

SERMON V.

THANKFULNESS REQUIRED IN EVERY CONDITION.

PREACHED AT ST. MARGARET'S, NEW FISH STREET, MARCH 23, 1645.

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”—1 THESS. v. 18.

WHAT is written to the Thessalonians, is written for our instruction. What they are commanded as christians, we are commanded as christians.

In the latter part of this chapter, several exhortations were given to them. Among the rest this is one; in which ye have,

The exhortation itself: “In every thing give thanks.”

And, the reason enforcing that exhortation: “For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

“In every thing give thanks:” in prosperity and in adversity, whether things go well or whether they go ill; in every thing give thanks. He had said before, verses 16, 17, “Rejoice evermore, pray continually.” Unto those exhortations he adds no such reason as here. Because it may seem strange that a man should give thanks in every thing, he adds also, “For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” So that plainly here lies this observation, or truth, upon the words:

It is the will of God, even our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing.

When we are full, it will be granted that then we are to give thanks to God. Deut. viii. 10. But ye are not only to give thanks when ye are full, but when ye are empty; not only when ye are strong, but when ye are weak; not only when ye are delivered from the hands of your enemy, but when you are delivered into the hands of your enemy. Therefore Job says, i. 21., “The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be his name.” Job was plundered by the enemy, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job was emptied

of a full estate, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job had lost his dear children, and yet he does bless the Lord; Job was in a great measure given up into the hands of Satan, and yet he blesses the Lord: for which he is commended.

So then, it is our duty, and the will of God our Father, that we should not only be thankful, but we should be thankful in every thing.

For, there is always excellency enough in God and Christ, to entertain your thankfulness, to draw out your thankfulness and praises. Indeed, there is a formal or notional difference, between praising God, and giving thanks to God. Praises respect the excellencies of God himself; thankfulness respects the benefits we receive from God. I praise God, when I honour him for the excellency that is in him; I am thankful to God, when I bless him for those benefits I receive from him. But now in Scripture, these are put one for the other ordinarily: and whatsoever our condition be, whether high or low, rich or poor, full or empty, there is enough excellency in Christ for to draw out our praises: and therefore in every thing we are to be thankful.

There is no condition so sad, but somewhat is good that is mingled with it; no darkness so dark, but some light withal; no misery so miserable, but some mercy withal. Heaven is all mercy, and hell is all misery: but this life is made up of both, it is a twilight, some good in every condition; and therefore, in every thing we are to give thanks unto God.

It is the duty of a christian to be like unto Jesus Christ: he was thankful in every thing. When he had not whereon to lay his head, "Father, I thank thee," Matt. xi. 25. When he was to go to his agony, and sweat drops of blood; they sung a hymn, says the text, a psalm of praise. So, when a christian is to go to his agony: whatever agony he meets withal, there is rise enough yet for his thankfulness: in every thing be thankful. As the apostle hath it in Eph. v. 20, "Giving thanks always, for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You will say, Suppose that a christian meet with some long, heavy, and sharp affliction: is he to be thankful then; to be thankful in that condition?

Yes; look I pray into Isa. xxiv. 15, "Wherefore," says he, "glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord

of Israel in the isles of the sea." Glorify ye the Lord in the fires ; so ye read it. Some rather translate it thus : "Glorify ye the Lord in doctrines ;" *Urim*, the same word that we translate, *Urim*, for the *Urim* and *Thummim* : but I would rather translate it *vallies* ; so Calvin : for doctrines does not suit with that which follows : "Glorify ye the Lord in the vallies, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." A valley is a low place, and dark ; now, says he, though ye be in a dark condition, removed from light ; Glorify the Lord in the vallies, glorify the Lord there. And good reason why the saints should do so ; as ye will see, if ye will look into Zech. i. 8 : "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white." This man upon a red horse plainly must be meant Christ : who is here attended with red horses, speckled and white, to send forth and dispatch into the several parts of the world upon his design. These other red horses, they are behind him, waiting upon him : now where is Christ ? he is among the myrtle-trees : and where are the myrtle-trees ? they are in the bottom. The saints and people of God for their fruitfulness they are called myrtle-trees, and sometimes their condition is as a valley ; they are in the bottom ; but yet they are myrtle-trees in the bottom, and Jesus Christ is among these myrtle-trees, though they be in a bottom, though they be in a valley ; and therefore no wonder that we should praise, and glorify God in this condition. Beloved, what we may rejoice in, that we may praise God for. Now, says the apostle, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; and let the brother of high degree rejoice in that he is made low," James i. 9, 10 : "Rejoice in tribulation," Rom. v. 3. A man is to rejoice more for the opportunity of exercising grace, than in all prosperity : there are some graces that cannot be exercised but in tribulation, cannot be exercised in heaven ; patience, and the like. Now then, when tribulation comes, a christian should thus look upon it : I have hereby an opportunity of exercising that grace, that I had not before ; and then he will bless God, and then he will be thankful in that condition : when God takes away one mercy, he gives another : if he take away Moses, he will give a Joshua : if he take away

Eli, he will give a Samuel: if he will take away Christ's personal presence, he will send the Holy Ghost. And the truth is, he does not so much take away as borrow a mercy; and he pays it again with usury and advantage: Onesimus goes away like a thief from Philemon, but he returns again with profit to him and others. As for these outward things, they will prove but debts at the great day of judgment: riches now, and gifts now, but debts then: and the less ye have of these outward things, the less ye have to reckon for them. In a bad day, men they say, Oh, that I had less, my reckoning would be less: the less ye have, the less your reckoning will be. The comfort of a man's life, consists not in *muchness*, but *fitness* to his heart. If a man have a great farm, and a small stock, it is the only way to break him: it is better to have a farm fit for one's stock, than a great farm. The Lord he sees what our stock of grace is, and accordingly he provides a farm for every one of his children; and sometimes it is lessened, but the reason is, because the stock of grace is no bigger, they have no more grace to stock it withal. Our gifts, and our parts, and our prosperity, they are so strong sometimes, that God is fain to mingle water therewithal, that we may not be drunk. I appeal to you: are not the saints gainers by all their losses; are not they strengthened by all their weakness; are not they bettered by all their crosses? Surely then, in all things they are to be thankful: though their affliction be exceeding long, sharp, and grievous; yet they are to be thankful in that condition.

But suppose now, that it be persecution that a man is to be exercised with; and that is bitter: is a christian to be thankful then, even in that condition?

Yes, ye know what the apostle says; "to you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer," Phil. i. 29. God's gift is worth our thanks. And says the apostle, "All shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel," Phil. i. 22. Is it not a great matter, and worth our praise and thankfulness; that we should be trusted by God to bear witness to his truth? "For this came I into the world," says Christ, "that I might bear witness to the truth," John xviii. 37. It was his design; thereby ye are like to him, and so honour him. When were the churches and people of God more pure than under per-

secution? and is it not a great mercy to be kept pure? The more you suffer for any truth, the more that truth will be spread by you: you die, but the truth lives: your estate dies, and your name dies, and your liberty dies: but your dying estate gives a living testimony unto the truth. "When I am lifted up," says Christ, meaning upon the cross, "I will draw all men after me," John xii. 32. And so shall you do, when you are lift up upon the cross for any truth, ye shall draw all men after that truth that ye are lifted up for. When have ye more communion with Jesus Christ, than when ye suffer most for his truth? Is it not a great mercy for a man to be glorified on this side heaven? Pray look upon that expression which ye have in John xiii. 30, 31; it is said concerning Christ himself, that when Judas went out, having received the sop, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him, verse 30. Judas "having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night: therefore when he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified." Judas went out to betray him, to bring him to the cross, a false brother was gone out. Now is the Son of man glorified, says he, not only because the cross was the way to glory; but the truth is, he was glorified upon the cross, there was a glory there. You may observe it; he did many miracles, and when he had done those miracles, he did not say then, Now is the Son of man glorified. He was transfigured; and he did not say upon his transfiguration, Now is the Son of man glorified: but now he comes to suffer, now he comes to the cross; Now, says he, is the Son of man glorified. And indeed, now is his love to poor sinners glorified. The apostle says, "He triumphed over all principalities and powers upon the cross," Col. ii. 15; and his love triumphs over all our sins, and our guilt, and our unworthiness: oh, then was free grace and love, when Christ was upon the cross! Now is the Son of man glorified. And so it shall be with you: when a false brother goes out to persecute you, to betray you, to bring you the cross; you may say so: Now is the servant of the Lord glorified, now is my love to Christ glorified; never more glorified than now. This makes the apostle Peter speak in his 1st Epist. iv. 16: "If any man suffer as a christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." It is matter of praise, and

thanksgiving here : says he, at verse 13, " Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." Verse 14, " If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." That is, says one upon that place, as Noah's dove hovered over the water, and found no place for to rest her foot upon, until she returned to the ark : so does the Spirit of God, as it were, hover over the souls of men, it wanteth rest : and when it sees a soul that suffers for the truth, there it lights, there it rests, there the Spirit of God and of glory rests. I appeal to you : which will be most comfortable, think ye, at the day of judgment ; that ye have been persecuted for the truth, or that ye have been a persecutor of the truth ? I know your answer ; when a christian is under persecution, he may lift up his voice, and say, I might have engaged against the truth ; ah ! I might have been a persecutor of the truth ; but blessed be God it is not so. The apostles went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Surely therefore, there is matter of praise and thanksgiving, even in this condition also, in this condition a christian should be thankful : it is the will of God our Father we should be thankful here.

But suppose that a man's inward and spiritual condition be overclouded, and God withdraw, and hide his face from a christian : shall he, can he be thankful in this condition ? is it his duty to be thankful now ?

Yes ; for though God do withdraw, though he do hide his face, and not shine upon a christian ; yet it may be light with him. Day may be day though the sun do not shine forth in bright beams. And it may be day light, it may be day upon a christian soul, though there be never a beam shines. We are saved by faith, and not by feeling.

Again, Though Christ doth hide his face, though he doth withdraw his comforting presence, he never withdraws his supporting presence from a christian ; sometimes more of that, when least of the other. Christ deals by a christian as God dealt by Christ in his agony, and on the cross : though God withdrew his comforting presence, so as he cried out and said, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" Matt. xxvii. 46, yet he had never more of God's supporting presence : and so it is with a christian. Though

Christ may withdraw his comforting presence, yet he never withdraws his supporting presence from them.

Besides, Jesus Christ does so withdraw from a christian as he does draw withal by his Spirit. He seemed to withdraw from the Canaanitish woman, but he did draw her to him by his Spirit. When he withdraws in Cant. v. from his spouse, he leaves myrrh upon the ringles of the door. And so when he withdraws from a christian, he leaves his myrrh upon the ringles of the heart: the heart cannot be quiet, cannot rest, takes no contentment without him, he does draw the soul to him, while he seems to withdraw from the soul.

What a man would not lose for all the world, that, you will say, is worthy of praise and thankfulness. Now take a gracious soul, a godly man when he is most deserted, forsaken, left, as it were; and he says, Now mercy is gone, now Christ is gone: ask him but this question: If Christ be gone, as you say, why do not you renounce Christ, and renounce all his ways? He will tell you, Oh, no, I dare not renounce him for all the world. But if he be quite gone, why do not you turn drunkard; why do not you turn swearer: and why do not you cast off all duties? Oh, no, that I dare not: I have yet something left, that I would not lose for all the world. Is there not then matter of praise and thanksgiving in this condition? Surely there is, even in this condition also.

But you will say: Suppose that a man be oppressed with sad temptations, black and dark temptations; God does not only withdraw, but Satan draws near, heavy, and dreadful temptations press in upon him: is it the will of God the Father, that he should be thankful in this condition also?

Yes; for is it not matter of praise, think ye, and thankfulness, that your enemy is overcome before you strike a stroke? you shall be more than conquerors: write, your enemy overcome before you fight. "Be of good comfort," says Christ, "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33; and so the god of the world, Satan, your enemy, is overcome before you do strike a stroke.

Besides, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that Satan can tempt you no more than your own Father gives him leave to do? "Simon, Simon, (says Christ,) Satan hath desired thee, that he may winnow thee as wheat," Luke

xxiii. 31. Mark the words, "He hath desired:" he was fain to ask leave first, he could not winnow Peter until he had leave. And he could not winnow Job until he had leave; he hath not power to tempt you further than your own Father gives him leave.

Again, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that nothing hath befallen you but what hath befallen the best of God's children, the greatest saints? Men say sometimes, Oh, never any one's condition like to mine, never any affliction like to mine. The most godly men have been most sorely tempted. In the Old Testament, David, a man after God's own heart, it is said of him, "The devil stood up, and moved him to number the people," 1 Chron. xxi. 1. What a report did God give of Job, and you know his winnowing and his continuance. In the New Testament, two famous apostles, Paul and Peter. "Peter, Satan hath desired to winnow thee:" Paul, "a messenger Satan, sent to buffet him." And our Lord Jesus Christ himself, "in all things tempted, that he might succour those that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18. Oh, beloved, how gracious will Jesus Christ be to tempted ones, that came from heaven on purpose to be gracious to them.

Further, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that you have always one for to run unto, to succour you, to relieve you in your temptations? A brazen serpent up, against you be stung. Paul therefore, in Rom. vii., having said, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" in the next words says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." When Satan is tempting, Christ is praying, interceding. "Satan hath desired to winnow thee, (says he,) but I have prayed," Luke xxii. 31. You cannot pray: truly sometimes we pray most, when we pray least, for Christ prays for us.

Again, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that ye have such an estate that these thieves can never rob you of? A christian is a traveller; the thief meets him, and takes his money that he hath about him; but he hath an inheritance of land at home, which the thief cannot take away from him. And Satan by his temptations possibly may rob you of these comforts that are about you; but you have an inheritance

and estate, christian, in heaven, that shall never be taken away, that you shall never be robbed of.

I will conclude thus, is it not matter of praise and thanksgiving, that by this mud you shall be more cleansed. Beloved, this is Christ's way: he suffers men to be tempted, that they may be freed from more temptations, and he suffers this dirt to be cast upon them, that they may be the more cleansed. "Simon, Simon, (says our Saviour,) Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat." How so? Satan "goes up and down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." True, that is his intent in his temptations; Satan's intent in the temptation, is not to winnow, that is Christ's intent. Satan's intent in the temptation is to devour, but Jesus Christ's intent in all those temptations is to winnow. And who more knowing, who more gracious, who more humble, who more thankful than those that have been most assaulted with a temptation? Pray observe what is said in 2 Cor. xii. 7. Says Paul, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger Satan, (so it may be read, without *of*, the messenger Satan,) to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure," again. See how that goes before and follows: it begins the verse and ends the verse: "Lest I should be exalted above measure," at the beginning of the verse; "Lest I should be exalted above measure," at the latter end of the verse. As if now, that these temptations were special preservations against spiritual pride; it is set down twice, "Lest I should be exalted above measure;" again and again. Spiritual pride indeed is very dangerous. It was Mr. Fox's speech, As I get good by my sins, so I get hurt by my graces: in regard of that spiritual pride he was guilty of upon the receipt of them. By temptation God uses to keep men humble. The Hebrew word for lees, the lees of wine, comes from the root that signifies, to keep, because the wines are kept by the lees. And so God is pleased to keep men humble by these temptations; in these lees, and in these dregs, God keeps men's graces. Temptations do you no hurt, until ye yield to them. The greater the temptation, and the more your flesh does tremble at it, the greater the affliction, but the lesser the sin. Temptation is the soul's rape; it may

deflower your soul, offer violence to your soul: it cannot take away your innocency. Now, is it not a great mercy to be kept innocent and chaste unto Jesus Christ? Austin hath a notable speech: If ye praise God under good things, ye are paid your debt; if ye praise God under evil, ye have made God your debtor. The truth is, we can never pay our debt to God, neither are we able to make God our debtor; but God is pleased to call himself so: when men praise him under temptations, and under persecutions, and under desertions, God is pleased to call himself our debtor. Surely therefore, it is good for a christian to bless God, and to praise God in every thing; in all things to be thankful; in affliction, in persecution, in desertion, under temptation. This is the will of God our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing, in every condition.

And if so, then what great cause have we to be very thankful to God in these times. Had the Lord let in the enemy upon you, ye should have been thankful: had ye been plundered of all your estates, ye must have been thankful: had ye lien at the mercy of the merciless enemy crying for quarter; yet you must have been thankful: how much more now? Had ye been emptied of all ye must have been thankful. Oh, shall we not be thankful then unto God now, that hath given us such deliverance, and such victories as these?

You will say unto me; what special thing is there that we should be thankful unto God for in these times?

Hath the Lord done such great things for England, and art thou only a stranger in Israel? Did ever England hear of such a year as this last year hath been? Can any records tell us of such a year? May I not say, stand out, O all ye ancient records from your dust, and tell us from the first day of England's birth, did ever England see such a year as this hath been, wherein the power and mercy, and free grace of God hath rode in triumph throughout the kingdom?

Yet that I may not be wanting to you, to your question: look I pray into Psalm cvii. 1, 2., ye shall find it written: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so; whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." See who are to say so: "let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Be-

loved ye know that not long since we were in captivity : I mean a spiritual captivity : we sat down by the waters' side, and said, How shall we do to sing a christian song? The Lord hath redeemed us, he hath redeemed us out of the hand of our enemies. And if the Lord hath not redeemed you out of the hand of your enemy : do not say so : but if he have, let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

Besides, Is it not worth our thankfulness, that we have had so many days of thanksgiving together? A day of fasting and prayer, is a sweet day ; a thanksgiving day sweeter, if I may make compare : for in a day of fasting and prayer, we deal with the anger and wrath and displeasure of God : in a day of thanksgiving with the love of God, and the mercy of God. In a day of fasting and prayer, we exercise grief : but in a day of thanksgiving, we exercise joy and love ; in a day of fasting and prayer, your eye is upon your sins ; in a day of thanksgiving, upon your graces, to be thankful for them. As the fish swims upon the top of the water when the sun shines, which in a storm lay at the bottom : and wood, and sticks tumbled up and down, and those were seen. So in a day of thanksgiving, there ye see and take notice of your own graces, to be thankful for them. In a day of fasting and prayer, sometimes, ye are so humbled for sin committed, as the sense of your justification is quite shattered : but in the day of thanksgiving, your assurance for heaven is sealed : they are sweet days. And, beloved, you have had many of them of late ; and surely this is worth our praise.

But give me leave a little to enumerate : for enumeration is one kind of argument : hath not the Lord from heaven owned his own cause in the hands of his servants, our brethren in the field? Hath not the Lord heard your prayers? Hath not the Lord opened many mines of precious truths that ye never knew before? Hath not the Lord delivered you from the hand of a savage enemy? Those that lay among the pots, brought forth with doves' wings : victory after victory ; one treading upon the heel of another, overtaking one another? Does he not daily load you with his benefits? I cannot say as David in Psalm ix. 1., " I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart : I will shew forth all thy marvellous works." The former part, " I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart," you will say, but the latter

part, "I will shew forth all thy marvellous works;" who can say? they are beyond us.

And now, beloved, if it be our duty to praise God, to be thankful to him in every condition, when we are low: shall we not be thankful to him now, that the Lord hath raised us, and filled us thus?

You will say, there is one thing that hinders us in the work of praise and thanksgiving in these times: a reformation is now begun, and things do not succeed according to our desires in the matter of reformation: should we, can we be thankful now?

Yes; if the Lord give me a child, should not I be thankful for it, because it is not born a man? When the Jews built the temple, did not they shout, and praise God that the foundation was laid? When the Israelites had overcome their enemies, in Samuel's time; though the enemies were round about them, they set up a stone, and called it Ebenezer, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us," 1 Sam. vii. 12. Beloved, in our thanksgiving we are to be like unto Jesus Christ: he did not only praise God when he had the mercy, but before he had it, in the entrance upon it. When he raises up Lazarus from the dead: "Father (says he) I thank thee that thou hearest me always:" John xi. 41, 42. and then he commands Lazarus to come out. But first he gives thanks to God. In the Scripture, the Holy Ghost hath commanded us, "to honour the Lord with our substance; and with the first fruits of all our increase." Prov. iii. 9. Either ye have the first-fruits of reformation or not. If not, what mean all those precious ears and fruits which ye have been gathering in these latter times? And if ye have the first fruits, though ye have not reaped the harvest yet: then "honour the Lord with your substance, and with your first fruits; so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses with the new wine of the gospel." God does give one mercy as a seal unto another; a first as a seal to the second: the second as a seal to the third: the lesser as a pledge of the greater. God does give a lesser mercy to try us whether we will be thankful, that he may give a greater. Beloved, these are trying times, God tries us whether we will be thankful for what we have. A reformation is now on foot: what though things do not suc-

ceed according to your desire, shall we not be thankful for what we have, because we want something of what we would have? when then shall we thankful?

Aye, but it is not only want of reformation, but many errors that are risen up among us in these times: and should we be thankful now in this condition?

Yes, shall I not be thankful for some grace, because it is mingled with much corruption; shall I not be thankful for my field of corn, because divers weeds are mingled therewith; shall I cast away the kernel, because it is compassed about with a shell? Luther, in the beginning of the reformation, met with many errors, and he comforted himself with this; When the corn is grown, the weeds will die alone. Meaning this; when reformation is come to greater strength, errors would die alone. It is said of our Lord and Saviour Christ, "He was numbered among transgressors:" Isa. liii. 12. Should not I love Christ, or own Christ, or be thankful for Christ; because he was numbered among transgressors? The errors of the time, you say, are the transgressors of the time. Shall I not love the truth, and own the truth, and be thankful for the truth because it is numbered among the transgressors, the transgressors of the time? Blessed is the man that can see a beauty in truth when it hath a scratched face. And indeed every truth hath a beauty; and the Lord hath given you out many truths in these times that ye were ignorant of before. Beloved, I do not say that ye should be thankful for any error, we ought to be grieved for any error. But shall we be so mindful against error, crying out against error, error; as not to be thankful for any truth we have? If the whole world were spread with error; that one truth living: "Jesus Christ died for sinners;" there were matter of praise. The more error does prevail, the more mercy it is, that you are kept. And truly the only way, or a special way to be kept from error, is to be thankful for truth. As a way to be kept from sin, is to be thankful for grace: so a special way to be kept from error is to be thankful for truth. So then, notwithstanding all this; yet you are to be thankful: thankful even in this condition, though many errors, yet ye are to be thankful, to be in all things thankful, in every thing thankful. Thankful when ye are straitened, as well as when ye are most enlarged. Thankful when ye

are deserted, as well as when God shines upon you. Thankful when ye are afflicted, as well as when ye are delivered. Thankful when ye have no victories, as well as when ye have victories. Some, it may be, now will praise the Lord and be thankful; hearing of so many victories; and because there may be some hopes of peace: but beloved, it is our duty to be in every thing thankful: it is the will of God our Father, that we should be thankful in every thing, thankful in every condition.

Give me leave to propound some few encouragements hereunto: for it seems a hard thing to be thankful in every thing, in every condition.

If you can be thankful in every thing, even when ye are low, you will engage God for to raise you up: if when you are weak, you engage God for to make you strong: if when you are deserted, you engage God to enlarge you, to shine upon you. It pleases God much, you cannot please him more, than to be thankful in every thing, even when ye are low. For example, suppose a man be convinced of sin, troubled in conscience, hath no assurance of God's love in Christ; if he should die, he does not know whether he shall go to heaven or hell. Yet notwithstanding, says he, whatever become of me, I bless the Lord that I am come hither: I was going on in the most sad condition: the Lord hath opened my eyes, I see indeed nothing but the wrath of God, due for my sins; but yet blessed be the Lord, that hath opened my eyes to see this: Aye, says the Lord, dost thou bless me because I have opened thy eyes for to see thy sins? I will open thine eyes for to see thy Saviour. Dost thou bless me because I have opened thy eyes to see thy own heart, and the naughtiness thereof? I will open thy eyes to see all my grace, and I will cause all my grace to pass before thee. This engages God, when we can be thankful for every thing; and when ye are low, it engages God much unto you.

Again, Hereby your afflictions shall be made blessings unto you. You say, How shall I know whether an affliction be a blessing or no? Take this note: when thou canst bless God under an affliction, then thy affliction is made a blessing: thy very blessing of God under an affliction, makes thy affliction a blessing to thee. Job, was greatly afflicted, and he

blessed God and his affliction was a blessing to him : so shall it be with you. Touch but thy affliction with a thankful heart, it will turn it into gold.

Moreover, the more you can be thankful for any thing when ye are low ; the more peace shall your heart and your soul be filled with. Some of you, it may be, want peace of conscience ; and ye say : Oh, that I had peace within, whatever become of me outwardly : whatsoever the world do with me, oh, that I had peace within.

To this purpose consider Phil. iv. ; says the apostle : “ Be ye in nothing careful,” verse 6, “ but in every thing, by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving ; let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” This is the way to get a great, and a full peace. Be in nothing careful : be in all things thankful, then the peace of God shall guard you.

Besides, hereby ye shall shame the devil : your great adversary shall retreat from tempting of you, as one ashamed and confounded. Some there are that shame the saints : and are a shame to the ways of God, and to the gospel : some there are that shame the devil. The devil said unto God concerning Job, “ Do but touch him, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Job i. 11. Says the Lord, “ He is in thy hand, only save his life :” and Satan touched him : what then ? “ The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away ; blessed be his name.” The devil said he would curse God, and he blesses God : see how the devil is shamed and confounded here. Some there are that make the devil’s words good : “ Touch him, and he will curse thee to thy face :” and so do some do, and thereby they are a shame indeed unto the people of God, and the ways of God. But when people can bless God under affliction : if ye in every thing be thankful ; the devil is confounded, God is much honoured. Wherefore, beloved, as ye desire that God may be much honoured by you, the devil confounded, your own peace settled, all your afflictions turned into blessings, and the Lord engaged to you, to raise you up when ye are low : learn out this lesson, not only to be thankful when ye are full, but to be thankful when ye are empty, to be in every thing thankful, this is the will of God your Father.

How shall we do this, you will say, how must that be done?

Some few things in answer to that, and so I will wind up up all.

Observe your own temper, and accommodate yourselves; put thyself upon that duty, and that grace, which thine own disposition lies next unto. God hath given us this indulgence. "Is any afflicted? let him pray: is any merry? let him sing psalms." According to your disposition, says he, that is the meaning; so let your work be, so let your grace be. It may be thou canst not pray; by that time thou hast been at another duty that thy disposition lies more unto, next unto, thou wilt be fit to pray. It may be thou canst not sing; by that time thou hast been at prayer, which thy disposition lies next unto, thou wilt be fit to sing. Let us not be more cruel to our souls than God is; he hath given us this indulgence: observe yourselves, accommodate yourselves; and by this means you shall be able upon all occasions to bless and praise the Lord.

Again, Be sure of this, that you maintain your assurance fresh, and green. It is a hard thing for a man to be thankful in every thing that wants assurance; come to him for to praise God for a great work: but it may be, said he, it came in judgment to me, I have no assurance. Strengthen your assurance in these three things, and it will cause continual thankfulness, thankfulness in every thing: assurance of your interest in Christ, and union with him: assurance that all comes from love: assurance that all things work together for your good: and then if the Tempter come, and says, Wilt thou praise the Lord; dost thou not see how all thy acquaintance hath left thee; and all thy friends left thee? you will answer again, Aye, but all this is for my good, and all this comes out of love, and so whatever falls out, you will be thankful in every thing.

Desire not much: he that desires much, will expect much; and he that expects much, he will not be content with little, much less thankful for every thing. Jacob was a plain hearted man; he desired little, he was content with less, he was thankful for every thing. So must you be.

And if you do desire much, let your eye be as much upon what ye have, as upon what ye want. The covetous rich

man, having a desire to have more, is not thankful for what he hath; if you come to borrow money of him, says he, I have need to borrow of you, I am a very beggar, I have nothing. His eye is so much upon what he would have, he forgets what he hath. So many times it falls out spiritually; let your eye therefore be as well upon what you have, as upon what you want.

Be sure of this, that you maintain the sense of your own unworthiness. No man more thankful than David, no man more sensible of his unworthiness than David; continually thankful, continually sensible of his unworthiness. There is a twofold unworthiness: creature unworthiness and sinful unworthiness. Accordingly a twofold sense of unworthiness; one that arises from the apprehension of creature unworthiness, of emptiness of that is in us as creatures; and another that arises from sense of guilt of sin. See them both in the viiith Psalm. The psalmist there praises the Lord: verse 1, "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" He praises the Lord. This thankfulness was raised from the sense of unworthiness, it was creature unworthiness: "Lord, what is man? O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. Lord, what is man?" Look into the cxvith Psalm, and there ye find the psalmist praising God upon the sense of unworthiness too: "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." And at the 12th verse, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Here is his thankfulness. It was raised upon sense of unworthiness. But what unworthiness? Sinful unworthiness: verse 11, "I said in my haste, All men are liars: what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" He was sensible of his own unworthiness, and it was a sinful unworthiness: "I said in my haste, All men are liars:" yet God is gracious to me: "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" So now it will be with you. If ye can but keep the sense of your own unworthiness, you will say, I was a wretched and a great sinner, and though I have but little in the world, yet any thing is too much for one that was such a great sinner as I was; you will be thankful for every thing, in every thing thankful; maintain but this.

Beloved, ye see how in all these troubles of these times God hath given us our lives for a prey. As the Lord said concerning Job: "Only spare his life," chap. ii. 6; so hath the Lord said concerning us, Spare their lives. God did not deal so by our Saviour Christ. When our Saviour Christ came into the world, he met with hard dealing from wicked men, and his life went for it. He did not say, "Only spare his life;" his life went for it. You have more, in this respect, than our dear Saviour had; you have your lives given you for a prey in these evil times, our Saviour had not. Shall we not, then, be thankful in every thing? having more than our Saviour had in this respect, shall we not be thankful for any thing; for any thing that God gives us shall we not now be thankful? How many are there that walk directly contrary unto this truth that I have spread before you: in every thing thankful: and they in nothing thankful, in nothing contented: husband godly, children hopeful, estate comfortable, and yet never contented; servants cannot please, children cannot please, friends cannot please; never contented. Oh, is this a duty, to be in every thing thankful; how do they lie in a sin, and the breach of this commandment, that are in nothing contented, never pleased. Beloved, I do not now come to call for contentment and patience and quietness under affliction, but for thankfulness; and not for thankfulness only, when all goes well with you, but for thankfulness in every thing. Oh, therefore, let us return unto our own souls, consider how it hath been with us. If there be ever a discontented man or woman, read this sermon, consider this scripture. The Lord says, "Be in every thing thankful;" and thou hast been in nothing thankful, in nothing contented in thy condition. Oh, how will you answer it at the great day? Let me leave this exhortation with you, in your bosoms; the Lord knows into what condition we may come, whether into affliction, or persecution, or desertion, or of temptation; remember here lies your duty before you, lay it up in your hearts: "It is the will of God, even our Father, that we should be thankful to him in every thing;" not in some things, not when things go well only, when we have victory; but in all things thankful; "In every thing give thanks unto God; for this is the will of God our Father concerning you."