

and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' If you come prepared with such a spirit, it will be a cheerful, a profitable thing to sing psalms.

*Use 2.* To show us what a good God we serve, who hath made our delight a great part of our work. God is much for his people's pleasure and holy joy. Many think it is against the will of God that they should rejoice; you are not only at liberty that you may, but under a necessity of duty that you must ever rejoice in God. To this end consider what matter he hath provided for our joy in himself and our redemption by Christ; and one of the Spirit's offices is to be our comforter, and one of the duties of religion is singing of psalms, which is appointed as a help to this purpose.

*Use 3.* To show how much we overlook our profit when we deal slightly in this ordinance. It is a means, as other duties are, not a task; and a means to make our lives both holy and comfortable; therefore let us not contemn it. The same graces which are necessary for other parts of worship, which we make greater reckoning of, are necessary here also.

## SERMON XXV.

*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—EPIH. v. 20.*

HERE is the second effect of being filled with the Spirit, and it is of great affinity with the former; for it showeth also what is the great matter, end, and use of christian singing.

In the words observe—

1. The duty, 'Giving thanks.'

2. The circumstances of the duty—

[1.] The time, 'Always.'

[2.] The matter, for what, 'For all things.'

[3.] The object to whom this religious worship is to be given, 'To God and the Father.'

[4.] The manner, or means by whom, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

*Doct.* That thanksgiving to God is a great and necessary duty becoming all christians.

1. I shall open this duty as it is here set forth.

2. How necessary and becoming christians this is.

I. To open the duty. Here is—

First, The substance, or act of it, 'Giving thanks.' Praise relateth to God's excellencies, thanksgiving to God's benefits. There is a twofold thanksgiving—(1.) By way of celebration or commemoration, when we speak of God's mercies one to another; (2.) By way of invocation, adoration, or worship, when we express them to God himself.

1. A thanksgiving by way of commemoration, when we communicate to others what experience we have had of God: Ps. xxii. 22, 'I will

declare thy name, unto my brethren ; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' The name of God is that by which he is made known in his word or works. As we are to propagate to others what knowledge we get of God by his word, so also what we have found of him in his works, how God hath made known his name to us by acts of grace and mercy : Ps. lxxvi. 16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' This is one part of the communion of saints, to call upon others to praise God with us, as one bird sets the whole flock a chirping. We are usually barren, vain, foolish in our communications with one another. This celebration and commemoration should be our cure and solace : Eph. v. 4, *ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐυχαριστία*, 'But rather giving of thanks.' Speaking to each other of God's goodness is a christian's mirth, and a choice remedy against foolish talking, jesting, and other sins. To put down idle and sinful talk, he prescribeth giving of thanks.

2. There is thanksgiving by way of adoration, or direct address to God himself. This is a special part of christian worship, therefore the whole is expressed by it : 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 'Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?' where the whole christian worship is expressed by 'blessing with the spirit,' or 'giving of thanks.' And thence God is said to 'inhabit the praises of Israel,' Ps. xxii. 3, because he is often magnified and praised by his church : the praises of Israel, that is the subject of it. Yea, it is doctrinally declared by God himself : Ps. l. 23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' The Lord taketh it as an honour to himself when we praise him for his excellencies or bless him for his benefits. This thanksgiving is an acknowledgment of benefits received to the praise of the bestower. There is included in it partly notice and observation of what God hath done for us. The contrary is taxed, Isa. i. 3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' The brute beasts know such as feed them and make much of them, but men take no notice of what great things God hath done for them : Hosea ii. 8, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' Little notice is taken of God's kindness in the world. And partly too an esteem of the benefits received ; for we cannot give thanks for what we value and prize not. Solomon gave cities to Hiram, but they pleased him not ; and therefore he called them Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty, 1 Kings ix. 12, 13, because they stood in low and moorish places. So God vouchsafeth many mercies, but most men are discontented with their portion ; the mercies of God please them not : Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord ; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' What love is it to be restored to bare hills and mountains, or to be brought home to a wasted land, where they were to begin the world again ? On the contrary, they that esteem the effects of God's love will bless him, and praise him : Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' They that are affected with mercies received cannot but be affectioned towards the God of their mercies, and therefore will speak good of his name. And partly actual acknow-

ledgment ; they excite and stir up their hearts to give God the glory these mercies call for : Ps. ciii. 1, 2, ' Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' This acknowledgment, if it be serious, will excite and urge them to make some recompense, as to consider what they may do for God : Ps. cxvi. 12, ' What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me ? ' And it was Hezekiah's fault, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, compared with Isa. xxxviii. 9, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness, that ' he rendered not according to the benefit done him.' Therefore unless this acknowledgment doth excite us and urge us to honour, please, serve, and glorify God, it is not right. They do anew devote themselves to him upon every eminent mercy.

Secondly, The circumstances of the duty.

1. Of time, ' Always.'

But how is this possible, that we should be without intermission in the actual exercise of this duty ?

[1.] We must always have a heart prepared and disposed to give thanks ; for the words arise from the heart if we be serious ; therefore the heart must be so purified and prepared that we may be ever ready to give thanks to God : Ps. lvii. 7, ' My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.' When the heart is prepared the work is easy. Now we must never lose our thankful frame. A sense of God's favour must ever be kept fresh upon our hearts ; though we are not always blessing God, yet we must ever be prepared to bless God.

[2.] We must not omit the proper occasions, but must do it frequently and constantly. Some mercies are so general and beneficial, that they should be remembered every day ; as the great blessings of the gospel, Christ, and the new covenant : Heb. xiii. 15, ' By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' He had spoken before of Christ as a sin-offering. And besides, God is adding new mercies continually to those which we had before, and so giveth new matter of praise and thanksgiving : Ps. lxxviii. 19, ' Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation ; ' Lam. iii. 22, 23, ' It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning ; great is thy faithfulness ; ' that is, daily renewed. There is no time in which we receive not some benefit from God. Now upon all occasions we should acknowledge the great and fatherly mercies of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3.] ' Always,' that is, in all conditions, both in adversity and prosperity ; in whatsoever estate we are or may be, it can never be so ill with a christian but he hath cause to give thanks to God. Job blesseth for taking as well as giving : Job i. 21, ' The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Choicer mercies are continued to us than those taken away from us, for we have God still, and an interest in the covenant. So we are bidden, Isa. xxiv. 15, ' Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea ; ' that is, in the fires

of tribulation. If we walk in the fires, and have the Son of God to be with us, we have no cause to despond.

2. The matter for which we are to give thanks, 'For all things.' The same extent of the matter we may see in a parallel place: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks.' Only what is here propounded collectively, 'For all things,' is there propounded distributively, 'In every thing.'

[1.] The universal particle comprehendeth all his benefits; not one of them should be overlooked or forgotten: Ps. ciii. 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' But how is it possible to remember them? There is an habitual remembrance and an actual commemoration.

(1.) An habitual remembrance is necessary for all God's acts of mercy, not only for the more eminent and signal acts of providence, but for every daily kindness we receive from him. An habitual remembrance is when we are possessed with a greater sense of God's love, and an esteem of him because of his never-failing compassions. The more fuel is added to the fire, the more the flame increaseth; so every mercy is so far taken notice of as to increase our love to God and trust and dependence upon him, and the cheerfulness of our obedience to him. We love him more and serve him better because of his daily kindness to us.

(2.) An actual commemoration of every single mercy is impossible. We must live over a life as long again to repeat the mercies of our former lives. Yet, as much as may be, we should be express and particular; for particulars are most affective. We must help ourselves by two things—(1.) By a frequent reckoning; look into thy bill, what owest thou? Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.' Innumerable are the mercies of God; the oftener we come to audit, the better. (2.) The other help is, since we cannot recall the several and single acts of God's mercy, yet to recall the several kinds and sorts of them, which the psalmist called reckoning them up in order: Ps. xl. 5, 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' To speak of them in heap, when we cannot speak of them in tale, as a painter representeth a crowd in a little table by a cluster of heads. But then, secondly, those that are eminent, like red letters in the calendar of our lives. It is God's end in giving them: Ps. cxi. 4, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.' And it is charged as a great crime upon his people that 'they soon forgot his works,' Ps. cvi. 13; that is, his eminent and signal deliverances. These are masterpieces of providence great helps to relieve faith, and never be forgotten by us.

[2.] This universal particle comprehendeth all kinds of mercies, spiritual and temporal mercies.

(1.) Common and temporal mercies. These should not be lost in the throng, for he that is not faithful in a little will not be faithful in much. As he that doth not make conscience of small sins will fall into

greater, so he that is not thankful for the smaller mercies disposeth himself to a stupid carelessness and insensibility of the greatest mercies: Luke xvi. 11, 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' A suspected leaky vessel we try with water first, and then with wine. Besides, they all came from the same love, the greater and smaller mercies: Ps. cxxxvi. 25, 'Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.' The same reason is rendered all along for daily mercies, as well as those mighty ones. Besides, nothing should be contemned where nothing is deserved: Lam. iii. 22, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.' We are unworthy of the air we breathe in, as well as of the great mercies of the covenant: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' Therefore, Deut. viii. 10, 'When thou hast eaten and are full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee;' Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' Besides, a small remembrance from a great prince is esteemed a great favour: Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' Again, common mercies come from special love, and are sanctified and blessed to us when received with thanksgiving: 1 Tim. iv. 3-5, 'And commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' We take them out of God's hand, and use them for his glory. We have Christ's example, which should be noted, because thanksgiving at meals is grown out of fashion. Now we read, John vi. 11, 'And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down.' Our ordinary refreshings are great mercies, and God should be acknowledged in them; though they be but coarse fare, we must bless God for it, as well as for choice dainties: 'Five barley-loaves, and two small fishes,' ver. 9. Men sit down and rise up from their meals like brute beasts; and we are forced to contend with the godless and unbelieving world about the plainest duties. So in ver. 23, 'Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after the Lord had given thanks.' He doth not only remember the miracle, but the Lord's thanksgiving and blessing. Well, then, God must be owned in every mercy.

(2.) Spiritual mercies. Certainly we are to bless God for spiritual and eternal benefits more than for those which are bodily and temporal; for our thankfulness ariseth from the esteem we have of the mercies which we give thanks for. Now we ought most to esteem and value these benefits as being the choice fruits of God's special love to us: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' And these mercies render us most acceptable to God: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted

in the beloved.' Jesus Christ came from heaven to purchase them for us, and his Spirit worketh them in us; surely we should be most affected with these. Other mercies may be overvalued, especially as we look upon them as provision for the flesh, and so our very thankfulness may be a snare; and though religion tips our tongues, our lusts are secretly gratified and pleased, while God is endeared to us, not as giving pardon and life by Christ, but food and plenty of worldly increase.

(3.) Ordinary mercies and extraordinary. Ordinary mercies are our constant diet: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.' Extraordinary mercies are our cordials in a fainting fit: Ps. lxxvii. 10, 'I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High;' the wonderful experiences we have had of God.

(4.) Positive mercies and privative mercies. Positive mercies: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Freedom from all the sins and dangers we might have fallen into. Privative mercies, because so many miserable objects as we meet with in the world, so many grounds of thanksgiving have we that we are not as they. Did we know how busy the devil is to hurt us, were it not for the sense of God's providence round about us, we would be more thankful to God. Positive mercies are observed, because these come to our notice and view; we know what we have received: we do not know how many dangers God hath prevented; but we may know how he hath stored our houses with blessings.

(5.) Our personal mercies, and other men's mercies. No question but we are to give thanks for our own personal mercies, as being most nearly concerned in them. We are also to give thanks for others: 2 Cor. i. 11, 'You also helping together by prayer for us; that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.' God's children rejoice in one another's prosperity, and are interested in one another's mercies, as if they were their own: Phil. ii. 27, 'For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also.' Epaphroditus was recovered, and Paul gave thanks to God: Ps. cxlii. 7, 'The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.' When one is delivered, all the rest are glad of it. The more any partake of spiritual life, the stronger is spiritual sympathy; they mourn and rejoice with others, as by mutual prayers, so by mutual praises. God would knit our hearts in spiritual love to one another: Ps. xxxiv. 3, 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.'

(6.) Public mercies and private mercies. The cabin is of no stead when the ship is lost. In the peace of the nations wherein we are embarked we have peace. The children of God are wont to be affected with the good or ill of Sion above their private loss and benefit. When well at ease, Nehemiah and Daniel mourned because it went ill with the church. Especially when both are bad; as that woman, 1 Sam. iv. 19, when she heard her father and husband were dead, and the ark of God was taken, she would not be comforted, but died. When it is

ill with them, yet well with the church ; they rejoice as Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, Phil. i. 18. But when it is well with both, then they rejoice : Ps. cxxviii. 6, ' Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.'

(7.) Mercies in hand and mercies in hope. That argueth a strong faith, affectionately to praise God for mercies in hope as well as mercies in hand : Ps. xxxi. 19, ' Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men !' Abraham, when he had not a foot in the land of Canaan, built an altar and offered thank-offerings to God Gen. xiii. 18 ; so God's children 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2 ; 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

(8.) Bless God for things prosperous and things adverse. I know it is a question whether we are to give thanks to God for afflictions, for poverty as well as wealth, for sickness as well as health, for death as well as life.

*Ans.* 1. Simply we cannot give thanks for afflictions as afflictions, no more than we can pray for them ; for evil as evil cannot be matter of thanksgiving ; it is in itself matter not of joy, but of grief : Heb. xii. 11, ' No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Thankfulness is the effect of joy ; how then can we be said to give thanks for things prosperous and adverse ?

2. Though we do not simply give thanks for the evil, yet we may give thanks for the good that is mixed with them ; that is to say—(1.) For the mixture : Job ii. 10, ' Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall not we receive evil ?' *Abstulit, sed et prius dedit.* He taketh away opportunities of service, but it is a mercy that he continued them so long. (2.) For the mitigation ; it might have been worse : Ezra ix. 13, ' And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve ;' Lam. iii. 39, ' Wherefore doth a living man complain ?' a man on this side hell. (3.) For the fruit and profit ; if it be not good in itself, it turneth to good : Rom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for good to them that love God ;' Ps. cxix. 71, ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes ;' Ps. xciv. 12, ' Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' It is well that God doth not give us over to a reprobate sense, and will not let us sleep in our sins ; there is a blessing hid in the cross. (4.) For the final issue, that God may be glorified : 1 Peter iv. 14, ' On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified ;' and we rewarded : Mat. v. 12, ' Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Thus they rejoice and give thanks. Some kind of sufferings are an honour : Acts v. 41, ' And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.'

3. The object to whom this religious worship is to be tendered, ' To God and the Father ;' so Col. iii. 17, ' And whatsoever ye do in word

or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.' God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and Father. The meaning is, to God who is the Father, from whom all good things are derived: James i. 17, 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' There is *decursus beneficiorum, et recursus gratiarum*. All is derived from God to us, and all is directed and referred by us to God, and both by Christ: 1 Cor. viii. 6, 'But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' To whom we pray, to him must we give the praise. We pray to God; some sacrifice to their own drag: Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' Not only are our prosperities and successes from God, but if we think a good thought or do a good work, it is still of God; and therefore he must have all the glory: Rom. i. 8, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.' Some give thanks to saints and angels; no glory must be diverted from God, to whom we pray. We have the Spirit in prayer inclining us to God only: Rom. viii. 15, 'We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Therefore the glory must solidly and in whole be ascribed to him. Some cannot come to God as a Father but by Christ: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

4. The manner or means, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Why must thanksgiving be made in Christ's name?

(1.) Because there is more of God discovered in Christ than elsewhere: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' If Christ had not come into the world, we had never known the wonders of his love, mercy, and grace, which are now discovered to us in raising us from sin and misery to life and happiness. Now his *φιλανθρωπία*, mankindness, appeared: Titus iii. 4, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.' The angels had the pre-eminence in the creation. There was *φιλαγγελία*, his love to angels seen, as being made nobler substances, enjoying the immediate presence of God; but in redemption there is *φιλανθρωπία*, his love to man. In creation man was made like God, but in redemption God was made like man.

(2.) Christ is the only mediator to convey blessings to us and our services to God; for he is our high priest and intercessor. As our high priest he procured all our mercies for us by his oblation; and by his intercession he conveyeth them to us: Heb. viii. 2, 'He is a minister of the sanctuary,' *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός*. He maketh our thanksgivings acceptable by presenting them to God as a sacrifice pleasing to him by virtue of his merit: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' As we sue



out mercy in his name, so we give thanks in his name; he is the mediator of our praises as well as our prayers. Without Christ nothing is acceptable to God; our persons out of Christ are odious to God, and God is terrible to us.

(3.) He hath required this duty from us: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' The great duty of the gospel is thankfulness, which enliveneth all the rest; for the gospel is made up of mercies, and therefore called a benefit: 1 Tim. vi. 20, 'Because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.' A great expression of God's love to sinners in Christ: 2 Cor. ix. 15, 'Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.' It is such a law as is mercy. A rule of duty calleth for obedience, but a law that is a remedy and a benefit—a precious remedy, an unspeakable benefit—calleth for gratitude and thankfulness.

(4.) Because all our mercies come to us as the fruit of Christ's death, as wrapped in his bowels, as swimming in his blood, as the fruit of his purchase. Lev. iii. 5, their peace-offering or thank-offering was laid on the top of the burnt-offering. Till we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, nothing we do is acceptable to him.

II. How necessary, profitable, and becoming christians this duty is.

1. How necessary a duty it is appeareth—

[1.] By the light of nature and God's express will in his word. It is evident by the light of nature. Ingratitude is counted an unnatural sin: 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 'Disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections.' This holdeth as to ingratitude to God, for nature teacheth men to promise praise when they beg mercies: Hosea xiv. 2, 'Receive us graciously, and so we will render the calves of our lips.' This is our promise to God, and it is God's paction with us: Ps. l. 15, 'And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Therefore it is unjust to detain this honour and glory from him.

[2.] By his express will revealed in the scripture: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' This should be to christians instead of all reasons, *intuitu voluntatis*; upon the first sight of God's will they should obey. It is not only 'his will,' but 'his will in Christ.' In the new way of government by a redeemer, thankfulness is most suited to the frame of the gospel, and is the main principle of that obedience it calleth for at our hands. The evangelical covenant requireth thankfulness for the mercy provided for us in Christ, as the great duty which includeth all other duties.

2. How necessary a duty it is appeareth by the great profit that cometh of it.

[1.] To keep us always in a remembrance of God, and that invisible hand that reacheth out all our supplies to us. The stupid carnal world looketh to the next hand, but thankfulness bringeth God into sight and remembrance. There are two notions that keep religion alive in the world—that God in a way of justice is the author of all the evil we suffer: Amos iii. 6, 'Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' and that in a way of mercy God is the author of all the good we enjoy: James i. 17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift

is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;’ Acts xiv. 17, ‘Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’ All the comfort, protection, peace, and plenty that we have come of God. This humiliation and thanksgiving keep up the notice and remembrance of God in the world. The world had never fallen into atheism and idolatry if these two principles had been well minded.

[2.] The observation and acknowledgment of his benefits breedeth in us a love to God: 1 John iv. 19, ‘We love him, because he loved us first;’ Ps. cxvi. 1, ‘I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications;’ Luke vii. 47, ‘She loved much, because much was forgiven her.’ Our thankfulness then must needs excite our love to God, for the more solemnly we remember his love to us, the more we will love him again.

[3.] It doth encourage our hope. God hath given great things to us, and hath promised greater. Now by remembering what is past, we are the more invited to expect what is to come: 2 Cor. i. 10, ‘Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;’ 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, ‘Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion: and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom;’ Rom. v. 10, ‘For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.’

3. How necessary a duty it is appeareth because it prevents many sins.

[1.] Hardness of heart and security in enjoying the blessings of God’s common providence: to the unthankful they prove occasions to the flesh; so their table is made a snare to them: Ps. lxxix. 22, ‘Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.’ But by thanksgiving the creature is sanctified: 1 Tim. iv. 4, ‘For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;’ for in thanksgiving we distinctly remember the author and end of these mercies.

[2.] It suppresseth murmuring, or that querulous, fretting, impatient humour which venteth itself even in our prayers and complaints, and soureth all our comforts. Murmuring is the scum of discontent, by which we entertain crosses with anger and blessings with disdain. It is very incident to man, who is a querulous creature. Now in thanksgiving we see how much more cause we have to give thanks than complain; this fretting humour is cured when we see how much we are bound to bless God. In murmuring we overlook our mercies, and in thanksgiving our discontent. When we have received so much good, shall we take it ill if the Lord exercise us with a little calamity? So much undeserved good, shall we take it ill if we feel a little deserved evil? Job ii. 10, ‘What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’

[3.] It preventeth distrust and carking cares: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Acknowledge what God hath done for you already, and you will the less doubt of his goodness for the future.

[4.] It cureth spiritual pride when we consider who is to be praised for all the good that is in us. They that have more than others are more indebted to grace: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'But who maketh thee to differ from another?' And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? We have it from God and for God, not for our own glory and ostentation. God will be angry if we rob him of the glory of it; Acts xii. 23, Herod was smitten because he gave not God the glory.

*Use 1.* Is it such a duty? Then take heed of impediments and enemies to thankfulness.

1. A proud heart. They delight in their own praises; an humble heart delighteth in the praise of God: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;' 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19, 'And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?' The proud think themselves worthy of more, and therefore speak diminutively of all they have: It is but thus and thus.

2. A fleshly mind, which looketh to the pleasing of the flesh, and forgets God: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.'

*Use 2.* Is our thanksgiving right?

1. If the heart be brought near to God by every mercy we receive from him: Ps. xvi. 8, 'Give the Lord the glory of his name.'

2. If it breed a great delight in God: Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.'

3. If it be a cheerful thankful obedience: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' John xiv. 15, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'

## SERMON XXVI.

*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*—EPH. v. 21.

THE apostle had laid down the common duties which belong to all christians; now he cometh to special duties which belong to us as we are clothed with particular relations; and he beginneth that discourse with a general exhortation, that concerns both superiors and inferiors,