as on all, that observed it.” On this Occasion, he quotes two Lines out of a *Latin* Poet, which he translates, and applies to the Prince of *Orange*.

Heaven's Favourite! For whom the Skies  
do fight,  
And all the Winds conspire to guide thee  
right. \*

THIS is a Part of that wonderful Work of Providence, which our Enemies are now endeavouring to undo again; but we hope, we trust in God, that *He will not forsake the Work of his own Hands*.

I HAVE given you a short Abstract of this remarkable Story, as an Instance of God's ordering providential Dispensations so, as to make his Providence *appear* in them; and it is for this Reason, no doubt, that he sometimes disappoints powerful and likely Means, and gives Success to weak and more unlikely Ones.

3dly, ANOTHER Reason may be, to encourage our Trust in him, even when we have but little natural, or reasonable Probability of Success. It is, in such a Case, a comfortable  
D Thing

\* O Nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat æther  
Et conjurati veniunt ad Classica venti!

Thing to remember, that *the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*; but that God can, and sometimes does, work by weak Means, as well as mighty; and he can save by many, or by few. When God, in his Providence, denies us the Use of ordinary Means, in any Distress or Danger, he thereby calls us to a more entire Dependance and Reliance on his Power and Goodness: And many have found the good Success of this, while others have been disappointed of their confident Hopes from those Means, in which they much trusted.

THUS I have explained my Text and Subject; what further remains is to make a practical Application of it.

*1st.* IF there be such an Uncertainty in all human Affairs, and human Events; let this teach us, to look after those better Blessings, which we may surely obtain, and which we shall be in no Danger of being ever deprived of, i. e. spiritual and heavenly Blessings, *that good Part which shall never be taken away<sup>a</sup> from us.* Surely our Portion and our Happiness must not lie in these precarious and uncertain Things; uncertain whether we shall obtain them, or if we do, it is uncertain how long we shall possess and hold them. Blessed be God, there are surer Mercies and Comforts than all these, which may certainly be obtained, and held for ever;  
even

<sup>a</sup> Luke x. 42.

even those, which the Scripture calls, *the sure Mercies of David*<sup>b</sup>; i. e. the spiritual and everlasting Blessings of the Covenant of Grace. — Here, as to worldly Matters, *the Race is not always to the Swift*; but in the spiritual Race or Path-way to Heaven there is no such Uncertainty: *So run, that ye may obtain*<sup>c</sup>; and all, that *run with Patience the Race that is set before*<sup>d</sup> them, shall surely obtain the Prize of Glory; therefore, says the Apostle, *I so run, not as uncertainly*<sup>e</sup>. — Here *the Battle is not always to the Strong*; but all that *fight the good Fight of Faith, shall lay hold on eternal Life*<sup>f</sup>. You are sure of Conquest and Victory; *the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your Feet shortly*<sup>g</sup>. — Here *Bread is not always to the Wise*; therefore *labour not for the Meat that perisheth*, for perhaps your Labour may be all in vain: Let the Uncertainty of Success, check your too eager Pursuit of worldly Things. *But labour for the Meat, that endureth to everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you*<sup>h</sup>. In this, your Labour will meet with no Disappointment; it is but *ask, and you shall receive, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you*<sup>i</sup>. — In this World *Riches are not always to Men of Understanding*; but hearken to Christ's  
D 2
Counsel,

<sup>b</sup> Isai. lv. 3.<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24.<sup>d</sup> Heb. xii. 1.<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 26.<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 12.<sup>g</sup> Rom.

xvi. 20,

<sup>h</sup> John vi. 27.<sup>i</sup> Mat. vii. 7.



Counsel, *Come and buy of me, Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayst be rich*<sup>k</sup>. His Righteousness, and the Graces of his Spirit, shall make you *rich towards God*<sup>l</sup>; you shall have durable Riches, to live upon and enjoy, when *this World, and all the Things that are therein, shall be burnt up*<sup>m</sup>.—Here again, *Favour is not always to Men of Skill*; the Favour, and Friendship of Men, is precarious and uncertain; but so is not the Favour of God. *I love them that love me, says he, and those that seek me early, shall find me*<sup>n</sup>. And he is a sure, and constant Friend, who will never withdraw his Favour from his own People; for it is the Promise of his Covenant, *I will never turn away from them, to do them Good*<sup>o</sup>. Such a Friend St. Paul found him to be: *No Man stood with me, but all Men forsook me; notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me*, 2 Tim. iv. 16. Thus let the Uncertainty of all human Affairs, and worldly Events, be improved, to wean off our Hearts, and to check our too eager Desires and Pursuits after these Things; and let it quicken us to seek after, and make sure of, those better, substantial, and durable Blessings. Oh! never let such precarious, uncertain, and perishing Things, as these, be the Portion of our Choice. I would say to my Soul, *God is thy Portion,*  
and

<sup>k</sup> Rev. iii. 18.<sup>l</sup> Luke xii. 21.<sup>m</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 10.<sup>n</sup> Prov. viii. 17.<sup>o</sup> Jer. xxxii. 40.



and then, when I am once secure of his Favour, and Love, through Christ; what have I to lose, what have I to fear? Then, though whole Nations trembled and shook, or *though the Earth were removed, and the Mountains carried into the Midst of the Sea*<sup>p</sup>, I would stand upon the dreadful Ruins, and rejoice, and triumph in my Portion, and say, *I have lost nothing.*

2dly, LET us learn from our Text, not to be confident of the Success of any worldly Undertaking, or of the Issue of any worldly Affair. None can be so, but God. *Who is he that says, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not, Lam. iii. 37. We are but of Yesterday, and know nothing*<sup>q</sup> beyond To-day, concerning the Events of Time and Providence. *Boast not thyself of To-morrow, for thou knowest not what To-day will bring forth*<sup>r</sup>. Whatever Probability there may be, of the good Success of any Thing, yet we must not be confident of it; for we can bring nothing to pass with our own Power, and God does not always work by the most likely Means, nor does he make Events always to answer the Probability of second Causes. We may hope, or we may fear, what *may* be; but God only knows, what *will* be; for what he has appointed, that will he bring to pass. And therefore,

3dly, THIS

<sup>p</sup> Psal. xlv. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Job viii. 9.

<sup>r</sup> Prov. xxvii. 1.

3dly, This also shows the Folly and Sin; of undertaking any Thing without God, *i. e.* without seeking to him for his Help, and humbly depending on his Blessing for Success. SUCCESS IS FROM GOD; he, and he only; can command, and give it to any of our Undertakings and Works. *Go to now, ye that say, To-day, or To-morrow, I will go to such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and sell and get Gain; whereas ye know not what will be on the Morrow: Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this and that,* James iv. 13, 14, 15. It is fit, and highly proper, we should thus *acknowledge God in all our Ways*<sup>f</sup>; and he expects, and requires it, that we should own his Providence, by Prayer for his Blessing, and for Success. *Thou shalt make thy Prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; and then shalt thou decree a Thing, and it shall be established unto thee, and the Light shall shine upon thy Ways,* Job xxii. 27, 28. But if, on the other Hand, we forget God, and set out without him, is it any Wonder he does not attend us with his Blessing? And then all our Endeavours are fruitless and unsuccessful: It is a practical disowning Providence; and as such, God has in many Cases remarkably shewed his Resentment of it. When Persons or Nations have set out in an Undertaking, in a vain Confidence and Presumption of their  
their

<sup>f</sup> Prov. iii. 6,

their own Power and Strength, how often has it been seen, that God has remarkably frowned upon them, and humbled them, and made them know, it is not for Man *to talk thus proudly* †. I cannot but suspect, that this, among many other crying Sins of our Nation, lies at the Bottom of those heavy Judgments, that are now upon us. You cannot but remember, what Shouts we heard at the proclaiming of the War, as if now we had nothing to fear, and nothing to do but conquer; for, *we had such Navies and Armies, that no doubt we should effectually humble our Enemies, in two or three Years at most, and bring them down to our own Terms.* This was the common Talk; but how few said any Thing, or thought any Thing, of God and Providence. I was afraid *then*, this proud and presumptuous Spirit must be humbled by Disappointment; and so it has proved. And now may we not see our Sin in our Punishment? If ever any Judgment bore the Signature of the Sin, for which it was sent; surely the *present Distress* points out our presumptuous *Self-Confidence*, and our Forgetfulness of God, as the procuring Cause of it. Will it be believed by Posterity, or will it not shake the Credit of the Historians of this Age, when it shall be read, in their Account of these Times, that *seven Persons only* landed in the Northern Parts of this  
 Island,



Island, and rose up in Rebellion against the King and Government, and having gathered a contemptible Rout, they ravaged and plundered, for several Hundred Miles, to the very Center of the Land? And though the Nation had Force enough, as might reasonably be supposed, to have quashed ten such Rebellions, yet it was not able, for several Months, to quash this. Surely, this is to make us see, how vainly we presumed upon our own Strength, and how foolishly and sinfully we forgot God and Providence. Is not this a very sensible Instance of what our Text says, that *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*. Here we may see, that God can correct our Pride and Haughtiness by weak Means, as well as by mighty. Oh, that we might be truly *bumbled under the mighty Hand of God*<sup>u</sup>, and repent, and *turn unto him that smites us*<sup>w</sup>! Could we but once see this Effect of the Judgment, we should then have hope, that God will turn, and have Mercy upon us, and remove it in his due Time. And then, if he shall be pleased at length to give us Victory and Success, I hope we shall be ready to own his Hand, and to give him the Praise. But I will not take up more of your Time, lest I should too much break in upon that, which is the more proper Work of this Day; namely, Prayer. The Times never more needed Prayer; the Call of God's Providence

<sup>u</sup> 1 Pet. v. 6.

<sup>w</sup> Isai. ix. 13.



dence was never louder to his People, to pray. It may be God will yet be entreated for us, that we perish not. His Name is still a God *hearing Prayer* <sup>x</sup>. As great Mercies, as we want, have been obtained by Prayer; and as heavy Judgments, as we feel or fear, have been prevented, or removed, by Prayer. Oh, that God would now *incline our Hearts to pray*; and then, we are sure, he will *incline his Ears to hear*!

z Psal. lxxv. 11.

F I N I S.



E

BOOKS

---

B O O K S printed for, and sold by J. OSWALD, at the *Rose and Crown* near the *Mansion-House*; and J. BRACKSTONE, at the *Globe* in *Cornhill*.

1. **T**HE Beauty and Benefit of early Piety; represented in several Sermons, preached to young People, on New-Years-Days, and published out of Compassion to the rising Generation. The third Edition. price bound 1 s. 6 d.

2. A Sermon preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, at *Salter's-Hall*, June 27, 1737. The second Edition. price 6 d.

3. The Origin of Death, and of immortal Life, considered in a Sermon, occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Mr. *Daniel Neal*, M. A. who departed this Life *April 4, 1743*. in the *65th* Year of his Age; with some brief Memoirs of his Life and Character. price 6 d.

The above by the Reverend Mr. *David Jennings*.

4. An Abridgment of the Life of the late Reverend and learned Dr. Cotton Mather, of Boston in New-England. Taken from the Account of him published by his Son, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Mather. Proposed as a Pattern to all Christians, who desire to excel in Holiness and Usefulness; and especially to younger Ministers. price bound 1 s. 6 d.

5. Two Discourses, the first of preaching Christ; the second, of particular and experimental Preaching. By the late Rev. Mr. John Jennings. The third Edition. price bound 1 s.

The two last published by the Rev. Mr. David Jennings.

6. A Vindication of the Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, from Mr. Taylor's free and candid Examination of it. price 1 s. 6 d.

7. Faith and Practice, represented in fifty-four Sermons on the principal Heads of the Christian Religion, preached at Berry-Street; by the Rev. I. Watts, D. D. D. Neal, M. A. J. Guyse, D. D. S. Price, D. Jennings, and J. Hubbard. In two Volumes Octavo. price bound 19 s.

Christian

Christian Preaching, and Ministerial Service. Considered in a Sermon preached at *St. Ives*, in *Huntingtonshire*, at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. *John Jennings*, August 12, 1742. By *David Jennings*. To which is added, A Charge delivered on the same Occasion. By *P. Doddridge*, D. D.

Printed for *J. Brackstone*, at the *Globe* in *Cornhill*; and *J. Waugh*, at the *Turk's Head* in *Gracechurch-Street*.

4 OC 58

