

God Acknowledged:

OR THE TRUE INTEREST OF THE NATION,
and all that Fear GOD.

OPENED In A SERMON
Preached December the 11th, 1695,
Being the Day Appointed by the KING,
for Public PRAYER and HUMILIATION.

*With Some Addition,
and edited in the year 2024 by
Thomas Brooks III*

By BENJAMIN KEACH

*Psal. 65. 2. O Thou that hearest Prayer, to Thee shall all flesh
come.*

Psal. 46. 10. Be Still and Know that I am GOD.

*Prov. III. VI. In all thy ways Acknowledge Him, and He shall direct
thy Paths.*

*Prov. III. VI. In all thy ways Acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct thy Paths.*

Introduction

WISDOM, in this Chapter, particularly in the first Verse, giveth to her Son, most needful and necessary Counsel; which ought to be observed by all who would be Truly Wise, viz. *My Son forget not my Law, but let thy heart keep all my Commandments.* By Wisdom, in several places of this Book of Solomon, is meant Jesus Christ; by Law, here may comprehend Christ's Doctrine, his Word and Holy Precepts. In the second verse, he lays down a precious motive, to stir up all understanding Persons thus to do; *For length of days, and long Life, and Peace, shall they add unto thee:* That is, Length of Good Days, a Joyful Life and Peace shall attend thee: In the third verse, He gives another Holy Precept, *Let not Mercy and Truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck, write them upon thine heart.*

By Mercy and Truth, is meant, that which ought to be in the heart of Man; and as these two are frequently joined together, as they are in God, so they ought always to be in us; not Mercy without Truth, but both together: Mercy, denotes all that Benignity, Clemency, Compassion and Charity, and readiness to do good to others, according to the place or station where we are set, or are placed. Truth, may comprehend that inward Sincerity, Faithfulness and Uprightness of heart, which should be in us to God and Man, according to the Holy Precepts of Gods Word, and Rules of Justice and Righteousness; and these should be written or engraven upon the Fleshly Tables of our Hearts, and so they will be as a Chain of Gold about the Neck, or a precious Ointment to the Soul.

In the fourth Verse, we have a Blessed Motive and Encouragement to do this, *So shalt thou find Favor, and a good Understanding in the sight of God and Man*: In a serious and constant Exercise of Religion, we shall meet with God's Acceptance, and attain unto a solid and spiritual Understanding, which will render us Honorable among all good Men.

In the fifth Verse, He subjoyns another Indispensable Duty, *Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding*: He hereby shews, that we should wholly rely upon Gods Wisdom, Strength, Promises and Providence, for Help and Relief in all our Affairs and Dangers; and not to think we can by our Wisdom (let our Understanding be never so great, acute and clear) accomplish our Designs, or manage our Affairs.

To which he adds the words of my Text, viz, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*.

In the Text are two parts: 1. We have a Duty enjoyned, *In all thy ways acknowledge Him*. 2. A Promise or Motive annexed, *And He shall direct thy paths*.

As to the Explanation of the Words, consider these things following:

1. The Subject, on whom the Precept or Duty is enjoyned, *Thou my Son*, or Sons; it may refer to one single person, or to any one man that would be wise, and succeed well in his Affairs or Enterprises, in whatsoever he takes in hand; or it may comprehend any wise and pious community of men, Civil or Ecclesiastical; for that which is the duty and true Interest of any one true Son of Wisdom, as so considered, is the duty of all in every place or station where they are set, whether in Church or State.

2. Observe the Object, *Acknowledge Him*; That is, the Lord; as repeated in the Context, Trust in the Lord: So here, *Acknowledge Him*; i.e. He that is your Creator, your God and only Counselor.

3. Consider the matter of the Duty, or what the Duty or Precept is, *In all thy ways acknowledge him*, That is, Know him, Own him, Acknowledge his Being, his Wisdom, his Power, his Sovereignty, and expect Counsel and Success from him.

4. The Universality of the Duty, In all thy ways Acknowledge God, Seek to him, Consult with him, and that not only in one or two main cases, that are of the greatest moment, or in some difficult Exigencies; but in all thy ways, whatsoever thou attempt to do, for thy Self, Family, Church or State, thou must Acknowledge God; Cry to him, Consult with him who sits upon the Throne, who is the Mighty Counselor, and Everlasting Father, and only Potentate, and great Ruler of the World, in all thy Designs and Undertakings, whether it be about the things of this Life, or about matters and things that concern the Life that is to come.

Secondly, You have the Motive, *And he shall* (or he will) *direct thy paths*: He will give thee Wisdom and Counsel, and shew thee a right way, and Bless thee, and give thee good Success, in all those things thou settest thy hand to do, or in that work thou goest about, wherein his Name and Glory is concerned, and thy good.

From the words thus Opened, I shall only observe one Proposition or point of Doctrine.

Doct. That it is the Indispensable Duty of every Man, or all Men who are Sons of Wisdom, in every thing they enter upon or go about to do, to Acknowledge God, which they must do, if they would Prosper or meet with Success.

In speaking to this Proposition, I shall endeavor (God Assisting) to do these things following.

1. Shew you what it is to Acknowledge God, or open the purport of that word more largely.
2. Shew you in what ways more particularly we should Acknowledge God.
3. Shew you how or after what manner we should Acknowledge the Lord.
4. Give you the Reasons of the Point.
5. Make Application of the whole.

What it is to Acknowledge God

1. To Acknowledge God, is to own the Being of God, or that God is, or that there is one Eternal and Infinite Being: It was a great while before Proud Pharaoh would do this, And Pharaoh said, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord;* I am the Sovereign Lord of Egypt, and I own no other Superior here; What Lord hath Authority and Power over me, to command me? But the Lord was resolved to make him know him and acknowledge him before he had done with him, and therefore poured forth his Plagues upon him, and at last overthrew him in the Red Sea: Those who will not Acknowledge God, and so Glorify his Dreadful Name, he will Glorify himself upon them at last in their Destruction: *And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the Children of Israel from among them.* Moreover it was a great while before Nebuchadnezzar would be brought to Acknowledge the Most High God, therefore was he driven from men, and made to dwell with the Beasts of the Field, and to eat grass as Oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of Heaven, till his Hairs were grown like Eagles feathers, and his Nails like Birds Claws. Though this is the least degree of Knowing and of Acknowledging God, yet many do not thus Acknowledge Him in their hearts: They Acknowledge Him with their Lips, but by their Works deny Him: *The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God.*

2. To Acknowledge God, is not only to Acknowledge his Being, his Holy Essence, or Deity; but also that he is the Absolute Sovereign of the whole World, and Sole Governor of all things in Heaven and Earth: *I know the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all Gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that did he in Heaven and in Earth, and in all deep places,* Psal. 135. 6. There is

no bounds to his Power, but his own Will; and what his Soul desireth, that doth he. God's Government is purely Arbitrary, and none but his ought to be so; His Will, His Law; yet is His Government most Righteous, because He can Will nothing but what is Just and Good. Our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleaseth: He hath Power over all both Men and Devils, over Kingdoms and Nations, to dispose and determine them, and all things in them, as seems good to him. *Who shall say to him, What dost thou?* He that made all things, or gave being to all, must needs have Power over all, and be Lord of all; 'tis He that maketh War, and commands Peace; that sets Up, and pulleth Down; that Kills and maketh Alive: 'Tis the Glory of God; He hath such an Unlimited and an Uncontrollable Power, seeing he is Perfectly Just and Righteous, as his Power is Inconceivable, so his Will is Incorruptible: *I the Lord have spoken it*, it shall come to pass, and I will do it, I will not go back. As if the Lord should say, It is my will it should be done, and therefore it shall be done: His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure.

And this Brethren we should know; and this it is to Acknowledge God. But,

3. To Acknowledge God, is to Own and Acknowledge that all things come to pass by his All-wise Providence: According to his Eternal Decree; either by his special Commission, or by his Permission; to say all things come to pass by God's special Commission, is to make him the author of Sin; but this know assuredly, that God did Determine, before time, that he would do such things, or permit or suffer such things to come to pass, and be done, or else it was impossible it should ever be done: All the Motions of the Creature, even the most violent, and to appearance, Contingent Motions of the Creature, are under the Direction, yea, under the Dominion of God.

All things Brethren, Move as they are Influenced by his Power, and Directed by his Wisdom. *Is there any Evil in the City, and I the Lord have not done it?* Amos 3. 6. *Afflictions do not rise out of the dust,* Job. 5. 6. What Evil soever cometh upon Kingdoms or Nations, Cities or Families, or particular persons, 'tis by God's Wise Providence: *Evil came down from the Lord to the gates of Jerusalem.* Mich. 1. 12. God did not only make the World, but he disposeth of all Affairs and Matters therein, as he pleaseth; the government of the World is as much of God and his work, as the making of it; there is in all Occurrences or Transactions of Men, a Wheel within the Wheel, and this we ought to know and to acknowledge: this is to Acknowledge God.

4. And from hence it followeth, that to Acknowledge God, is to Acknowledge his Omniscieny: *The eyes of the Lord run too and fro, through the whole earth, to shew himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is upright towards him,* 2 Chron. 16. 9. If God had not a perfect knowledge of all things, how could he govern the World? the Text that I mentioned last, shews two things.

1. The perfect Knowledge God hath of whatsoever is done throughout the whole Earth.

2. His Providence over all, even over the whole Earth, in ordering and disposing of all things therein, and particularly his care of his own People; *His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men,* Psal. 11. 4. The Lord doth not only know all things and persons, but he hath a clear understanding of them: *All things are naked and manifest to his eyes with whom we have to do.* Heb. 4. 13. *The Eye of God* signifies the Knowledge of God, he sees as well what is in Man, as what is done by Man; He knows our thoughts a far off, before they are conceived, he knows what they will be; there is nothing done, nor intended to be

done, but it is known by the Almighty; his Eyes are like a flaming Fire, of a piercing and penetrating Nature: *The eyes of the Lord are every where, beholding the evil and the good*, Prov. 15. 3.

3. Man sees the Face, the outside, but God searches and discerns the Heart; the Eyes of Man may be deceived, but the Eyes of God cannot; of Christ 'tis said, he *needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man*, John 2. 25. This shews that he is the Eternal God, for, *thou knoweth all things*, (saith Peter) *thou knoweth that I love thee*, 21.17. God's sight of Man, and of his Ways are Universal, and Everlasting; he saw all things with one single look from Everlasting to Everlasting; he knows all things past, present, and to come: *For his eyes are upon all the ways of man, and he seeth all his doings; there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves*, Job 35. 21, 22.: and as God is a God of Knowledge, so to acknowledge him, is to acknowledge his Omniscience.

5. To Acknowledge God, 'Tis to acknowledge and own his Infinite Wisdom; or, that he is a Most Wise God: And as he made all things in Wisdom, so he governs all things in Wisdom also, no Men have any true Wisdom but what they receive from God: the Infiniteness, the Omniscience, the Unchangeableness, and the Simplicity of God, &c. are Incommunicable Attributes; but the Wisdom of God together with his Holiness, Justice, and Mercy, are Communicable, i.e. God doth give, or communicate Holiness and Wisdom, &c. unto Angels and Men: God indeed, is said to be only Wise, because none hath Wisdom of and from themselves but he, nor are any so Wise as he; his Wisdom so far excels the Wisdom of Men and Angels, that none are said to be wise but the Lord only;

none are originally Wise but God; the Wisdom of God is not a separable Quality from him, (or from his Being,) as the Wisdom of Man is; many (as one notes) are Men, but not Wise Men.

6. To Acknowledge God, is to acknowledge his Justice and Holiness, *Judgment and Justice are the Habitation of his Throne*, Psal. 97.2. He can do no Man any wrong, because he is Justice and Righteousness it self; whatsoever God brings upon a Nation, or People, or particular Person, 'tis Right, or in Righteousness. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee*, Jer. 12. 1. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* Gen. 18. 25. We may judge of his Justice and Righteousness, by considering of the nature of his Law, that is Just, Holy, and Good; what is the Law of God, but a written Impression of his Holy Nature; also the Justice and Righteousness of God is seen in his punishing the Wicked for their Sin; but more especially, in punishing his own Son when he came to stand in our stead and Law-place, as our Sponsor and blessed Surety; he spared not his own Son, as an act of Justice, when he undertakes to pay our Debts, or satisfy Divine Justice for our Offenses. God will render unto every man according to the fruit of their doings: *he will not lay upon man more than is right*, Job 34. 23. *He hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve*, Ezra. 9. 13.

7. To Acknowledge God, is to acknowledge his Goodness, Mercy, and Faithfulness, his Mercy endureth for ever; There is none good but God, that is, essentially good, perfectly good, and so there is none Righteous but he; he is a God ready to forgive, plenteous in Mercy and Goodness; *who is a God like unto thee pardoning Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, Mich. 7. There is in God not only pardoning Goodness, but protecting preserving, redeeming, strengthening, and comforting Goodness. God is infinitely and immutably Good.

8. To Acknowledge God, is to own and acknowledge him to be man's chief good, and that our only Happiness lies in him, not in the Creature, but in the Creator; not in having great Portions of worldly Goods, but in having a special Interest and Portion in God: *Many say who will shew us any good*, Psal. 4. 6. What was that good? Why, Corn, Oil, and Wine; but what saith David, *Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, thou hast put more joy into my heart, than the time when their corn and wine increases*, verse 7, 8. Earthly things may be called our goods, but not our good; they that never tasted how good God is, never knew true good. That cannot be Man's chief good, that cannot answer the necessities of his better part; namely, his Soul; God is a Soul Good, a Soul satisfying Good, a Soul Enriching Good; the Heathens labored to find out what was the chief Good; and finding nothing in this world could satisfy the Soul, neither Riches, Honors, Pleasures, nor Knowledge; concluded, there was some Superior Being, or an Infinite God, that must be Man's chiefest Good: that cannot be our chief Good, that cannot fill our Desires, nor make us truly and everlastingly Happy. Men may in the fullness of all their Sufficiency be in straits, and be miserable, who are possessed of never so great Riches, Honors, and earthly Pleasures; that which Sickness and Death may rob us of, cannot be our chiefest Good.

Sirs, we never rightly acknowledge God until we know by our own Experience, and acknowledge him to be our chiefest and only Happiness.

9. To Acknowledge God, is to fear and reverence his dreadful Name, and serve him as our God and only Sovereign of our Souls: *If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 1. 6. The whole of Man's Duty is expressed sometimes by fearing of God; said Joseph, *Do thus, and live, for I fear God*; He acknowledgeth God this way, and himself to be his Servant; I

fear God, I cannot, dare not Sin; *how shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* They that fear not God, are Men of no Religion: *The fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom.* Pray remember to Acknowledge God, is to fear him, and dread to offend or displeas him.

10. To acknowledge God, is to trust in him at all times, to make him our Hope and Help, to depend upon him for Counsel and Direction in all we go about, and submit our Wills to his Will, and patiently to take and endure whatsoever he lays upon us.

To Trust in God, is to have Confidence in God, 'tis to lean upon God, upon his Wisdom, upon his Conduct, on his Strength, Faithfulness; and gracious Promises, and not to depend upon our own Wisdom; see the verse before my Text, Trust in the Lord, and *lean not to thy own Understanding*, acknowledge him, that is, Trust in him. To Trust in God, is also to expect and hope from God, and to wait for Counsel; indeed, it is the Character of a godly Man to trust in God, as well as it is his Wisdom and Safety: We can (as one observes) never trust Man too little, nor in God too much; *Curssed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm*, Jer. 17. 5. *but blessed is the Man that Trusteth in the Lord, and whose Strength the Lord is*, v. 7.

11. To Acknowledge God, is to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be God; not God by Office, but God by Nature, the only wise God, the Eternal God, Co-equal with the Father, Phil. 2. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, though a distinct Subsistence or Person from the Father; yet one in Essence subsisting in the form of God, imports not Christ's Appearance, in exerting of God's Power, but his actual Existence in the Divine Nature: *To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power*, Jude 25. *We are in him that is true;*

even in his Son Jesus Christ, this is the true God, and eternal life,
John 5. 20.

This it is to acknowledge God, viz. To own Christ to be God; ye believe in God, believe also in me, i.e. Ye acknowledge the Father is God, acknowledge the Son also to be the same God; it would be Idolatry to give Divine Adoration to Christ, if he was not the true Eternal God: Moreover, it would justify the Blasphemy of the Jews, who charged him to be a Deceiver, and a Blasphemer; who, because he was (as they thought,) no more than a meer Man, made himself equal with God; not to acknowledge Christ to be God, is not truly and fully to acknowledge God, because Christ is God; we ought not only to acknowledge the Being of God, but also his manner of Being, or the three Persons in the God-head.

12. To Acknowledge God, is to acknowledge all the good things we receive to come from him, whether Temporal or Spiritual, even Life and all the comforts of Life, Wisdom Knowledge, Riches, Honors, Friends, Peace, Health, Relations, Prosperity: And also 'tis to acknowledge all Afflictions, Troubles, Reproaches, Trials, even all kind of Adversity to come from God; for whoever may be the Instruments, yet God is the only Agent and Orderer of them.

13. And lastly, to Acknowledge God, is to love him above all; and to seek unto him, in all we do, and to strive to promote his Glory; he that is our chief Good should be our last end, our ultimate end: in all we do, we should aim at the Glory of God, and to carry on (with all uprightness) his Interest (to the utmost Power that is in us) in the places and stations where we are set by him. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength.* So much as to the first thing proposed to be opened; namely, What it is to acknowledge God.

Secondly, I shall shew you in what ways of ours more particularly we should acknowledge God; or wherein we should acknowledge him.

Particular Ways in Which We Should Acknowledge God

1. In entering upon no Civil nor Religious Action, without consulting with God, in and by his Word; we should put this Question to our own Hearts, viz. *Is the thing that I am a going to do good, is it warranted by the word of God, is it according to his Will, will it tend to his Glory, is it not only lawful, but is it also expedient, if the matter I am a going to do be not justified by the word of God, though my end may be good, yet the thing is evil; may I do it and not offend God, or will it not hurt my Brother, or cause him to stumble?* Were such Questions put by all Men to their own Hearts, it would prevent many Evils in Men's Civil Actions. Also, when Men enter upon any Religious Duty, they should consult the word of God, see whether the thing be warranted, hath God commanded me to do this thing, have I Precept, or Precedent to justify me in doing of it?

Brethren, we are not to consult, Men, General Counsels, nor Ancient Fathers, but the Word of God; 'tis not Custom here will carry the Cause, though it be of some hundred of years standing; if from the beginning it was not so, nor is it sufficient, though many Learned Men, nay, Holy Men, assert it to be a Truth, if it be not written in God's Word. Where God hath no Tongue to speak, we should have no Ear to hear, nor Hand to do; but alas! some Men more consult their own Carnal Reason and Interest, their own Profits, their own Passions than God's Word and his Glory; many peruse their unwarrantable blind Zeal, like Paul, when a Pharisee,

who verily thought he ought to do many things against the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, though it was to the making a fearful Slaughter of Christ's blessed Members.

2. Men should acknowledge God in all their Purposes, or about what they think to do, or intend to do, before they put them into Execution. Man sometimes purposes and God disappoints: *Go to now, you that say to day or to morrow, we will go into such a City, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain, whereas you know not what will be on the morrow.* James 4. 13, 14.

Men should, before they enter upon any Action Civil or Religious, seek to God, by Prayer, for Wisdom and Direction; and also for Strength, Aid, and Assistance; and they that do not this, do not as they ought, Acknowledge God: and thus, I say, in a more general way, we should do; though it be in the smallest matters, and in the doing of things that are Lawful to be done; if they would have Success therein.

But to descend to some few particular things and cases, about the doing, or entering upon the doing of which, we should seek to God (and so in a right way Acknowledge him.)

1. When any Young Men, or any Persons begin to set up for themselves, or to Trade in the World; they should Acknowledge God, or seek to him for Counsel and Direction about that Affair; that they may succeed well therein, and receive a Blessing from him; for in vain do Men rise up early and sit up late, unless God be sought unto, and is pleased to prosper them in their Undertakings: How was Jacob Blessed as a Shepherd? Which was his employment; who in all he did, Acknowledged God, and called upon him: Riches got, and not by the Almighty, or in a lawful way, will prove a Curse to him that getteth them: 'tis a God Provoking Evil, to say in thine heart, *My power, and the might of my hand,*

hath gotten me Wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get Wealth, Deut. 8. 17, 18. Riches and Honor, which are a Blessing, and tendeth not to puff up a Man or Woman, cometh from God.

2. Men and Women, should Acknowledge God in changing their condition; this is a great thing, and the Comfort of Men's Lives much consist in this matter: *A Prudent Wife is from the Lord, Prov. 19. 14.* But alas! now a days, People in this matter, act like to the wicked Men of the old World; *They take them Wives of all which they choose. Gen. 6. 2.* Which is charged upon them as a great sin, and one cause of the Destruction brought upon them by the Flood; How did Sampson suffer by his Delilah, whom he chose, because he liked her well? Perhaps she was fair, but he consulted not with God: but, how well did Abraham's Servant succeed, in obtaining a Wife for Isaac, his Master's Son by Seeking unto God and Acknowledging him?

You Young Men and Women, that truly Fear God, see you to it; that you in the choice of Yokefellows, Acknowledge God; consult his Word, choose such that are Godly, such that Believe in Christ, let his Word be your Rule in this matter: Be not unequally Yoked with Unbelievers: your Peace with God, and the Comfort of your Lives depend on this matter; do not as the Sons of God in the old world did, and as Sampson did, viz. *Choose such as you like;* but such as God likes and approves of.

3. We should Acknowledge God, in Removing from one place to another, from one Country to another, or from one Habitation to another, or from one Trade or Employment to another: We should first seek the Kingdom of God. *Will this remove make for the profit of my precious Soul? Will it turn to the Glory of God? It should not be, What Air, or what Earthly Profit may I find there, where I am going? but is the Gospel Preached*

there, in the Purity of it? can I have communion with godly Christians there? or, Will not my Spiritual Loss be more than my Earthly gain? So in the other case; say, Will not more snares attend that Calling I am about to enter upon? Shall I not run my self into Temptations by doing it? Doth not my present Employment bring me in Food and Raiment, and ought not I therewith to be Content? I only mentioned these few Cases as to our paths, in respect of Civil Affairs: you may add any other way or work you go about.

Oh! How doth it concern us to Acknowledge God, for Preservation and a Blessing in all things? Even in taking Journeys by Land, or Voyages to Sea, and when we go out in the Morning, and return in the Evening; when we lie down, and when we rise up, or enter upon any Religious Work.

1. *About our Receiving, Retaining or Declining, of any one, or more Principles of Religion.*

We should Acknowledge God and Consult with him, in and by his Holy Word; we ought to examine and try the Point or Principle, we are about to Receive or Leave: is it according to what is written? Doth God's word confirm it to be a Truth? Then receive it; but cry to God for Wisdom and Understanding in the Case; be fully persuaded in thy own Conscience from the word of God about it: On the other hand, if thou upon searching, canst not find that Doctrine or particular Practice, thou hast received formerly, is agreeable to Gods word; or that 'tis not in thy Judgment provable therefrom; then after seeking unto God, thou oughtest to reject it; though many Good Men, Learned Men, assert and maintain it to be Truth; thou art not to consult with Men, nor acknowledge them to be thy rule, but God's Word: To the Law and Testimony: Search the Scripture: *Gods Word giveth Understanding to the simple*, Psal. 19. 7. *That is a Lamp to thy Feet, and a Light to thy Paths*, Psal. 119. 105. No man, minister or not, shall be allowed to answer for thee at

Christs Bar¹, about any Error thou hast received and dost maintain; every one must give an Account to God for himself; it will not be a good plea in that day, to say, Lord, such an able Minister held this Principle, Preached it, Practiced it; God may reveal some Truth more clearly to an Aquila and a Priscilla, than to an Eloquent Apollo, Act. 18. 26.

2. Thou art to Acknowledge God, & seek to him, concerning what Minister, or Ministers, thou dost purpose to hear, and know their Doctrine well, and their Lives also; see that they Preach Christ, that they Preach the Gospel clearly; whose main design, is to Exalt Jesus Christ and the Free Grace of God; and particularly, that they are Sound about the Doctrine of Free Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, as it is Imputed and Received by Faith alone, without any mixture of Mans own Inherent Righteousness: Oh take heed; this day is Perilous; there are many that are Corrupters of Gods Word, and perverters of Christs Gospel; thou mayst before thou art aware, be undone by dangerous Heresies.

3. Acknowledge God and seek to him, when thou art about to join thy self with some Church, in point of Communion; Examine their Faith, their Constitution, their Discipline; see they all hold weight with God's word. And if thou art Tempted to leave a True Church, because of some offense taken; acknowledge God, seek to him, consult with the word of God, least it be from Satan, a Temptation, and arises from thy own Evil Heart; say, *Shall I not be a Covenant Breaker, a Disorderly Person, and an Evil Example to others? Will it not offend God, or stumble my weak Brother?* Thus reason with thy Self; say, *Shall I consult with Flesh and Blood, and gratify my Corrupt part?* This may deter thee from it.

1 Minor liberties taken on this sentence: original text missing some parts.

4. Acknowledge God and Seek to him, when thou comest to hear the word of God Preached; say, *Lord 'tis thou must prepare my heart to meet with thee this day; O open thou my Understanding, incline my will, move upon my Affections; deliver me from Drowsiness, Deadness, Unbelief, & from all kind of Pride & Conceitedness, & from Prejudice against the Minister, or any Truth that he may deliver, that I want Light in. What I know not teach thou me.* 'Tis not man can reach thy heart; not the Ministers Voice, that can make thee Hear and Live; but the Voice of Christ; 'tis God that can turn thee from Darkness to Light, & from the power of Satan unto God: Thou mayest reform thy way, or get some degree of Reformation, by thy natural powers improved, by the word Preached; but 'tis God alone must change thy Heart; a new Heart must be created in thee by God's mighty and glorious Creating-Power, and his Spirits operating Influences; it is *God that commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness*, that must shine into our Hearts, to give us the *Light of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us*, verse 7. Do not trust to thine own Power, nor rebellious Will, 'tis God must make thee willing; he must draw thee, move thee, before thou canst come to Christ; Faith is not of our selves, 'tis *the gift of God*, Ephes. 2. 8, 9. 'tis God must turn thee from thy evil way, and change those vicious Habits that are in thee, and in all Men naturally; *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, &c.* Turn thou me, and I shall be turned. Oh! Thus acknowledge God, & cry to him who works all our Works in us, and for us; *'Tis not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy*, Rom. 9. 17. Did Men thus acknowledge God, he would soon direct their Path, and give Success to them in their Duties. Ministers should also acknowledge God in their Gifts and Endowments

(what have they which they have not received) and their own Insufficiency.

5. We should acknowledge God, when we come to draw near to him in the Holy Supper of the Lord; it is he that must prepare our Hearts, for this his sacred Ordinance also; *The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue are from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. What Heavenly Comfort do we meet with, or have we met with at one time more than at another? How lively are our Spirits, and active our Graces, when God vouchsafeth his Divine Influences, and quickens us in our Duties? Did we muse, the Fire might soon burn: 'Tis God must deliver us from vain Thoughts, worldly Thoughts, when we draw near to him, and stir up our Affections, and raise our Spirits; therefore thus let us acknowledge him, that we may set under Christ's Shadow with delight, that his Fruit may be sweet to our Taste.

But no more as to these more ordinary ways of ours, whether Civil, or Religious; but to proceed to that which is the chief Work of this day.

We ought to acknowledge God in divers special Cases.

1. As in choice of Ministers, to watch over us, and take the care of our Souls, we should acknowledge God who hath promised to give us Pastors after his own heart, to feed us *with knowledge and understanding*, Jer. 3. 15.

2. In choice of Magistrates to rule us, or to represent us in National Synods, and make Civil Laws; we ought to acknowledge God, who hath promised to give Judges as at the first, and Counselors as at the beginning. How good was Jethro's Counsel to Moses, Exod. 18.21. *Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers, &c.* Did

Jethro speak this only, or hath not God spoken it also; *The God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spoke to me; he that ruleth over men, must be just ruling in the fear of God,* 2. Sam. 23. 3. I am afraid many Men do not in this case so consult with God, nor acknowledge him as they ought; were such Men always chose, what a happy People should we be, or would England be. But,

3. We should acknowledge God, and look to him, when difficult cases may be before a King, and his People; in which the good and welfare of a whole Nation is concerned; nay, many Nations; and not only so, but also the good of God's Israel, as now at this day: Oh how should we cry to God, who only is able to give Counsel, and direct our worthy Senators: *By me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Judgment,* (saith our Lord Jesus) Prov. 8. 15. All great and good things that Kings and Princes do, is from God, and by the Influences of Jesus Christ: God sits amongst the Gods; he can rule, and over-rule Men's Hearts at his pleasure, at such a time as this: Ezra sought a right way, to do, which, he acknowledge God, he sought to him: We may bless God who put it into the Hearts of the King and Parliament, to seek God at this difficult time; certainly the Finger of God is in this matter: Saith Ezra, *And I proclaimed a Fast there at the River Ahava, that we might afflict our selves before our God, and seek a right way for our selves, and for our little ones, and for all our Substance,* Ezra 8. 21. *For I was ashamed to require of the King a Band of Soldiers and Horsemen, to help us against the Enemy, because I said the hand of our God is upon all them that seek him for good,* verse 22.

This it appears is the right way, most pleasing to God, the only way to obtain the Mercy we want, viz. to humble our selves, and seek to God; this is that way God directeth us to take: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and ye shall glorify me,* Psal. 50. 15. 'Tis the right way to obtain Mercy, to exalt

the Eternal Being, to magnify God; yea, and this is the right way according to the avowed Principles of all true Christians: *I was ashamed*, saith this good Man, *to ask a Band of Soldiers*; because our God hath promised his Hand shall be with us for good; that he was able and ready to help them that seek him, and put their trust in him: I might also note from hence, that we are allowed to cry to God, not only for our selves, and little Ones; but that God would bless and preserve our Substance also.

4. Another special Occasion that calls upon us in an extraordinary way to acknowledge God, and seek him, is in a time of great affliction; when God's People are in Distress and great Danger.

Thus did Jacob, Gen. 33. when he heard, how his enraged Brother Esau was coming out to meet him with four hundred Armed Men, to cut him off, with his Wives and Children.

How did he wrestle with God! He prayed and made Supplication; & also said, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*, Gen. 32 26 And he said, *What is thy Name? and he said, Jacob; and he said, Thy Name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a Prince hast thou Power with God and Men, and hast prevailed*, verse 27. All that thus wrestle with God, God accounts Princes; they are Prevailers with God; they overcome God in a spiritual manner, and prevail over Men, nay, over Devils, and all Hellish Lusts, and the powers of Darkness. Esau shall not hurt thee, (as if God should have said) *I will prevent thy present Fear and Danger: Thus Jacob at this time, when in great Straits and Afflictions, acknowledged God.*

This also did the Children of Israel in Egypt, under their grievous Bondage and Misery: *They cried to the Lord, and God*

heard their Cries and their Groans, Exod. 2. 23. 24. and looked upon them, and had respect to them, verse 5.

Moreover, thus Moses and poor Israel acknowledged God, when they were pursued by bloody Pharaoh, and brought to the Red Sea: *Stand still, saith Moses, and see the Salvation of the Lord; have your hope in him, trust in him, acknowledge his Power, in this time of your dismal Danger: The Egyptians, whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever, Exod. 14. 13.* Let not your Hearts fail, sink, nor stagger through Unbelief; but with Faith and quiet Minds look to God, and you shall (as if Moses should have said) soon see an end of your cursed Enemies. Also thus did Samuel with all Israel, look to God, when the Philistines came against them, *they fasted on that day, and said, We have sinned against the Lord, 1 Sam. 7. 6.* Likewise thus did good King Jehosaphat, when the Children of Moab and Amon came against him, and against Judah: *Jehosaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a Fast throughout all Judea, 2 Chron. 20. 3.* Moreover, when Nehemiah saw how the remnant of God's People that were left of the Captivity, were in great Afflictions, and the Wall of Jerusalem was also broken down, he acknowledged God, and cried to him, *Neh. 1. 3. O Lord, I beseech thee let now thine Ear be attentive unto the Prayer of thy Servant; and the Prayers of thy Servants, who desire to fear thy Name, &c. verse 11.* Thus also did Esther and Mordecai, seek to the Lord, and acknowledge him; when the poor Jews were in danger of being all cut off in one day, they fasted, and prayed unto God.

5. We should acknowledge God, when we have any great Work to do for his holy Name, as was when we are about to reform, or labor after Reformation in Religion, or to throw down Idolatry or Superstition: Thus did good King Josias in the twelfth year of his Reign, he began to seek after the God of David, and to

purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the Groves, and carved Images, &c. 2 Chron. 34. 4. Moreover, when Ministers enter on their Ministry, they should seek to God, acknowledge him, wholly design his Glory, and depend upon his Strength, for Help, and Success.

6. When great things are near at hand, or some mighty appearance of God for the glory of his Name, and salvation of his Church, and exaltation of Sion, and downfall of their Enemies, God should be sought unto, and be acknowledged by his own People: thus did Daniel, Dan. 9. 2. *I, Daniel, understood by Books, the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by Prayer and Supplications with Fasting, and Sackcloth, and Ashes, verse 3.*

Brethren, thus it is with us: we understand by Books, i.e. by the Book of Daniel, the Revelations of St. John, and by the Writings of good Men, that the number of the years of our spiritual Captivity under mystical Babylon, is near expired; and that glorious things are near; and therefore we should now in an extraordinary manner cry to God, and acknowledge his Power, and Wisdom, and Faithfulness. Oh look up, the Vision will (suddenly) speak.

How We Should Acknowledge God, or After What Manner We Should Be Found In This Duty

1. In the Sense of our Sins, and Sins of the Lord's People, & of the whole Nation; yea, with a through sight & sense of Sin, and with self abhorrence for the same: Thus did Samuel acknowledge

God, and poured out Water before the Lord, at Mizpah; 1 Sam. 7. 6. and thus did Daniel, he confessed his Sins, and the Sins of the People; *We have sinned, and have committed Iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy Precepts, and from thy Judgments,* Dan. 9. 5. *Neither have we hearkened unto the Prophets which have spoken in thy Name to our Kings and Princes, and our Fathers, and to all the People of the land,* verse 6. O what sins are we guilty of, and this vile Nation guilty of, whom God hath been so good and gracious unto, and saved with an high Hand, and delivered, when (some time ago) all was a going that is dear to us.

2. With all Humility and brokenness of Heart we should acknowledge, that whatsoever is come upon us, is in Justice, and Righteousness; we must say with Daniel, *O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us, Confusion of Faces, as at this day to the men of Judah, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem; to all Israel that are near and far off, &c. because of our Trespases: O Lord, to us belongeth Confusion, to our Kings, and to our Princes, and to our Fathers, because we have sinned,* Dan. 9. 7, 8. How low should we lie every one of us, and labor to find out the plague of his own Heart; and to smite on our Breasts, and say, What have I done? We must say, *It is of the Lord's Mercy we are not consumed;* that we are yet a People, and England a Nation, not yet utterly forsaken of God; In our acknowledging of God, we should humble our selves, and pray; and not only so, but turn every one from his evil way; so will God hear from Heaven, and will forgive our Sins, and heal our Land, 2 Chron. 7. 14.

3. We should acknowledge God with a sense of our Weakness, Ignorance, and short sightedness, and not trust to our own Understanding: See the Context, *Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding,* Prov. 3. 5.

Let not Men think their Wisdom is sufficient to act and accomplish those great Designs that they take in Hand; because they are so acute, and have such clear natural Parts, or acquired Parts: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; nor the strong man glory in his strength. Let not the Learned Man boast of his great Learning, but let all know, True Wisdom is from God; 'tis he must guide us in Judgment; Brethren, 'tis a good sign God will not leave us, in that he hath put it into the Heart of our Parliament; to acknowledge God, and seek to him a right way: at this difficult hour, it argues that they see need to ask Counsel of him, and would acknowledge him, from whom Wisdom, to manage the great Affairs of Nations cometh, and would not lean to their own Understanding: God is the great Governor of the World.

4. We should acknowledge God in Christ, come to him only, and look to him alone in a Mediator; if we do not wholly acknowledge him in the Name of Jesus Christ, all we do will be in vain; for out of Christ he is a God of Wrath and Fury; yea, a flaming and devouring Fire; but in Christ, he is pacified and reconciled to all that so come to him; Samuel well knew this, and therefore he took a sucking Lamb, and offered it for a *Burnt-Offering, wholly unto the Lord*, 1 Sam. 7. 9. This Lamb no doubt typified Christ Jesus, in and by whose Sacrifice only, he foresaw God was appeased, and his Justice satisfied, and the guilt of the Sins of God's Israel removed.

Christ is the only way to the Father; *No man cometh to the Father but by me*, saith our blessed Lord, John 14. 6. This Brethren, and none but this, is the right way: Sinners are only to draw near to God by Christ; this way is prepared for them, cast up for them; this is that new and living way: and Saints have no other way to come to God, nor to acknowledge God to be their God, but only in Christ. Oh, acknowledge God thus, *God was in Christ*,

reconciling the World to himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19. God in Christ is strong to save, strong to help, strong to deliver: *Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. The glory of his Power, Mercy, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, are all united, and shine forth to save Sinners in Christ, and to save Nations, who look to him, and acknowledged him in Christ. Almighty Power was seen in creating of the World, and his Power in conjunction with his Justice was seen, in casting the Angels that sinned, out of Heaven, and Man out of Paradise; and Divine Power, as it was joined with Divine Mercy, shone forth, in saving and delivering Israel at the Red Sea; but in Christ, the glory of his Power, Mercy and Justice, and all other of his glorious Attributes, are united together in sweet Harmony, to save and help all that by Christ come to him; nothing can hinder our Help and Succor, if we acknowledge and come to him in Jesus Christ.

We should acknowledge *God manifested in the Flesh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. not only that Christ is God, (as I before hinted) but the reason why he took unto him our Nature, and what things he hath wrought out for us; & how the glory of God shines forth in him. We never acknowledge God in the Top Glory of his Wisdom, Mercy, Love, Power, Justice and Goodness, unless we acknowledge him in Christ; nor can we know him any other way to be our God, nor come to him, nor expect any Help, Relief, Pardon or Peace, from him: We must acknowledge what Christ is made of, God the Father unto us, even Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption: He is our Life, our Light, our Righteousness, our Strength, our Peace, our Food, our Guide, our King, to Rule us, our Priest, to Atonement for our Sins, and to Intercede for us, and our Prophet to Teach us. In him, God is our Father, our Friend, our Portion; in him, we may come to God with holy

Boldness; All the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him, amen, to the glory of God the Father.

5. We must acknowledge God by Faith: God is never acknowledged in Christ aright, but by Faith; we must believe, if we would be accepted, to believe in Christ, or come to God by Faith in Christ, is the way to be justified, to be pardoned, and to obtain all things whatsoever we want.

To Believe, is to trust in God through Christ, to rely upon God through Jesus Christ, to rest on God's Power and Mercy through Christ, to receive him for all, as he is offered in the Gospel, 'tis to depend upon God's faithful Promises: *He that cometh to me, I will no wise cast out*, John 6. 36. He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him; *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us*, Heb. 7. 25.

Oh remember that you acknowledge God by Faith, in the Death, Resurrection, and Intercession of Jesus Christ: *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*, 1 John 2. 1. Whatsoever we ask in Christ's Name, in Faith, that is agreeable to the Will of God, we shall receive from him.

6. We should acknowledge God constantly; always, from first to last; not only when we stand in the greatest need, of him, when we are Low, or Poor, but also when we are High, Rich, and in a prosperous Condition, Hagar desired not Riches, lest he should, when full, deny God, and say, *Who is the Lord*, Prov. 30. 9. *Trust in the Lord at all times*, saith David: will the Hypocrite always call upon God? No, no, in Afflictions he may, and often doth, when God's Chaistenings are upon him, then he will cry to him, and seek him; but to call upon God, and acknowledge him, and seek his Glory, and depend upon him, and look for Success always in all things, at all times from God; is only the Character of

a true Christian. We can never be in so high a state, never arrive to such a degree of Wisdom, or have Riches in so great abundance; that we need not acknowledge God, and depend upon him; no Men live, but those which stand in need of God's help. And there is no Man so low, so poor, so destitute, that God cannot raise him up, help him, and relieve him: Man's Being, and well Being, is only from God.²

7. God is to be acknowledged in Truth and Uprightness of Heart; if we fail here, all our Humiliations will be in vain; Hypocritical Fasts are abominable to God; is it because we have Sinned, and God thereby hath been dishonored? or, is it not rather for Corn, Wine, and Oil, that we cry to God this day? Is it not for a deliverance from our Miseries, rather than from our Iniquities? *When you fasted and mourned, &c. did you (saith the Lord) fast unto me?* Zech. 7. 5. Let all Men see to this, for if we are not sincere, God looks upon our Prayers with disdain: *They have not cried to me with their Heart, when they howled on their Beds, they assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, and they rebel against me,* Hos. 7. 14. They do it (as if God should say) for Peace and Plenty; they have the World in their Eye; not my Glory, but their own Carnal Interest, for they live still in their Sins; and rebel against me: Let England, and the Inhabitants of this City see to this, lest they should be found in the like Abomination this day, with Israel of old.

But to come to the Reason of this Doctrine.

2 Slight changes necessary to this paragraph for readability.

Why We Should In All Our Ways Acknowledge God

First, Because Wisdom and Counsel is from the Lord; none can act or do any thing for God, in a right way, and to a right end, or for their own good, unless helped and influenced by the Almighty. *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, Job 32. 8.* Who is it that teacheth Senators Wisdom, but the Lord: Alas! all Men's meer Natural Wisdom, of which they sometimes boast, it is but Foolishness; when compared to that right spiritual Wisdom, which he can give them: Meer natural Men, or Men without the Divine Wisdom of God, are often influenced by the Devil: Satan is a great Politician: Go to, we will deal wisely, saith Pharaoh: aye, but that Wisdom was from below, it was from the Devil, and such Wisdom God can soon confound; Man's Wisdom is to take Counsel of God, and seek to him; *The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, Prov. 9. 10.*

Secondly, Men ought to acknowledge God, because he doth require, and Command them so to do: it is their Duty to do it; and their great Sin that do not seek to him: Brethren, what Blessing can Man expect to meet with in their undertakings, that asked not Counsel of the Lord: how were the People of Israel blamed and punished, for doing some things without asking Counsel of him? *Josh. 9. 14.* But they *asked not counsel at the mouth of God.* It was about making Peace with them that they were commanded to Destroy, and not to make a Covenant of Peace with: God also pronounced a Woe to his People, for their neglect herein; *Woe to the rebellious Children, saith the Lord, that take Counsel, but not of me, &c. Isa. 30. 1.* *That walked to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, verse 2.*

Call upon me in the day of trouble, Psal. 50. 14. Prayer is owing to God for every thing, in prayer we should let our Request be made known to the Lord.

Thirdly, because God can give Wisdom, to them that are esteemed simple, weak and ignorant Men; he can make the Foolish, Wise, and put his Spirit upon them: What Wisdom did he give to Moses, who kept his Father-in-law's Sheep? And what a famous Judge and Ruler did God make him to be? It is true, he was trained up in the Wisdom of Egypt before, but that was foolishness with God. What Wisdom did he give to David, who was but a Shepherd, and to Amos a Herdsman: Moreover, what Wisdom did he give to the Disciples of Christ, who were some of them but Fisher-men, and deemed unlearned and ignorant Men; God makes choice of the weak and base things of the World, to confound the Mighty; and of the Foolish, to bring to naught the Wisdom of the Wise. 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28.

Fourthly, God ought to be acknowledged by all Men, in all Matters; because 'tis by his wise Providence (as you have heard) that all things are governed, ordered, and disposed of, throughout the whole Earth; not only the Affairs of particular Persons, but the Concernments and Affairs of Nations and Kingdoms much more.

1. In all Civil Affairs in respect of Government, &c. All the Counsels of the Mighty are influenced by the Lord: God judgeth amongst the Gods; *the Shields of the Earth belong to the Lord*, Psal. 47. 9. *'Tis by me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Judgment*, Prov. 8. 15.; he sets up, and pulleth down at his Pleasure.

2. All Military Actions of Nations, are ordered by the Almighty, War and Peace are from him; if he take Peace from the Earth, in vain do all Counselors and great Statesmen meet, and consult about Peace: hence God is called, The Lord of Hosts, and a

Man of War: or, The great General of Armies. He hath opened his Armory, and has brought forth his Weapons of Indignation. Saith David, *He teaches my Hands to War, and my Fingers to Fight*: He is a God of Influence and Authority; he Commands all, and none can stand before him; at his Command, Frogs invade Pharaoh: from hence it appears, that a Martial Employment is very Honorable, viz. when the Cause is good, when 'tis for his Glory, and for the Honor and Safety of a King, and People: God being called the Lord of Hosts; the God of the Armies of Israel; puts a Luster and Dignity upon a General of an Army engaged in a Just Cause.

3. In all Ecclesiastical Affairs, or Matters respecting the Church of God, he ought to be acknowledged; nay, in this matter, before all things, we ought to seek unto him, who is in a peculiar Sense stilled³, The King of Saints, and God of Israel. He that is the Head of the Church, is the Absolute Governor thereof; the Spiritual Rights of his People, and the Rule of Men's Consciences, is only under his Power and Influences; and his Laws only are the Bond and Limits of his Government; no altering, adding to, nor diminishing from his holy Precepts: the Power to Rule the Church, is Christ's Prerogative alone; as he is God, it is essentially and absolutely in his Hand; and as Mediator, this Power is given to him by the Father: *All Power is given to me in Heaven, and in Earth: go ye therefore teach all Nations*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. Moreover, the Peace and Prosperity of God's Church and People, as also all their Trouble and Adversity is from him. Who gave Jacob to the Spoil, and Israel to the Robbers? Did not the Lord against whom they had sinned? Whosoever are the Instruments in either case, God is in a special manner the great Agent in it, it was he that brought again the Captivity of Sion; it was God that stirred up Cyrus to proclaim

3 Orig. *stiled*

Liberty for the Jews, to Build their City and Temple. And when he comes to build up Sion, in these last days; he will appear in his Glory, and will undo all that have afflicted his People; for they that touch them, touch the Apple of his Eye, Let the French Tyrant, Pope and Turk look to it; their day is near; for God will plead the Controversies of Sion, and come upon Princes as upon Mortar; and as the Potter treadeth the Clay, Isa. 41. 25. His Sword is bathed in Heaven, God will come with vengeance; even God, with a recompence he will come and save you, Isa. 35. 4. It will not be long before you will hear the voice of them that flee, and escaped out of Babylon, to declare in Sion, *the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his Temple*, Jer. 50. 28. Oh therefore let us look to him, acknowledge him, for these things are very near.

Again, as all Affairs, both Civil, Military, and Ecclesiastical, are in the Hand of God, and ordered by his wise Counsel; so are all Creatures likewise.

1. The good Angels are under his Authority and Influence, they all wait for his Word, and obey his Command, either to protect his own People, or execute his Wrath upon their Enemies.

2. The evil Angels are also under his Power; Satan is limited by him, he is in Chains, God sets Bounds to him, he can go no further than his Chains will suffer him; 'tis not who he will, but who he may devour; he could not touch Job, nor any thing he had, till God gave him liberty; the Devils could not go into the Herd of Swine, till Christ said, go.

3. All men also are subjected to his Authority, and he can at his Pleasure restrain the wrath of wicked Men, or make it tend to his own Praise: *Thou hast no Power, except it be given thee of my Father*, saith Christ to Pilate.

4. All Irrational Creatures are at his Command, he can stop the Months of hungry lions, so that they could do Daniel no hurt: Nay, and he can give David power to destroy both the Lion and the Bear: The Lord opened the Mouth of the Ass, to speak with Man's Voice, to rebuke the madness of the Prophet. Moreover, He caused two she bears to bare Children, for their reproaching of Elisha; and who was it but the Lord, that sent the lion to slay the young Prophet, who transgressed against him. Moreover, Remarkable is the passage of his causing a Raven to feed Elisha when distressed.

He hath also Power over, and ruleth and disposeth of all Inanimate Creatures, the Winds and Sea obey him, and are at his Command; he can make the Sun stand still, or go back, if he please; 'tis He that makes the Grass to grow, the Sun to shine, and the Rain to fall; 'tis He that gives Rain and fruitful Seasons, and who sometimes smites⁴, and brings a Blast and Mildew upon the Fruits the Earth; therefore all ought to acknowledge him.

Fifthly, we ought to acknowledge God, because, as all Judgments and Plagues are from him, so he can at his Pleasure remove them. *I Form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil; I the Lord do all these things*, Isa. 45. 7. and if he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble; and when he hideth his face, who can behold him, whether it be done against a Nation, or against a Man only, Job 34. 29.

If God will give those Nations Quietness, where it is not, or continue it where it is; there is no Power on Earth, or Hell, can hinder, or prevent it: who can Curse them that God will Bless? or, Bless such that God doth Curse? *There is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel*, Numb. 23. 23. But Woe to that Nation, or Person, God hideth his Face from; for

4 Orig. *snites*

then he withdraws his gracious Care and Protection, and then he will not hear their Prayers also, then he will not give them Counsel; nay, but will do more, he will leave them to their own Counsel, as he did Israel, Psal. 81. 12.

Sixthly, we would acknowledge God in all things, because he can make use of unlikely ways, means, or persons to do his own Work; by the blowing of Rams Horns, he made the Walls of Jericho to fall down, Josh. 7. 5. He spoiled Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, by an Army of Frogs, Locusts, Lice, Flies, &c. What wonders did he do with three hundred Men? God, as one observes, can strike a strait Blow with a crooked Stick; 'tis not for the worthiness of the Instruments, that he doth work, but for his own Glory.

Seventhly, because all success in our ways and undertakings are from God, Rulers of Nations, Magistrates, and Ministers, cannot do any thing unless God Bless them, and his Hand go along with them: *I have planted, and Apollo watered; but it is God that giveth the increase*, 1 Cor. 3. 6.

The Plow-man plows in vain; the Trades-man buys and sells, and Trades in vain; the Merchant and Mariners venter to Sea in vain; the Physician prescribes Medicines in vain; nay, Magistrates rule in vain, and Ministers Preach in vain, and the People hear in vain; if God denies Success, or prospereth them not: In vain do men rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of Carefulness; if God doth not bless the labor of their, Hands; *Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hosts, that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the People shall weary themselves for very vanity?* Hab. 2. 13. 'Tis not the Care of the Husband-man to wait for the proper Season to Sow his Seed, nor the Industry of the Trader, nor the Skill of the Physician, nor the Wisdom and Policy of the States-man, nor the Learning of the Gospel Minister that will

avail them, if God do not succeed them: Many think by their Skill, by their Parts, by their Policy, and by their Learning, to do mighty things; when, alas! they see themselves suddenly blasted in a secret way, by the Hand of God, and all their Devices brought to naught; Men of small Parts and Learning, God being with them, many times wonderfully prosper; when Men of great Parts, Learning, and Wisdom, are confounded, because they acknowledge not the Lord, nor seek to him; by strength no man shall prevail: Oh therefore, ye the Sons of the Mighty, acknowledge God, and lean not to your own Understanding!

Eighthly, Men should acknowledge the Lord in all things they go about; because they may be brought into such straits, and have such difficult Cases before them, that they may see the work is too hard for them, or they may not know what to do; their Wisdom may fail them, or Men may be brought into such straits, as sometimes the Sea Men are, that they are at their Wits end; but God then can help the States-men how to project Matters, and order their difficult Cases; and the Seaman, when he cries to God, wants not help, God makes the storm a calm, and causes the proud waves to cease, and brings them out of all their troubles; read Psal. 107. at your leisure: Men may want Wisdom, though they have great Power; or want Power, though they have great Wisdom, or may want time, and⁵ opportunity, tho' they have both Wisdom and Power; but God wants neither Power, Wisdom, nor Opportunity: therefore we should acknowledge him.

Ninthly, we ought to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, because whatsoever he hath promised to do for his People, he positively says, he will nevertheless be sought unto, that he may do it for them: *I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate; I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it: Thus saith*

5 Orig. adds *a sit*

the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them, &c. God will justify us freely of his own Grace, through the imputation of Christ's Righteousness; but he will have us look to him, or believe in Christ, that he may do it for us: Moreover, he will give us the Grace of Faith, that we may believe in Jesus Christ; but he will have us inquire of him; we must pray to him, and attend on his Word, that he may give that Grace and Power to us, to believe, &c. Also God will pardon our Sins, for his own Name-sake, and not remember them any more; but he will bring us to his Feet, or humbly, with Contrition of Spirit, to cry to him, that we may receive that Pardon: for, as a King may freely forgive a guilty Rebel, yet he must first come and confess his horrid Treason, and beg Pardon on his Knees; so God will cause the guilty Sinner thus to do also: in like manner God will perform all his Promises, and give Counsel, Direction, and Wisdom to Senators, and to Ministers of Justice, to godly Magistrates and Preachers of his Word, &c. but he will be enquired of, and sought unto by them, that he may do it for them: and this he hath declared, and positively made known to be his Will, and Absolute Pleasure; therefore it would be high Presumption, and Pride, to expect these things of him, unless we comply with him in this Matter.

Tenthly, all Men ought to acknowledge God in all their ways because, not to look to God, seek to God, and acknowledge him, is Brutish; 'tis to be worse than Heathens and Idolaters; for, they in Straits and Afflictions, or when they enter upon Matters of Moment, will cry to their Gods; *They called on the name of Baal from Morning even until Noon; saying, Oh, Baal, hear us; but there was no voice: And Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud for he is a God, either he is a pursuing, or in a journey; or, per adventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked:* Moreover, The Mariners that were with Jonah in the Ship, (who were Heathens) in

that Storm they were in; *Every Man cried unto his God*, and seemed to be offended with Jonah, that he did not cry to his God also: What meanest thou, O sleeper, arise, and call upon thy God. The Israelites usually asked Counsel or God, by the Ephod, the Grecians, by their Oracles; but Christians ought only to go to God by Jesus Christ, and ask Counsel in his Name. Brethren, that God that brings a People, a Nation, or particular Person into Trouble, (and sometimes for great Sins) only knows how to bring them out of it. Such that eye not God in their Trouble, never search into the cause of it; and as they know not, consider not the cause of their Disease, so they are as ignorant of the Cure; and from hence apply indirect Medicines, not to acknowledge God, is to question the Being of God: however, it argues, they do not depend upon him, that in their Trouble do not seek unto him: shall Heathens give greater Glory to Dumb Idols, than Christians give to the true and only God of Heaven and Earth?

They that depend upon their own Wisdom, do in effect, Deify themselves; for none hath a self-sufficiency in him, or is independent, but God alone: but, how alike are some Men to the Swine, that greedily eat up the Acorns that lie under the Trees, but never look up to the Tree from whence they come; or like a Dog, that seems angry, and snarls at the Stone that is thrown at him, but never regards the Hand of him that threw it, nor knows he the cause thereof.

Eleventhly, it followeth from hence therefore, that we ought in all our ways to acknowledge the Lord; because 'tis hereby God is glorified: as not to acknowledge him, seek to him, and trust in him, doth detract from God, or lessen his glory; nay, utterly rob him of that honor and glory that is due to him alone; so hereby we give him that glory which is owing to him from his Creatures: we by fearing him, shew that he is God, that he is our Maker, our Lord

and only Sovereign; and by trusting in him alone, we acknowledge that he is our help, our strength, our hope, and that our dependence is upon him. He is great, and therefore to be feared; he is faithful, therefore to be believed; he is good, therefore to be beloved, and made the only Object of our chiefest Affection; he is our only Counselor, and therefore we should look to him for direction, wisdom and counsel.

Twelfthly, we should seek to God, and acknowledge him, for all, and in all things, especially in a time of trouble; because what deliverances, help or succor soever we receive, it is wholly to be ascribed to him; but they that seek not to God for direction and success, will not look upon themselves obliged to praise God for all the mercy, help or deliverance received; they will sacrifice to their own Nets or Drags, to their wisdom, policy, strength or care; or to their own counsels, and so admire themselves.

But the truth is, if men acknowledge not God, or neglect to seek to him for the Mercy they want, the Mercy when received may prove a Curse to them instead of a Blessing: God gave Israel Food, but sent Leanness to their Souls. To these I might add, that God's Counsel shall stand, he will do all his pleasure; there is no counsel against him shall prosper; he is the great Disposer of all Affairs of Nations, &c. and if we comply not with his Word, in acknowledging him, he may blast all our hopes; there is no contending with the Almighty; they that subscribe not to his wise Government, and exalt not him, he will at last cut them in pieces. In a word, 'Tis for our good; 'tis our Interest to acknowledge God, as well as it tends to his Glory.

Lastly, we should acknowledge God in all our Ways, because God can do Wonders in the way of his working for his People, when they seek to him: what Wonders did he do of old? His Hand is not shortened that he cannot Save: when things are

past help or remedy with Men, 'tis a fit opportunity for God to work: In the Mount it shall be seen.

He can restrain the Passions of Men, the Waves of the Sea, and the Tumults of the People; he changed Esau's Heart to Jacob; he caused the Egyptians to lend their Jewels to the Israelites; he can cut off the Spirits of Princes, or strike them with a Panicking Fear, and cause them to flee when none pursues them: he raised up new Troubles upon Saul, and made him cease his prusuit of David, when he was in danger. God can soon infatuate the Counsels of our Enemies, Isa. 44. 25. He frustrateth the Tokens of the Liars, and maketh Diviners mad, and turneth Wise-men backward, and maketh their Knowledge Foolishness. He can make our Enemies to act for our good; he caused Cyrus to proclaim Liberty to build Jerusalem, and God's own Temple; and how did he turn the Counsel of Achitophel into Foolishness, at the Prayer of David!

These things being considered, you may find there are Reasons sufficient to shew, that it is our Duty, in all our Ways to acknowledge God; but no more as to the Doctrinal Part. I shall now briefly endeavor to improve (by way of Application) what hath been said.

The Application

From hence it appears, that it is a great and an abominable sin, not to acknowledge God in every thing we go about.

1. Not to consult with God, is in effect to deny his Special Providence over us; or that he orders all events that come to pass. The truth is, we here in England, of late, talk so much of Fortune and of the Fortunate; that it seems as if we were in some Heathen Nation. I am sure no man can, or dares consult with God, or acknowledge him in any unlawful things, to gratify their Covetous

Appetites; if they do, let them tremble. Would they have God to Patronize their wickedness? Brethren, we should never step one step, in doing any thing which we have cause to doubt is sinful; or that which we cannot safely seek to God for a blessing upon.

2. Not to acknowledge God, is a kind of Atheism; sure such do not steadfastly believe the being of God: for if there be a God that governs all Affairs, why do they not seek to him, pray to him, trust in him as God.

3. Or at least, not to acknowledge God in every undertaking, it argues unbelief; and it doth cast contempt upon his Wisdom, Mercy, Goodness, &c. Slighting his Sovereignty, Care and Providence over them. Such shew their Pride and Folly with a Witness, as if they were wise enough to manage their Affairs themselves, without consulting with God, and seeking to him a right way.

4. God may for this great neglect, and evil, refuse to appear to help men in their necessities and great straits; when matters are too difficult for them, God may let them fail in their Counsels, and be confounded in their Projects, to convince them they are but Men; and that without him they can do nothing. I am persuaded that God oftentimes (upon this account) infatuates the Counsels of Men; *Ye shall conceive Chaff, and shall bring forth Stubble*, Isa. 33. 11. Though men may like Achitophel give suitable counsel as cunning Statesmen, yet God can obstruct or hinder such concerned to take it, or from closing with it; but rather to take other counsel to their ruin, as Absalom took the Counsel of Hushai, to his utter overthrow; and this was all from God, *the Lord had appointed to defeat the good Counsel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom*, 2 Sam. 17. 14.

5. It shews, that such think it is in vain to seek God, possibly they judge the Almighty doth not concern himself about their matters; they are too low, too mean matters for the great God to take notice of; or else they conclude, he is unmindful of his own word and promises to them that seek him; or otherwise, they shew they have no faith in his word, nor dependence upon God. But did they give credit to the Holy Scripture, all their folly herein would soon vanish; for is it not said that an Hair of our Head, nor a Sparrow falls to the ground without God; he hath interested himself in all our concerns, and if we seek him, he will be found, He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain.

6. It shews, that such men do not take notice of the operations of Gods hand, nor observe what he hath done in times past; nay perhaps before their own Eyes, but a little before: Shall a Heathen, or men strangers to God, outdo such that are called Christians. Potiphar saw and was convinced, nay, and did acknowledge that the Lord was with Joseph, and prospered all things his hand.

7. It robs God of that Sacred Homage and Worship which is due to him from all his Creatures, and so overthrows the foundation of all Religion. For by acknowledging God in all we do, we shew we own that Divine Worship, Fear and Trust that is due to him; but they who do it not, seem to disclaim or disown Gods chiefest Glory, viz. That Divine adoration that belongs to him alone, and which appears not only to be his right from Revelation, but from Natural Light; for 'tis a Branch of Natural Religion, to acknowledge and trust in God, and to seek to him for all things we want, and to praise him for all things we have or do receive.

He that is the only object of our Divine Worship, is he that governs all things, and from whom all good comes, and delivers us from whatsoever is evil or hurtful to us. But they that do not

acknowledge God, will neither pray to him for what they need, nor praise him for what they receive; therefore it destroys all true trust in God, fear of God, and love to God, not to acknowledge him: and it shews such do in effect, deny God's governing the World, who Acknowledge him not, or Pray not to him. *The Lord looked down from Heaven to see if there were any did understand or seek God,* Psal. 14. 2. He takes notice who they be that Acknowledge his Authority over them; or who understands this, and so Fear him and Calls upon him, and Trust in him: But alas! The Wicked say, *Are not our tongues our own, and who is Lord over us:* They think their wisdom is from themselves, to Contrive, to Project; and their Tongues their own, to speak and utter what their hearts conceive; and their Hands their own, to effect what their hearts contrive, and their tongues express.

Quest. *Who are they that do not truly Acknowledge God?*

Answ. 1. Such that never or but seldom think of God. David, speaking of the Wicked, saith, God is not in all their Thoughts: or in none of their Thoughts, they think not of God. Psal. 10. 4.

2. Such who never consult with God in his word, about what they Undertake, that do not inquire, whether what they are about to do be Just and Agreeable with the word and will of God; nor seek for a Blessing upon what they are about to do.

3. Such who Pray not to God, or least wise, do not Pray in Faith or Believingly.

4. Such that depend upon their own wisdom, or trust in their own Strength, or rely upon an arm of flesh: *Some trust in Horses and some in Chariots,* Psal. 20. 7. But what said David, *I will not trust in my own Bow, neither shall my Sword save me,* Psal.

44. 6. [Hosea writes,] *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses*, Hosea 14. 3.

5. Such who in all they do, do not chiefly seek the Honor of God, the Interest of God, and the Welfare of his People; but in their Prayers, rather eye their own interest, their own peace, safety and profit, or their own glory: these do not truly Acknowledge God.

6. Such who do not Acknowledge, that all the good things they receive, to come from God; but ascribe it to their care, wisdom and industry, or secondary causes: as I heard of a wicked Man, who had a plentiful crop of Corn; and a neighbor observing it, bid him Praise God for it; *Praise God*, said he, *praise my dung-cart* (or to that purpose). Such men be sure Acknowledge not God.

7. Remember, that such who do not live by Faith on God's Promises and Providences through Jesus Christ, or do not come to God in Christ, for all Spiritual and Temporal Blessings, or that Trust not in him at all times and for all things, but either mummer against God, or despair of his Mercy in the Lord Jesus; or whosoever do not give God the glory of his Wisdom, Mercy, Justice, Power, Love and Faithfulness, as they shine forth in Christ; do not truly Acknowledge God.

Exhortation

First, let me Exhort you all (these things being so) to Acknowledge God, whosoever you be, whether High or Low, Rich or Poor, Young or Old; the King on the Throne must Acknowledge God, as well as him that grinds at the Mill: 'tis both the duty of the Prince and of the Peasant: there are none so high, but he can bring down, nor none so low but he can raise up

Second, pray to him in Faith, for Prayer is one way to Acknowledge him. And as for Motives.

1. Consider, that Prayer is the Duty of all Men: though God will not hear Sinners; yet Peter put Simon Magus upon Prayer, Pray, that the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee: This shew; the need of Grace, of Faith, and a Changed Heart; if wicked men Pray not, they Sin, yet their Prayers cannot please God.

2. You know that God will hear a godly mans prayer, if he prays in Faith, and for such things that are agreeable to his will, but let him come in Christs Name: *Ask and ye shall Receive, that your Joy may be full*, John 16. 24.

3. Prayer hath obtained great Blessings of God; nay, it hath done Wonderful Things: I mean the Prayer of Faith and of Faithful Persons. It hath opened and shut Heaven: *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, that it might not rain, and it rained not on the Earth, by the space of Three Years and Six Months; and he prayed again, and the Heavens gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth*. James 5. 17. Prayer hath quenched the violence of Fire, and stopped the mouths of lions: Faith and Prayer divided the Red Sea, that Israel went through it on dry ground It hath put to flight the Armies of Aliens.

4. Prayer is Gods Ordinance, 'tis his way wherein we ought to meet him.

5. It hath his Promises, his word that is settled in Heaven; his promise is as firm as Heaven it self.

6. Prayer Honors God many ways:

1. Hereby we Acknowledge his Omniscency, that he knows us, and our wants and necessities.

2. Prayer Honors God, in that by Prayer we acknowledge his Omnipotence, that he is able to help us, let our condition be what it will: and in that he can confound our Enemies.

3. In respect of our dependence upon God, for in Prayer we Acknowledge, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are up to him and our Trust is in him.

4. In Prayer we Acknowledge his Authority over us, and his Love and Faithfulness towards us: but Brethren, know that it is the Prayer of the New Creature that prevaieth, that pleaseth and honoureth him; 'tis the voice of the New Born Spiritual Babe, that is sweet to him; yea 'tis the voice of his own Spirit that he hears, and which brings honor to him: moreover know, that 'tis through Christs Intercession only, that our Prayers are heard: Christ offers up all the Prayers of his own People with his own Incense, and when he offered up their Prayers with his Incense, their were Voices, Lightnings and Thunder.

Third, join Confession of Sins with your Supplications: Oh, find out, every one of you, the Plague of his own heart, and lie low at the Foot of God; confess your own Sins, and the Sins of the Nation, and the Sins of God's People, thus you have heard Daniel did: Brethren, to Confession of Sin, add also deep Humiliation, this must be joined with our Prayers and Confessions; nay, and Reformation of Life also, every one must turn from his evil way. See 2 Chron. 7. 14. *If my People that are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their Evil Ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their Sins, and will heal their Land:* If we regard Iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear our Prayers: 'Tis true, a National Humiliation and Reformation, may prevent National Judgments, as

in the case of Nineveh: Oh, that we could see but such an Humiliation (as was among them) among us in England, for the Sins of this Nation are grievous in the Sight of God, being attended with such Lamentable Aggravations, we are a People of exceeding great Mercies; but Oh! the Wickedness of these Days: God is therefore angry with us; [Oh that] the Inhabitants of England may see their Sins in their Punishment: doth not God touch us in our Trade and Coin? Is it not, because those two things have been, as it were, the Idols of England, or of Multitudes among us? Sirs, let us look higher than to secondary Causes of these present distresses that are upon us; and acknowledge God to be just in permitting these Evils to come upon the Land: if we cannot find out the Cause of our Distempers, how shall we find out a Cure?

I am afraid least this Pretended Fast, should be but as a Mock-Fast, or a day of Humiliation in shew only, and not in heart; if we see all persons reforming their ways, we shall have ground to hope better things.

If Magistrates do their part, not only in making good Laws against Vice and Profaneness; but in seeing those Laws put into due execution; and they themselves, and every man to turn from his evil ways, and from the violence that is in his hand, then may Gods Wrath and Anger cease; but if not, his judgment will break forth upon us.

Brethren, God is a jealous God, and will not be mocked; what men sow they shall reap. 'Tis said of Nineveh, *And God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil, that he had said, that he would do unto them, and did it not*, Jonah 3.10. It was not their words, but their works that God looked at; 'tis not what we speak, but what we do that will prevail with the Almighty.

1. Terror and woe to them that cast off all fear of God, and acknowledge him not, or do it not in truth and sincerity. *Thou [who] casteth off fear, and restrainest prayer before God, Job 15. 4.:* Some men look upon it vain and unprofitable to pray to God, or to acknowledge him; *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, and have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?* But what will these men do in the day of Wrath? Judgments shall bow them and break them, if Mercies will not melt them.

2. Those that refuse to acknowledge God, or who follow not his Direction, and walk not in his Ways, nor hearken not to his Voice, nor wait for his Counsel, he will in Wrath and Judgment leave, and give them up to their own hearts lusts, and to walk in their own counsel, as he did Israel of old; *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would have none of me; so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsel,* Psal. 81. 11, 12. God may justly withdraw all his directing influences from such, and blind their Eyes, who, through Pride, think they have Wisdom enough to manage their own Affairs, and direct their own Paths. God's counsel is to men, to forsake their sinful ways, to embrace his Son, or believe in Christ, and trust in him alone, and rest on his word, and cry to him in their trouble; but when they refuse to do this, he oftentimes utterly leaves them, and then they fall, and bring ruin on themselves and others, whose counselors they pretend to be, or chosen to be.

The truth is, while the Nation continueth in its Rebellion against God, and all Profaneness aboundeth to such a degree, as to this day it doth, what can we expect but Wrath and fearful Judgments? What signifies a few formal Prayers, whilst men hold

fast their sins? Are such Laws made and executed, to check and restrain the cursed enormities of the ungodly? That may tend as an effectual way to accomplish such a Reformation that God calls for. Alas, whilst every Man's Hand at Sea and Land is up against God, fighting against him; can we expect he should appear to fight for us? Oh, what horrid Pride, Uncleaness, Oaths and Blasphemy, and all Profaneness do we see and hear of every day! 'Tis a wonder the Earth opens not its Mouth to swallow them up at Land (as it did them at Jemeca;) and that the Sea doth not swallow up our Ships (and those in them) they having such a wait and load in them. Sin is a heavy burthen, and our sins are so heavy, they are enough to sink (as one observes) seventeen Kingdoms. Moreover, what Errors and detestable Heresies do abound among us? And also what Divisions, Discord and Animosities are there among Professors? One set against another, little Love and Charity being now to be found in the Earth: much Preaching, but little Practice: are not many Professors as Proud, Covetous, Carnal and Loose as others. Oh, where is the Life and Power of Religion? What can we look for whilst things are thus, but some fearful calamity and dissolution.

But to proceed to a Use of Comfort and Consolation, to such who do in uprightness acknowledge God.

Observe the Motive, or Encouragement, that is laid down in the later part of my Text, and he shall direct thy Paths.

I cannot now speak to this part of the words, as I might, for want of time; but certainly here is great ground of Comfort to all godly Christians, yea to all that rightly acknowledge God. For,

1. He will shew us the right way, that we might, saith Ezra, seek a right way; none but God can lead us into a right way; every

mans way may seem right in his own Eyes; but no mans way is right, but such as God teaches and directs.

2. Let our Straits and Distresses be never so great, nay, beyond the wisdom of Man to find out a Remedy, yet God can soon direct us, and all that seek to him, in a way for present Relief; nothing is too hard for him to do, *Who is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working*, Isa. 23. 29.

3. God can direct and save a People, when all say, there is no hope; when every Man despareth of Succor and Relief, and are at their Wits end as it were. God can lead, guide and direct us Infallibly: He only gives certain and Infallible Counsel; there are none can defeat his Counsel; no wisdom nor craftiness of Men can stand before the Wisdom of God. There is no Wisdom nor Understanding nor Counsel against the Lord: What Encouragement is here to seek to God!

4. As he can Direct us, and none can withstand him; or give us Counsel, which none can overthrow; so he can with ease, defeat all the Counsels of his People's Enemies; nay, can turn their crafty counsel to the Advantage of his own People: *He taketh the Wise in their own Craftiness, and the Counsel of the Froward is carried head long*, Job 5. 13.: or as the Prophet Isaiah saith, *The Counsel of the Wise shall be turned backward*. *Omne Consilium Captatum in Festinatione est Stultitia*. God can mingle a perverse Spirit, and and make the Princes of Zoan to become Fools.

5. When he is sought truly unto, he hath promised to direct a People or Person that feareth him; his special care is over such that Trust in him: *Behold the eye of the Lord is over them that Fear him, upon them that hope in his Mercy*: Mind my Text, *He shall direct thy Paths; the steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his ways*, Psal. 37. 23. *Though the young*

lions want and suffer hunger, yet they that fear God shall want no good thing, Psal. 34. 10.: He will lead the Blind, in ways they knew not, &c. Isa. 42. 16. Though we are in our selves, Blind and Ignorant, yet if we Acknowledge Him, He will lead us, and will not leave us to the lusts of our Enemies: brethren, we are still in God's hand and none can pluck us out; and our times also are in his hand.

6. You that are Godly, have interest in this mighty God; He is your Father, therefore he will Teach and Direct you; His Faithfulness and Fatherly Affections leadeth him thus to do.

7. Do you also commit your selves to him and Trust in him; and will he, think you, ever fail such that so do: *The Poor committeth himself to thee: Thou art the Helper of the Fatherless, Psal. 10. 14.:* If unfaithful Man will not fail such that wholly Trust in him; will the Faithful God not help and direct such that put all their Trust in him; though our Sins be many, and our miseries and dangers many also, yet Brethren, let us lie low before the Lord, and humbly confess with the Prophet our own Insufficiency. *Oh Lord, I know that the way of Man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his Steps, Jere. 10. 23.* Let us use all due means which God directeth us to, or be found in our duty, and leave the Issue of all to God; Men not seeking constantly to God, nor relying on him, may be the cause [that] they prosper not. But, let it go how it will with the Land, or with the Wicked therein; yet saith the Prophet Isaiah, *Say to the Righteous, it shall go well with him.* A dismal day must come and will come upon this Land, and upon all Nations of the Earth; we see already Distress of Nations and Perplexities; but these things are but the beginning of Sorrows, but do you that Fear God, Look up, lift up your heads, for your Redemption draws near.

8. God will Bless, and give Success to such that seek to him, that humbly and sincerely Acknowledge him, yea in their

Civil Affairs; such shall find their Endeavors crowned with a Blessing; and also in Spiritual matters God will lead them: the meek will be guide in Judgment, and the meek will he teach his ways: that is, the humble and lowly ones, that Acknowledge God, and submit to his hand, and are willing and desirous to be lead, directed and governed by him in all their ways, in doing Justice and Judgment, who are not selfish or self-seeking persons, who lay not burthens on others to ease themselves; but act in all righteousness and equality in what they do, in the Station where they are set; for as all the ways of God are Mercy and Truth, so should all the ways of Men be, especially such that are Rulers and Magistrates, who are entrusted with the great concerns of a Nation or People; they ought to be Men fearing God, Men of Truth, hating Evil; if not, God may justly leave them, and blast all their endeavors; for they are the Meek, the Humble and Righteous ones, that God will guide in Judgment, and direct their Paths.

9. Know assuredly, that none Teaches like God: what is Man's teaching? Some Glory in their Philosophical Learning, but that only fills the head with knowledge; it may make Men critics, but not Christians: others boast of the Teachings of Natural Reason, and will receive no Principles of Religion that is above this Teacher; and thereby, they cast contempt upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All True Knowledge flows from God's Sovereign Grace; he guides and teaches whomsoever he pleaseth; he can speak to the Heart, nay, give a heart to understand, as well as instruction; he can give a teachable frame, or a teachable Spirit, as well as direct those whom he hath given such a frame, or heart, unto; therefore it followeth, that to teach and direct our Souls, is the effect of Almighty Power. *Be still and know that I am God.* Confess your weakness, your ignorance, and acknowledge my Skill, my Power; as if God should say, *No man can come to me,*

except the Father, which sent me, draw him: What is his Drawing, but his Teaching; Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John 6. 44, 45.

Men must be Untaught, or become as Fools, before they can be Wise; I mean, emptied of their own Wisdom, and confess, they know nothing as they ought to know: Christ's Office and Work, is to Teach his People: He only hath the Tongue of the Learned; therefore let all men Learn of him, wait upon him; acknowledge him, to be their only Instructor and Counselor; and say with David, *Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory, Psal. 73. 24.* And thus I shall End as I Begun, *In all thy ways Acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy Paths.*

FINIS.