

Of Thankfulness to God.

by John Gill

Thankfulness to God is a vital aspect of a godly life, encompassing temporal and spiritual mercies, and is a response to God's gracious dealings with us.

Scripture: Psalm 68:19, Psalm 100:3, Matthew 11:25-26, Luke 17:15-18, Romans 1:8, 2 Corinthians 9:15, Ephesians 5:20, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Thankfulness", "Gratitude to God"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the vital role of thankfulness in the life of a believer, asserting that true thankfulness stems from a heart of contentment and godliness. He explains that thankfulness should be directed towards God for both temporal and spiritual mercies, highlighting the importance of recognizing God's grace in all circumstances, whether in prosperity or adversity. Gill encourages believers to express gratitude for the gift of life, health, and the blessings of grace, including redemption and adoption, as well as the means of grace such as the gospel and the ministry. He concludes that thankfulness is not only a command from God but also a reflection of our relationship with Him, urging believers to cultivate a habit of gratitude in every aspect of their lives.

Transcript

A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity

Book 1--Chapter 13

OF THANKFULNESS TO GOD

Thankfulness follows contentment: a discontented man is not thankful for anything; but a contented man is thankful for everything. Thankfulness is a branch of godliness; none but a godly man is truly a thankful man: there are some things not to be named among saints, and are not becoming them; but this is; and rather becoming them than many other things (Eph. 5:3,4), an unthankful saint is a very odd sound, if not a contradiction; "unthankful, unholy," are characters joined together, and agree (2 Tim. 3:2), and so "unthankful" and "evil" (Luke 6:36), and particularly none but an holy man can give thanks "at the remembrance of the holiness of God" (Ps. 97:12).

Concerning this gracious disposition of mind, thankfulness, may be observed, 1. The things for which thanks are to be given; and they are all things; the rule, and which is, according to the will of God, is

"giving thanks always for all things;" and again, "In everything," or for everything, "give thanks" (Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18), to which agrees what the apostle says (Phil. 4:6). And, 1a. First, for temporal mercies; for God is the "Father of mercies," even of all such mercies; the author and giver of them, and therefore thanks should be returned to him for them.

As, 1a1. For our beings; to be, is better than not to be; and none could give us existence but God, the fountain of being; "In him we live, and move, and have our being;" that is, we have it from him, as well as are supported in it by him; "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves:--be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Acts 17:28; Ps. 100:3,4), the wonderful formation of man, the structure of his body, the symmetry and perfection of its parts, as well as soundness of limbs, are matter of praise and thankfulness; as they were to the Psalmist David (Ps. 139:14-16). 1a2.

For our life, which is from God; he "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25), some creatures have a being, and yet not life, as inanimate ones; some have life, yet only a vegetative one, as plants; and others only an animal one, as brutes; but God has given to man a soul, both living and rational; Adam's body was made out of the dust of the earth, and then God breathed into him the "breath of life, and man became a living soul;" and such a life every man has, which is a grant and favour from God (Job 10:12), and therefore thanks should be given to him for it, and for all the mercies of life, and for that more than for them; since "the life is more than meat," or drink, raiment, and everything by which life is nourished, supported, and made comfortable; and, indeed, is preferable to all a man has besides (Matthew 6:25; Job 2:4). 1a3.

For the preservation of our being and life be God; his visitation, which is every day, every morning, preserves our spirits; he upholds our souls in life; he is therefore truly called, the "preserver of men," and is worthy of praise and thanksgiving on that account; the reason given is, not only because he has made the heaven, earth, and seas, and all therein; but because he "preserveth them all" (Neh. 9:5,6). 1a4. For our health, and for the continuance of it, and for restoration to it when it has been interrupted; health is a very valuable mercy, and without which the outward blessings of life cannot be comfortably enjoyed; and therefore is greatly to be desired, both by ourselves and for our friends; thus the apostle John wished for Gaius, that he might "prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospered" (3 John 1:2), and persons favored with such a mercy have reason to be thankful; as also when it has been lost and restored again; thus Hezekiah, when recovered from his sickness, said, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day" (Isa. 38:9,19), and a contrary behavior, as it very unbecoming, is justly resented; as in the of the ten lepers (Luke 17:15-18). 1a5.

For every mercy enjoyed, be it what it may; not only for life and health, for food and raiment, which are the principal mercies; but for every other, the least that can be thought of (Gen. 32:10). "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;" so that it seems the goodness of any creature mercy to a man depends upon his thankfulness for it; and this is the difference between a thankful and an unthankful man: an unthankful man, thinks nothing good; and a thankful man thinks everything good, and blesses God for it (2 Tim. 4:4), and this he does every day; mercies are returned every day, and are new every morning; and therefore men sensible of them will say, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits!" (Ps. 68:19). 1b.

Secondly, for spiritual mercies, whether of a lower or of an higher kind. As, 1b1. First, for the means of grace, the gospel, and the ministry of it; and a great mercy it is to be under the sound of it; "Blessed is the man that heareth me," the voice of wisdom, the gospel of Christ, though only externally (Prov. 8:34). It is

an happiness to be born in a land where the gospel is preached, and not among Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists, where there is a "famine;" not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but of "hearing the word of the Lord" (Amos 8:11), and a dreadful judgment it is on a people when the Lord commands "the clouds," the ministers of the word, "that they rain no rain upon them," that is, preach not the gospel to them.

The gospel was first restrained to the Jewish people, and forbid to be preached to the Gentiles; but afterwards the apostles had a commission to preach it to all nations; the Gentiles embraced it gladly, glorified it, or were greatly thankful for it; and when this is blessed to the conversion of sinners, it is matter of thankfulness; not only to them, but to all true believers, and to the ministers of the word: when the Jewish Christians perceived that God had given repentance to the Gentiles also, they glorified God, or were thankful to him, and blessed his name; and when the apostles declared the conversion of the Gentiles by the ministry of the word, it caused great joy among the brethren; and when they were successful in all parts, in making conquests of souls to Christ, they could not but express their thankfulness to God, saying, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14), and when it is food to believers, and is sweet to their taste, as the honey and the honeycomb, and they esteem it more than their necessary food, then are they truly thankful for it.

It is in itself glad tidings, and a joyful sound; and when it is experimentally heard and known, it causes praise and thankfulness, even among personages of the highest class; "all the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth;" the doctrines of the gospel, so as to understand them, as they will in the latter day glory (Ps. 138:4), when the gospel ministry will be the means of enlarging the interest of Christ, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Lord's and his Christ's, then the four and twenty elders, the representatives of gospel churches, will "worship God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned," by making the gospel ministry effectual to the enlargement of his kingdom and interest (Rev. 11:15-17).

To which may be added, as means of grace, the ordinances of the gospel, called the goodness and fatness of the house of God, the provisions of Zion; which, when saints are blessed with, and especially when blessed unto them, and made useful and beneficial, they "shout aloud for joy," or are exceeding thankful for them: and with these may be mentioned, the ministers of the gospel, who are the gifts of God to his churches; "And he gave some pastors and teachers;" gifts to qualify them for such offices; and he gives them themselves to his churches, to officiate as such among them; "And I will give you pastors" (Eph. 4:11; Jer. 3:15), these are reckoned among the blessings and privileges of churches, and of all true believers; "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas;" and therefore they have reason to be thankful for them; and especially when, though their "teachers have been removed into a corner," yet not so "any more," but their "eyes see their teachers," and their ears hear the joyful sound from them. 1b2.

Secondly, thanks are to be given particularly for the blessings of grace themselves, the things which are freely given of God. And in order to thankfulness for these, in men there must be knowledge of them; which is had by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; and there must be an application of them, a view of special interest in them; the Spirit of God must witness to their spirits that they belong unto them; he must take of the things of Christ, and show them unto them; which will cause exultation and thankfulness.

As particularly, 1b2a. For electing grace; this may be known without any special and extraordinary revelation; even from the grace in the effectual calling; "For whom he did predestinate, them he also

called;" and the "vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory," are explained of those "whom God has called" (Rom. 8:30; 9:23,24), so that those who are called by grace may comfortably conclude, that they are predestinated unto life, or are in the Lamb's book of life, and are foreordained unto eternal glory; and this may be known, as the apostle observes, from the efficacy of the gospel on the hearts of men (1 Thess. 1:4,5), and such therefore will call upon themselves and others to praise and thankfulness, saying, "Praise the Lord, for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure" (Ps. 135:3,4).

And the rather this is matter of great thankfulness, because 1b2a1. The choice God has made of men to everlasting life is of grace, and not of works; even of free, unmerited grace, and without any motive to it from them; hence called, "The election of grace" (Rom. 11:5,6; 9:11-13). Something similar to this was the national election of the people of Israel, which was not because of their quality or quantity; but because of the Lord's pure love unto them (Deut. 7:6-8). 1b2a2.

This choice is an act of distinguishing grace; it is not a choice of all, only of some; or it would be no choice; "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18), all Christ's disciples were chosen to office, but not all to grace and glory; such so chosen are "vessels of mercy," in distinction from others, called, "vessels of wrath;" it is a choice of "us," and not others: of us, who are in no wise better than others, as undeserving of the favour of God as others, being "children of wrath," even as others. 1b2a3.

It is a choice, which is the source, foundation, and security both of grace and glory. Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, which include all grace, are fixed and secured in eternal election, and flow from it; men are chosen to faith and holiness before the foundation of the world, and these are in time bestowed upon them; "As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed;" hence true faith is called, "The faith of God's elect," being peculiar to them, in consequence of their election, and with which their eternal happiness is connected; "For whom he did predestinate--them he also glorified."

Now if the apostle thought himself bound to give thanks for the election of others, then much more for his own; and so is every chosen vessel of salvation; see (2 Thess. 2:13). 1b2b. Thanks are to be given for redeeming grace. This was one of the benefits and blessings of grace, which lay uppermost on the mind of the Psalmist, when he called upon his soul, and all within him, to bless the name of the Lord, and not forget his benefits; "Who," says he, "redeemeth thy life from destruction" (Ps. 103:1,2,4), having in view, no doubt, the redemption of it by Christ, from everlasting ruin; thus Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, began his prophecy, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people," and raised up a mighty Saviour and Redeemer from David's family; this he said, when the "day spring from on high had visited them;" the Saviour was conceived, and become incarnate, though as yet not born, who was to be the Redeemer of his people (Luke 1:68,69,78), and great reason there is for praise and thankfulness on this account. 1b2b1.

Because this redemption is special and particular. They are a "peculiar people" whom Christ has redeemed from all iniquity; they are "redeemed from among men," and so not all men; they are "redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" and not every kindred, every tongue, all people, and each nation; and therefore have the greater reason to be thankful that they are redeemed. 1b2b2. It is altogether free on their parts; though they are bought with a price, are redeemed from a vain conversation, with the precious blood of Christ, to which redemption is frequently ascribed; yet they are "redeemed without money," without any price or money of their own paid by them for it; it is wholly of free cost to them; they are "let go, not for price nor reward," which they have given; their redemption is indeed through

the blood of Christ, and yet it is "according to the riches of the grace of God," who of his infinite wisdom and grace has found a ransom. 1b2b3.

It is a plenteous one; "With the Lord is plenteous redemption" (Ps. 130:7), a redemption from all iniquity, original and actual; from all sins of every kind, of heart, lip, and life, before and after conversion; from Satan, stronger than they, who held them captive; from all the curses of the law, to which they were subject by sin; and from hell and wrath, and from every enemy of their souls. 1b2b4. It is an eternal one; "Having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12), which will always continue; the redeemed will never more return to a captive state, or be brought into subjection to what they are redeemed from; but will always enjoy the benefits arising from this grace; and if therefore Moses and the children of Israel had reason to sing unto the Lord, who "in his mercy had redeemed them out of Egypt," which was but a temporal redemption; much more reason have we to praise the Lord, and give thanks to him for eternal redemption by Christ. 1b2c.

Thanks are to be given for pardoning grace and mercy. This is the first thing the Psalmist mentions after stirring up himself to bless and praise the Lord for all his benefits; "who forgiveth all thine iniquities" (Ps. 103:1-3), and indeed pardon of sin is a great blessing; and he is an happy man whose transgression is forgiven, and his sin covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity! and therefore should express his thankfulness for it. And, 1b2c1. Because it is entirely free with respect to the persons who partake of it.

It proceeds, indeed, upon a satisfaction made by another; for God, though he forgives sin, will by no means clear the guilty, without a full satisfaction to his justice; "Without shedding of blood there is no remission;" but though Christ's blood has been shed for the remission of sins, yet that is according to the riches of divine grace; it is free to men, though it cost Christ dear, his blood and life (Isa. 43:25), some, their debts are more, and others less numerous; one owes five hundred pence, and another fifty; but whereas neither the one nor the other "have anything to pay," God, the creditor, "frankly forgives them both" (Luke 7:41,42). 1b2c2.

Pardon of sin, is not only free, but full and complete; and therefore sinful men should be thankful for it; God not only forgives all manner of sin, signified by iniquity, transgression, and sin; greater or lesser sins, such as are more or less aggravated; but all acts of sin committed by his people; God, for Christ's sake, forgives all; "Having forgiven all trespasses" (Col. 2:13), no one sin is left unforgiven; the Lord's name be praised! 1b2d. Thanks are to be given for adopting grace; this is one of the spiritual blessings with which the Lord's people are blessed in Christ, "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:3,5).

There is such a display of grace in the blessing of adoption as ravished the apostle John, and caused him to break forth in a rapture, and say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1). Two things serve to excite thankfulness for this grace: 1b2d1. That it is bestowed on persons very unworthy; such who are by nature children of wrath, as others; and yet by this grace, children of God; such of whom God himself says, "How shall I put them among the children?" and yet of his grace puts them there; such who are like the wretched infant, cast out into the open field, in the day it was born, to the loathing of its person, and yet taken into the family of God; who have nothing lovely in them to recommend them, as Moses to Pharaoh's daughter, and Esther to Mordecai had; but all the reverse. 1b2d2.

The various blessings annexed to this grace; such have the glorious liberty of the children of God; liberty of access to God, as children to a father; and a right to all privileges and immunities, which fellow citizens

with the saints, and those of the household of God have; these are never more servants, but heirs, and have a right to the heavenly inheritance. 1b2e. Thanks are to be given to God for regenerating grace (1 Pet. 1:3,4). This is wholly owing to the free grace and rich mercy of God; it is denied to be of blood, or of the will of men, or of the will of the flesh; but of God, of his sovereign grace and favour; who, "of his own will, begat us with the word of truth;" and the rather should we be thankful for this grace, since without it there can be no enjoyment of eternal life; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jam. 1:18; John 1:13 3:3). 1b2f.

Thanks are to be given as for a right to eternal life; which lies not in the righteousness of men, but in the righteousness of Christ; so for a meetness for it, which is all of grace (Col. 1:12). 1b2g. Thanks are to be given for victory over all spiritual enemies; and so for persevering grace in faith and holiness to glory, notwithstanding them all; nothing more distressing than a body of sin and death, and nothing more desirable than a deliverance from it; and yet no hope of it but through Christ; and having hope of it in this way, such a soul may say with the apostle, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" that is, that there will be a deliverance from it; and not from that only, but from every enemy, sin, law, and death; and therefore can say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory;" over death and the grave; over sin, the sting of death; and over the law, the strength of sin; so that nothing shall hinder an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God (Rom. 7:23,24; 1 Cor. 15:57). 1c.

Thirdly, for Christ, the great blessing of grace and gift of God: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15), the donor of this gift is God, of whom are all things; hence Christ is called the "gift of God," by way of eminence (John 4:10), who is a sovereign Being, and disposes of all his gifts, and so this, to whomsoever he pleases; it is his own he gives, and he may do with that what he will; and this is a gift like himself, suitable to the greatness of his Majesty, as King of kings; it is a royal gift, like that "Araunah, as a king, gave unto the king" (2 Sam. 24:23), the gift is the Son of God; "To us a Son is given;" the only begotten Son of God, his own Son, the dear Son of his love, his Son and Heir; him he has given to be for a covenant of the people, the Mediator and Surety of it, and with whom he has entrusted all the blessings and promises of it; and to be an head over all things to the church; and to be the Saviour of the body, the church; even to be God's salvation unto the ends of the earth; for which purpose he has not spared him, but has delivered him up into the hands of men, justice, and death; and for which those to and for whom he is given, have reason to be thankful; when, besides these things, the nature of the gift is observed.

As, 1c1. It is entirely a free gift; it is one of those things, and the chief of them, which are "freely given unto us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12), unmerited and undeserved; wholly of free grace, and flowing from the pure love of God, to persons of all the most unworthy (John 3:16). 1c2. It is a suitable one; nothing could have been given us more suitable to our case and circumstances; "Such an High priest became us;" such a Prophet, such a King, such a Mediator between God and men, such a Redeemer and Saviour, such an Advocate and Intercessor, one so full of grace and truth, who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, who is indeed ALL in ALL; all that we want, all that we can desire; for, 1c3.

It is a very large and comprehensive gift; "God, with Christ, freely gives us all things; and blesses, with all spiritual blessings in him," the blessings of grace and of glory (Rom. 8:32; Eph. 1:3), Christ being ours, all things are ours; and therefore we have reason to be thankful (1 Cor. 3:22,23). 1c4. It is an unchangeable and irreversible gift; it comes from the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and not only the giver, but the gift itself is unchangeable; who is "Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever;" and is one of the gifts of God which are "without repentance;" to which may be added, that it is "unspeakable;" none can say how great it is, what is contained in it, and what the benefits

arising from it in time and to eternity. 1d.

Fourthly, For the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces. The Spirit himself is the gift of God (Luke 11:13), and a great and glorious gift he is, for which we have reason to be thankful; especially when we consider to what ends and purposes he is given, as to be a Comforter of his people, "He shall give you another Comforter" (John 14:16), and to be a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and to strengthen the saints with all might in the inward man, and to be the earnest and pledge of their future glory and happiness (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14,17; 3:16).

The various graces of the Spirit are gifts and free grace gifts, and very valuable ones; faith, which is of the operation of the Spirit, is "not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," which no man has nor can exercise unless it be given him of God; and all men have it not, and therefore it is distinguishing grace to those who have it, and should be thankful for it; a good hope is through grace, and is given both by God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:16), and so love is from grace (1 Tim. 1:14).

These are now the all things for which we should be thankful. 2. When, in what cases and circumstances, and for whom thanks are to be given. 2a. When; always, this is the rule, "giving thanks always for all things;" every day, night and day, constantly, continually, all the days of a man's life; for there are ever new mercies, they are returning every day and every morning: hence says the Psalmist, "Every day will I bless thee" (Ps. 145:2; 146:2). 2b. In what cases and circumstances, in what state and condition, are we to be thankful? in everyone, "in everything," that is, in every state, "give thanks" (1 Thess. 5:18). 2b1.

Not in prosperity only, when we are to be joyful, cheerful, and thankful; and when we are not to attribute our prosperity to ourselves, nor to second causes, but to God, and be thankful; otherwise we shall only "sacrifice to" our own "net," and "burn incense" to our own "drag" (Hab. 1:16). 2b2. But in adversity also; as Job blessed God, or was thankful, when he was stripped of all; and the people of God have reason to be thankful under afflictions, when the Lord puts underneath his everlasting arms, and supports them under them; when he strengthens them on a bed of languishing, and makes their bed in their sickness; when he chooses them in the furnace of affliction, and knows their souls in adversity; when he manifests his love and favour; when he is with them passing through the fire and water, so that the one shall not kindle upon them, nor the other overflow them; in short, since he makes all things work together for their good here and hereafter, they should be thankful.

And also, 2b3. In times of temptation; since the temptation might have been suffered to have been greater and heavier than it is; and since the grace of God is sufficient to support under it, and carry through it, and the faithfulness of God will not suffer his people to be tempted above what they are able to bear; and since Christ is able to help them that are tempted, and sympathizes with them, and prays for them that their faith fail not. 2b4. When in very uncomfortable frames; at least better might be wished for, since these might have been worse and have issued in despair, or bordering on it; and in the midst of all it should be considered, that though frames are changeable things, Jehovah changes not, Christ is the same always, the covenant of grace is sure, and the gifts and calling of God without repentance; and the Lord knows them that are his, and they shall never perish. 2b5. Amidst all the reproaches and persecutions of men; so the apostles were thankful that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ; the apostle Peter says such are happy (1 Pet. 4:14), and such who are persecuted for righteousness sake are pronounced blessed by Christ, and are exhorted to rejoice, and be exceeding glad (Matthew 5:10-12). 2c.

For whom; for all men, for kings and all in authority (1 Tim. 2:1,2), since these are powers ordained of God, and are ministers for the good of men, are terrors to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well; if they are good kings and worthy magistrates, such are to be honored and obeyed, and thanks to be given for them, which is good and acceptable in the sight of God. We are to be thankful for our relations and friends, and for the continuance of them; children are the gifts of God to parents, and as such to be owned with gratitude, as they were by Jacob and Joseph (Gen. 33:5; 48:9 see Ps. 127:3-5), and likewise for the churches of Christ, and all the saints in them; for their prosperity, for their grace and the increase of it; for their faith, both as a doctrine and a grace, and for their love to one another; these are what the apostle expresses his thankfulness for in almost all his epistles; and so for the ministers of the gospel saints should be thankful, who are the gifts of God to the churches, and are promised as such (Jer. 3:15).

These are the servants of the most high God which show unto men the way of salvation, and who are the churches' servants for Jesus' sake, faithful stewards in the house of God, to give to everyone their portion of meat in due season; and being thus useful, thanks should be given for them; and which likewise should be done for an increase of converts through the ministry of the word, when there are additions made to churches of such as shall be saved; when the gospel is succeeded for the gathering in of others to Christ and into his churches besides those who are already gathered (2 Cor. 2:14). 3.

To whom are thanks to be given on the above account? to God, of whom are all things, and to whom the glory of all belongs; he is the proper and primary object of thanksgiving; "I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all" (Rom. 1:8), God, Father, Son, and Spirit. 3a. Thanks are to be given to the Father "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father" (Eph. 5:20), and hence the same apostle blesses or gives thanks unto him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for blessing the saints in him with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), and the apostle Peter blesses or gives thanks to him as such for regenerating grace particularly (1 Pet. 1:3), and he is to be considered in such an act of thanksgiving as Christ's God and our God, and as Christ's Father and our Father; for as we are directed to pray to him, saying, "Our Father, which art in heaven," so we should give thanks to him as such, saying, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 1:3). 3b.

Thanks are to be given to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ; and these are sometimes given to him particularly and alone, "I thank Christ Jesus the Lord," says the apostle (1 Tim. 1:12), and if thanks are to be given him on such an account as there, then certainly for other favors received from him; as for his suretyship engagements, for his assumption of human nature, for suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people, and for many other acts of grace done by him, and blessings of grace received from him.

Besides, it is in the name of Christ, and through him, we are directed to give thanks to God (Eph. 5:20; Rom. 1:8), as it is proper we should, since all our mercies come to us through him; it is in him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and it is out of his fulness we receive, and grace for grace; and all the grace that is wrought in us in regeneration, and in carrying on the work of sanctification, is all "through Christ;" nor can we come to God in any other way with our thanksgivings but by him; he is the only way to the Father, the way of access to him with boldness and confidence; and therefore "by him" we are to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name" (Heb. 13:15).

Nor are our spiritual sacrifices, either of prayer or praise, acceptable to God, but through Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom our persons are accepted, even in him the beloved. 3c. Thanks are to be given to the

blessed Spirit; for, as he is the object of prayer with the Father and the Son, so the object of praise and thanksgiving; and great reason there is, that as we should be careful not to vex and grieve the good Spirit of God with our ingratitude; so that we should be thankful to him for all that he has done for us; in quickening and regenerating us; in beginning and carrying on the good work of grace in us, and in sealing us up to the day of redemption.

Besides many other acts of grace which might be mentioned. Now this work of thanksgiving, is to be performed towards God with a celebration of the divine perfections, which are displayed in his acts of kindness to us; as we are to give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, so at the remembrance of every other attribute of his; it is in this way the living creatures are said to give glory, and honour, and thanks unto God (Rev. 4:8,9). This is also to be done by a recollection of the benefits of God, bestowed upon us; which, though so many that we are not able to reckon them up in order before him; yet, as much as in us lies, we are to call upon our souls to call to mind, and not forget, if possible, any of his benefits; and to inquire, what shall we render to him for them; (see Isa. 63:7), and this is to be performed with all our hearts, with all that is within us, with all the powers and faculties of our souls, and to the utmost of our abilities; as we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our strength; we are to give thanks to him in like manner, in the most intense way we are capable of; as we are to serve him with grace in our hearts in every branch of duty; so in this, even in the exercise of every grace. 4.

The reasons or arguments for giving thanks. 4a. It is the will of God; and that is reason sufficient why it should be attended to (1 Thess. 5:18), it is that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God made known in his word, which he has commanded and directed to; "Offer unto God thanksgiving" (Ps. 50:14), this is a sacrifice acceptable to him, and well pleasing in his sight (Ps. 69:30,31), and the contrary is resented by him. 4b. This is the will of God "in Christ Jesus," which is made known by him; who, lying in the bosom of the Father, has declared his whole mind and will to the sons of men; and this among the rest; and it is also to be given unto God in and through Christ, as before observed. 4c.

It is enforced by the example of Christ, who himself gave thanks to God, and that for the distinguishing blessings of his grace bestowed upon his people, according to his sovereign will and pleasure; "I thank thee, O Father," &c. (Matthew 11:25,26). To which may be added, 4d. The examples of saints in all ages, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; the book of Psalms is full of instances.

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