

A

S E R M O N ,

Preached, November 30th, 1843;

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR

T H A N K S G I V I N G ;

BY

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1844.

A SERMON

TEXT, LUKE xvii. 11—19.

MY BRETHREN:—In the narrative which I have read, we have a touching instance of the simplicity, grandeur and beauty of the Scriptures. Our blessed Redeemer, whose life was spent in going from place to place doing good, was on his last journey to Jerusalem. On his way he was met by ten persons afflicted with the leprosy,—a most distressing and formidable disease, by which the exterior of the whole body was disfigured and the entire system deranged,—who asked for help. The Saviour advised them to go to the priests, whose duty it was to judge of the existence and cure of the leprosy, according to a command recorded in the 13th chapter of Leviticus; the design of which evidently was to convince the priests of his divine mission, by the miraculous cure, or that the lepers might obtain permission from them to mingle again in society. On their way they were cleansed. What could therefore have been more natural for them, than to return to him who had performed the cure of their loathsome and distressing disease, and show him their gratitude? But one only did so, and he of the Samaritans, a sect hated and denounced by the Jews. Jesus applauded his grateful faith and expressed his dissatisfaction at the conduct of the rest by asking “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.” The whole narrative is highly instructive and I think well suited for reflection on the present occasion. This day having been set apart by the chief Magistrate of Maryland, for thanksgiving and the praise and glory of the Almighty, I design improving it, by in-

viting your attention to some remarks on the *Nature, Sources and Guilt of Ingratitude*, together with some *Motives* that should urge us to thankfulness.

Nothing is more common among men than complaints against the divine government, and dissatisfaction with the ways of Providence. They do not remember the blessings they have received and are enjoying, but think of those which others have, and they have not. The man who has good health and a good name, which are worth more than great wealth, disregards them, and looks with a coveting eye upon his neighbor who is rich. The man of wealth on the other hand, who is wasting with disease, forgets his riches and sighs for the enjoyment of health. Thus, instead of being content in every condition of life, we are just the reverse; instead of comparing ourselves with the distressed and unfortunate around us, with the poor beggar who asks at our door for bread, we measure our condition by that of the rich man, and are dissatisfied because he possesses more than we do. Such seems to be the conduct of men in almost all departments of life, and the reason for it is found in their want of gratitude to God. The whole may be summed up in one word, man is ungrateful. He does not regard God in all his dealings towards him as his greatest Benefactor and best Friend, and therefore looks upon Him with suspicion and distrust. The various changes of his life, which are all full of mercy and goodness to him, though sometimes painful to the carnal nature, he does not view in the light of blessings and sources at least of his ultimate happiness. He judges of the dealings of God on the erroneous principle, "That nothing is good except it be temporal good; he forgets that in truth and reason, that only is good, which is durable, which is eternal, which is holy, which unites the soul to God, the fountain of all good: and that is evil which is transitory and polluted, which tends to no good moral end, which is sensual, which alienates the soul from God. Allow this interpretation to be just, and it gives a key to the divine administration which unlocks many of its difficulties and establishes the goodness of God, where perhaps it is least seen and acknowledged by his creatures." You

thought it very hard when death entered your door and with his iron grasp, removed the friend whom you had most affectionately loved, and in whom you had placed the felicity of your days. You wished you had died before him, and when you returned from his grave, you felt as if all your pleasures and all your hopes had been buried with him. To you there was no brightness in the sun, and no cheerfulness in the face of nature. The employments of life which before were pleasant, now proved a burden; on every object a sad gloom seemed to rest; you retired to your chamber and with "aching temples on your hands reclined," thought of your neighbor whose door was a stranger to the footsteps of death—the event seemed so unkind, and you sighed complaints against the Providence of God! But could you have seen the design which was concealed beneath the afflictive dispensation, you would have been satisfied that it was mercy and goodness. The first voice that aroused you from the sleep of death, may have come, or may yet come from the dying-bed of that very friend from whom you were so loth to part. The very reflections by which you have been led to the cross of Jesus, or perhaps will be hereafter, may be drawn from your mind by the silent grave, in which you thought were deposited forever, all your hopes and all your joys. From that sacred spot, over which perhaps the rank grass is already waving, a still small voice may reach your ear, when deaf to every other call of mercy. I believe with a certain eminent writer, that "There is no doubt but in the invisible world, when we shall be able to form a true conception of the goodness of God, we shall discover mercy where we once discovered only severity, and shall thank God for the disappointment, the sufferings and trials endured below, as the most signal instances of his providential care and goodness." God's dealings towards us are always intended for our good, and yet how small the number of those who really believe it and render him ardent gratitude? There are hundreds and thousands who never speak or even think of God, at least not with a view to be grateful and to do him homage. If they are in easy circumstances, they regard their prosperous condition as the

result, not of the goodness of God, but their own wisdom, industry and labor. If the harvest proves abundant, it is in their conceited opinion, because the land was well tilled, and grain was sowed in the proper season. If they are in health, it is because they guard it with care, if they meet with few or no misfortunes, it is because they are wise enough to prevent them. How few remember that all things belong to God, and that even *they* are not their own. The sun is his, for at his command it rises and shines upon the world. The earth upon which we tread is his, for it emerged from chaos at the sound of his voice; even man is his, for *he* did not become a living soul until God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. If God therefore, should take back what belongs to him—the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the sea, and ungrateful man, all would be engulfed in chaotic night! Ingratitude, like other vices has degrees of criminality, some are guilty of it to a greater extent than others. Forgetfulness of the Benefactor and the blessings bestowed upon us, may be regarded as the first degree of ingratitude. It was in this way that the chief butler of the King of Egypt, proved unfaithful to Joseph who had afforded him great relief by the favorable interpretation of his dream. The butler as you know was cast into prison by Pharaoh, and dreaded the result of the king's displeasure. A dream which he had during his confinement increased his apprehensions and distress. Joseph explained the dream and relieved his mind by showing him that in three days, he should be removed from prison and restored to his former place in the king's house; and then added this reasonable and feeling request: "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness I pray thee unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away, out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." After such an appeal from an individual who had proved himself in various ways, especially by the true interpretation of the dream, an extraordinary personage, it seems impossible that he should have proved himself so basely ungrateful as to for-

get Joseph, but the narrative informs us: "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." We justly blame the chief butler's ingratitude, and wonder how he could be guilty of it, and yet conduct ourselves much more ungrateful toward the Lord Jesus! Joseph had but foretold the chief butler's deliverance and enlargement; Christ wrought out ours with his blood upon the tree, yet we forget him, though often reminded of him. thus ill do we requite him, like foolish people and unwise. The second degree of ingratitude consists in continuing ungrateful after having been reminded of blessings received. Thus Nabal proved ungrateful to David, after having been informed of the favor shown by him and his soldiers to his shepherds when they were quartered among them. They did them no injury, were no disturbance to them. nor took any of their lambs out of their flock, but even protected them from being hurt by others. When it is considered that David and his soldiers were in distress and without provision, it proves great care and management that no plundering was done by some of them. Nabal certainly had abundant reason to be grateful, and should have rejoiced at the opportunity of manifesting kindness and gratitude toward them, but instead of this he rudely asked: "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many now-a-days that break away every man from his master." This sounds very much like the responses of wealthy misers, (without and within the pale of the church,) to calls that are sometimes made upon them for contributions to objects of benevolence and education. When told of the good that is accomplished in this way, and of their duty and ability to contribute, they will ask: What are these societies? who are these young men that intend to study for the ministry? let them work! There be many people now-a-days who expect every man to live without work! The highest degree of ingratitude however, consists in rewarding good with evil. The Egyptians were guilty of this sin towards the children of Israel, and their punishment is seen in their subsequent fate. We too, even in this bright day of light and knowledge, cannot plead exemption from this heinous vice:

and it is an evidence of the unbounded goodness of God, that his blessings are not entirely withdrawn. If you were to give a poor man a bag of flour, and he should sell it, and take the money and purchase an instrument with which to break into your house and do you harm, or even if he should purchase liquor with it, become intoxicated and then abuse and injure you, would you present that man with flour a second time? I think not. But is not God perpetually affronted and dishonored in this way? Does not the swearer employ the very breath which sustains his life, in cursing God and taking his name in vain? Is not the grain which God designed as the "staff of life" changed into poison and made the means of crime and vice, and of destruction to the souls for whom Jesus died? Are not the blessings of God, such as health, knowledge, and influence, often made to minister to pride and sinful passions? How often are genius and learning, designed by the Creator for high and noble purposes, used for opposing both him and his laws? Even the blessed Sabbath which has been graciously appointed to smile upon us every week with its peaceful and benevolent beams, and which is designed for the worship and obedience of God; for man's spiritual improvement and growth in grace, is often desecrated and its holy hours consumed in violating the commandments of God. Instead of remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy, some who profess to be christians, will insult God and dishonor his law by their absence from his sanctuary, and the pursuit, at least indirectly, of their worldly business. This is compensating the goodness of God with disobedience, which is rewarding evil for good, and of such a man, Solomon emphatically says: "Evil shall not depart from his house." "To render evil for evil is brutish, but to render evil for good is devilish." The Jews stoned the Savior for his good works, therefore is his blood upon them and upon their children.

II. We proceed secondly, to notice the *Sources* of ingratitude. The first of these that we shall mention, is *Insensibility*. There are minds who appear to be cased in iron and steel. They see nothing in the manifold

works of God by which they are surrounded, to inspire reverence and gratitude in their hearts. They are astonished at the simplicity of him, who, lost in admiration, gazes upon the sun when in all his splendor he ascends above the eastern horizon; or pauses by night to survey the beautiful moon, as in mild and serene majesty attended with innumerable brilliant stars, she walks along the heavens. They see nothing in the lightning's flash, they hear nothing in the awful voice of thunder, to make them feel that reverence, gratitude and homage are due to God by all the rational beings whom he has made; they pass down the stream of life with such insensibility as if man were designed only to labor, eat and sleep. They scarcely ever go to church, and if they do, they apply not what they hear to themselves, and therefore no impression is left upon them. They scarcely ever read at all, except occasionally a secular newspaper, and even that seems to be an effort. Such persons of course are not grateful, they scarcely know that there is such a sin as ingratitude. They are not malignantly ungrateful; they really think if they guard their health, labor faithfully and industriously, and pay their honest debts, this is all that ever will be required of them. This is not imagination, you all know that there are such men, and we should pity them, pray for them, and by every possible means, seek to open their eyes to their dangerous state. How much happier is the true christian in the most abject poverty, than such insensible, stupid beings, beneath the shades of wealth and affluence? They never look up higher than the clouds which are above them, whilst the christian from the order and beauty of *His* works, looks far beyond the most distant star and beholds the wisdom and glory of the Creator. To such a mind the seasons roll not their rounds, without affording to it great delight. It beholds God every where as a Preserver and Benefactor; in the sun, the moon, the stars, the sea, the earth, the flower, even in the insect upon its leaf, the wisdom and glory of God are seen! Its strains of gratitude continually resound in the language of inspiration: "Bless the Lord all his works, in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord O my soul!" Another source of in-

gratitude is *indifference*. There are persons who sit down to the table upon which God's bounties are spread, they eat and are satisfied, but never consider who is the Lord, by whose hands their wants are supplied. The ingratitude of *indifference* is more criminal than that of *insensibility*; the man who is under the influence of the latter, does not know his duty, he does not feel it,—but he who is under the influence of the former, does both, and yet leaves it undone. He receives the Scriptures as a divine revelation, reads them, his opinions agree with them, he acknowledges in words the claims of God upon him for obedience and gratitude, and still lives from day to day, and from year to year, in the utter neglect of them. There seems no foundation in his mind, in which the remembrance of God can abide. The man who is under the influence of *insensibility* may be regarded as an infidel, because he is destitute of religious knowledge and faith, which he might possess if he would; but the man whose indifference makes him neglect God, is worse than an infidel, he professes to believe the Bible, reads it, attends church, has knowledge enough—even his views of practical religion are clear and distinct. He knows what is required of a christian, and perhaps is quick in finding fault with his neighbor for neglect of religious duty, whilst the salvation of his own soul is wholly neglected, and not a single emotion of love and gratitude to God arises from his heart. This species of indifference, and the ingratitude towards the Supreme Being and the neglect of the interests of the immortal soul which flow from it, are exceedingly common in the present day. We have so much plain and faithful preaching, so many instructive and cheap religious books and newspapers, and there is so much said and done daily on the great subject of religion; the necessity of regeneration or the *new birth*, is so frequently and impressively urged, that it implies in all who neglect their salvation, the most criminal indifference. And what still farther enhances the guilt of such persons is, that they are well aware of the ruinous effects of indifference in other things, and are therefore never found under its influence when pursuing their worldly business, or when engaged in the

political strifes and contentions that agitate the country. Here they are decided and foremost—no half-way business here; but when God and heaven, and hell and eternity are concerned, they can be indifferent; how unreasonable, how dishonorable, how dangerous is the character of such men! How great the number of such as know their duty! How small the number of such as honestly perform it! How seldom is it remembered that they who “know their Master's will and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes?” “What would you think of the child whom the highest degree of parental kindness could not excite to the performance of a single duty, and who should pay no other regard to the injunctions and entreaties of the most affectionate parents than the cold compliment, ‘They are proper, I may some time attend to them?’ Who would not pronounce him a monster of ingratitude and disobedience? And yet the obligations of a child to his earthly parent, bear no more proportion to our obligations to God, than man, a worm of the dust, bears to the infinite Jehovah.” It was this indifference, no doubt, that prevented the nine lepers whom the Saviour had cured of their loathsome disease, from returning and rendering praise and gratitude to God. It is indifference in the present day on the great subject of religion, that prevents thousands from being grateful to God, from rendering him that obedience in which true gratitude alone consists, and finally from getting to heaven. But there is another source of ingratitude on which I have not time to dwell, I mean pride. Before the withering influence of this sin, love to God, love to our neighbor and virtue in general, fall prostrate like blooming flowers before the raging storm. For the proud man it is impossible to be grateful. He believes that he more than merits every thing that he possesses. Proud children are not grateful to their parents for what they have done for them, but rather think that they should have done a great deal more. Proud pupils are not grateful for the labors of their teacher, but think that he should take far greater pains to instruct than he does. The proud man, like the pharisee in the gospel, enumerates his virtues, and then claims a reward for them. He does not re-

gard God's blessings as unmerited, and therefore gratitude is out of the question. How could I be grateful to a person for the performance of an act to which I considered him doubly bound, by previous obligations conferred upon him? Gratitude and religion cannot exist without humility, the proud man therefore, does not possess them.

III. *The guilt of ingratitude* is the last point upon which we shall offer a few remarks. That guilt attaches to ingratitude, is universally conceded by all men who possess correct knowledge and suitable feelings on any subject. Among the sage Athenians and Macedonians it was not uncommon for persons to be brought before the civil tribunal on charge of ingratitude. From the writings of these and other pagan nations, the guilt of ingratitude may be abundantly learned. It may be learned from every-day life, for it is a common thing to hear persons blamed and reproached for ingratitude. Children that are ungrateful to their parents are despised, and scholars who are ungrateful to their teachers are censured. The ungrateful man possesses no nobleness of soul—he is without a sense of God in the world. You may gain an enemy and make him your friend by showing him kindness, but an ungrateful man is beyond your reach. He therefore is not entitled to esteem, he has no just claim for regard, either from God or man. He abuses the blessings of God to gratify his sinful desires, and expects from his neighbor, what in return he would not be willing to do unto him. His heart is dead to one of its most noble powers. Point out to me an ungrateful man, and I will show you a man guilty of many other vices, a man who is hedging up his way to respectability and the salvation of his soul, and upon whom if he continue to be so, the scorn of the world and the wrath of God will inevitably descend. But go with me for a short time, to the law and testimony, and let us hear their decision on this subject.

In the text the Savior asserts the guilt of ingratitude in the impressive question: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." This is evidently a reproof of the ingratitude of the nine that were

healed but did not return to express their gratitude to the Savior, which applies to all of the present day who are similarly ungrateful. The same question may be asked now. When men are restored from dangerous sickness, here and there one comes to give thanks to God, but where are the nine? When men are defended from danger; when they are recovered from the perils of the sea; when a steamboat is destroyed and a large part of crew and passengers perish, here and there one of those who are saved, acknowledges the goodness of God and renders him praise, but where are the mass of them? They give no thanks, they offer no praise. They go about their usual employments to mingle in the scenes of pleasure and of sin, as if nothing had occurred. When my brother returned home to Chilicothe, Ohio, a year ago, the steamboat in which he travelled in the morning before day, on a dark and foggy night came in contact with a tree that projected in the river, and a traveller who was in the habit of early rising, happened to be on deck, was thrown off and drowned. My brother, together with a number more, were just in the act of going on deck also, when the accident took place. In this instance the danger of a dreadful explosion and the loss of many lives was narrowly escaped, and yet he told me that in less than two hours afterwards, there were as much mirth and levity among most of the passengers as at any previous time. Such was their want of gratitude for their own preservation, and sympathy for the man who was drowned, and his bereaved friends and relatives. But again. In the third chapter of Paul's 2nd Epistle to Timothy, ungrateful men are classed with the blackest characters, even with those who, in the last days, shall cause perilous times to come. A source of such irreligion and vice as ingratitude is declared to be in the Holy Scriptures, cannot be exempt from great guilt, and will meet finally with a fearful punishment.

Another description of the indignation of God against ingratitude, is found recorded in the 13th chapter of the Prophet Hosea, where God speaks to the children of Israel. In the 4th verse he speaks of what he had done for them: "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of

Egypt, and thou shalt have no God but me, for there is no salvation besides me. I did know thee in the wilderness in the land of great drought." In the 5th verse he complains of their ingratitude: "According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted, therefore they have forgotten me." But in the 7th verse his wrath is kindled against them, and I wish every ungrateful person to hear and tremble, whilst I repeat the language of Jehovah: "Therefore will I be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them; I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their hearts, and then will I devour them as a lion, the wild beast shall tear them." Such language needs no comment, it was uttered by the lips of the Almighty; it paints the guilt of ingratitude with the pencil of God.

Lastly, I promised to mention a few *Motives* which should urge us to gratitude. God is our supreme Benefactor. Kings and princes, when amiable and upright, are often great benefactors, but compared with God they are dust and ashes. With thousands of their subjects they are never acquainted, and are ignorant of their wants and circumstances; they cannot therefore, afford the necessary relief, but the eyes of God are upon all, even upon the poorest of the children of men. David says, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." The great men of the earth forget the poor and needy, and seldom think of them, but God is no respecter of persons, and all that love and serve him, it matters not how poor and despised they are by the world, may safely look to him for support and comfort.

This certainly is inexpressible condescension on the part of God and should elicit from our hearts, emotions of the warmest gratitude. How natural it is for us to seek the notice of our fellow creatures, especially if they are raised far above us in condition. "Many will entreat the favor of the prince and every one is a friend to him that giveth gifts." Suppose some distinguished personage, as for example, Henry Clay, or John Q. Adams, should be so concerned for your welfare, that he would think of you

every hour in the day, and you had sufficient evidence of the fact, so that you could not for a moment doubt it; what effect would it have upon you? would you not regard it as a high honor, for which you could not help but be grateful? And yet what is the benevolence of such men as Clay and Adams, great as they may be, compared with that of the infinite Jehovah?—"a rush-light trembling and failing in the beams of the sun!" Neither the things which the greatest men on earth have at any time thought, spoken or done, nor the motives which gave them birth, nor the consequences which they produced, are to be thought of when placed at the side of the blessings which are daily bestowed upon us by our Creator; and should we not therefore love him above all things, and render him our highest gratitude? When men do us favors, they usually expect favors in return, and sometimes greater ones than we received from them, so that it has been said: "where his interest is, there you will find the man." With God it is not so, "he needeth nothing from man, for he giveth to all life and breath and all things." O that I had the tongue of an angel, that I might fully express what I feel on this subject! The drops of water in the ocean may be counted—the grains of sand on their shores may be numbered, but the ocean of God's goodness is unfathomable, and his mercies are past finding out. To him we are indebted for all things. Our bodies and our spirits are his—our friends are his, our hopes and prospects of immortal life are his all—all are his!

I might specify many other blessings as motives of gratitude, but must close by adverting to one or two more.

Our home in a civilized land, furnished with Bibles, churches, ministers, colleges, seminaries, schools, professors and teachers and other means of knowledge and improvement, is a great blessing and loudly demands our most ardent gratitude. Another blessing is the system of free schools, which alone has done much for our country and promises to do still more. In many places in the United States, the poorest people can procure for their children at the public expense, at least a common education, and where this system fails that of Sabbath schools

supplies the deficiency, and trains up the young for intelligence and virtue. Eternity alone can compute the extent of the blessings of Sabbath school efforts. One of the greatest blessings which can be conferred upon man in this world is intellectual and religious instruction, the former to prepare him for usefulness and respectability on earth, the latter to guide him to regions of endless bliss beyond the skies; and this blessing the Sabbath school confers upon the attentive and faithful scholar. We live too in a free country where every man can think for himself, and where the conscience is not burdened by the strong arm of civil power. And as I have been specifying blessings, I cannot pass by the great cause of *Temperance*, which has done so much good in many portions of the world. It has dried up tears for suffering humanity, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and opened the prison doors to the captive drunkard, and restored him once more to his family with sense in his head and affection in his heart. Can we compare the state of society so *far* as our personal knowledge extends with what it was two years ago, and not bless God for the change?

But the greatest of all blessings, which mortals can never sufficiently feel nor admire, is the gift of God in sending his Son, and with the death he suffered for us on the cross, peace of conscience and the hopes and prospects of a better home, when the one we now occupy shall be given up in death. I leave you to reflect on this unspeakable blessing, for man cannot describe what angels desire to look into, and what caused Abraham to rejoice many centuries before Christ appeared in the flesh! I only ask once more, do not these blessings and thousands more which I cannot enumerate, furnish motives innumerable for the most ardent, the highest emotions of gratitude? And here permit me to remark that the gratitude which is acceptable to God, consists in honest endeavors to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. When afflicted we should evince our gratitude, conformably to the example of our Saviour, in the exercise of patience and submission to God. When in prosperity we should do good with our substance, relieve the poor, and lend hoping for

nothing again. In the days of the apostles a prominent duty of christians was the entertainment of travelling christians. Peter in his remarks to christians says: "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one towards another without grudging." Sometimes christians in those days were robbed of all they had and were driven to distant countries for safety, and hence it was necessary that they should be kindly received and their wants be supplied. As it respects *true christian hospitality* there is a great delinquency among christians in our day, I do not mean that strangers are not entertained; but that the destitute portions of the earth are neglected, which through the benevolence and liberality of professing christians, should be furnished with pious missionaries and entertained with the story of the cross of Jesus. If we believe that the souls of men are of such immense value, that their redemption was undertaken at the expense of the sufferings and death of the Son of God; and that in endeavoring to imitate the Saviour, which is the solemn duty of every christian, we must feel deeply as he did for the salvation of the world, are we not exceedingly ungrateful for the blessed hopes and prospects which are placed within our reach and do we not render ourselves unworthy of them, if we refuse to *exert our utmost ability in every possible way*, to furnish the destitute at home and abroad, with the means of salvation and eternal life? Are we sincere in our profession of love and gratitude to the Saviour, who is anxious to see of the travail of his soul in the conversion and salvation of sinners, and in the founding and building up of his church if we refuse to contribute means as we have the ability, for this purpose? How many who profess to be christians give little or nothing to objects of benevolence, and what many do give, is not "without grudging," for if they had given cheerfully, they would have given more.

If any are present to whom these remarks apply, I pray God that they may take hold of their hearts, and induce them to employ what God has entrusted to them of this world's goods, as they shall wish they had done, when they must part with it and leave all to others. I

have no doubt that hundreds possessed of ample fortunes, who would think it ruinous to their interest to give five dollars annually to objects of benevolence, would upon their dying beds, gladly give all they have or ever had, if that would secure the salvation of their souls. When you shall look back from that solemn place, where in a few days more the soul must leave the body, upon your past life, the amount contributed to objects of benevolence may be the sum total for which you will have reason to rejoice that you ever possessed it, or rather it may be the only sum of which you shall not have reason to be deeply afflicted that it was ever in your hands. The rich man went away from the Saviour sorrowful; to sell all he had and give it to the poor, was a sacrifice too great for him to make, but what advantage has his wealth been to him during centuries already, which he spent in hell? Had he been poor, perhaps he would have followed Jesus, and now be an heir of heaven. From the remarks of the Saviour concerning him, we are led to infer that his wealth was what prevented him from becoming a disciple. The inspired writer tells us "he went away grieved for he had great possessions," thus you see his possessions stood in his way to heaven. And Jesus said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? They may enter but their difficulties are great; and yet men will cling to wealth more than any other object, when of all others, it is the greatest barrier in the way that leads to heaven. True gratitude does not consist in talking about religion, and wishing it success, but in *doing* all we can in every possible way to further the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

In conclusion, dear brethren, let us resolve in the fear of God and in reliance on his grace for support, to be grateful hereafter. Let our gratitude flow from faithful hearts. Let it ever be disinterested and regulated by humility and love. Let it embrace not only our own but also the blessings that are bestowed upon others. Let us observe the apostle's direction. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." And above all let us never forget, that when we find it our meat and drink to do the will of our heavenly Father, then are we exercising towards Him the highest and most acceptable gratitude.