



BY THE REV. F. BOURDILLON, M.A., *Author of "Bedside Readings," "Golden Tears," etc.*

HOW wonderful is the grace of God! Not only does He load us with favours, all undeserved, but when we thank Him for them, He does on that very account send us more. All that we have is of His free gift, and the least we can do is to thank Him; do our thanks *deserve* anything? No. Yet because we thank Him, He adds to His gifts, and bestows on us even better gifts than before.

God speaks of *rewards*, and therefore so may we. But not of God's rewards, as of rewards in general. A reward is usually the reward of labour or of merit, given either because we have earned it, or because in some way we have deserved it. But God's rewards are of grace. As between Him and us, all is grace and favour throughout; grace and favour from Him and towards us. It is He who gives us all, and also gives us faith to receive it as from Him, and to know and thank Him as the Giver. And now for this very thankfulness (His own work in us) He actually *rewards* us, gives us a *reward* for thanking Him for what He gave before. All is of grace, but this is grace indeed; grace beyond all that could have been thought.

There is a remarkable verse in the Psalms: "Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he *honoureth Me*" (Psalm i. 23).

How gracious is God to accept our thanks and praise, and speak of it as doing Him honour! The best thanks we can offer are so unequal to His gifts, and our highest praise falls so far short of what His goodness calls for, and yet He condescends to accept such thanks and praise as we offer! Under the Gospel praise, as well as prayer, to be acceptable, must be presented through Jesus Christ, our Mediator, but when we do approach God by Him with the voice of thanksgiving, then He accepts us and our praises. Poor and unworthy as our best praises are, yet for our Redeemer's sake they find favour with God. This is a fresh gift from Him, a *reward* of grace.

God is pleased to say: "He *honoureth Me*." Does that mean only that he *wishes* to honour

God by his thanks and praises? No, he *does* honour Him; God has so ordered it that the praises of His servants redound to His honour, and promote His glory among men.

For consider, does not a thankless Christian do dishonour to Him? Does not a murmurer lead others to murmur? Do not gloom and discontent make people think that servants who are so unhappy cannot have a good master? Every unthankful person dishonours God before men, as leading them to think His gifts of little value. On the other hand, a grateful person, content and cheerful, and full of praise, who gives glory to God for all His dealings, and shows on his very face, and yet more in the obedience of his life, a peaceful and happy thankfulness, such a person causes men to think *well* of God, and this does Him honour.

Servants of God, do not forget this. While you seek in all things to live to His glory, and to do Him honour, do not forget to honour Him: by thanking Him. Give Him this honour in your thoughts, let your heart praise Him in secret. But, further, let men see that you are thankful, let them observe in you the signs of a grateful spirit; be not ashamed to speak His praise, and to sing His praise; honour Him with your lips, speak good of His name. Thus honour Him before men. And let it be your comfort, that He graciously accepts your praise as honouring Him.

Thanks and praise should not be a rare thing with us, offered now and then only, for some special mercy, or some great deliverance. "In *everything* give thanks." "While I live, will I praise the Lord." "Giving thanks *always* for *all* things unto God and the Father, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ." It is thus we are taught to praise; and he who does so lives in the spirit of praise; thankfulness is a part of his very life.

We never can be out of the right way in thanking and praising God. Sometimes, when we are on our knees, words of prayer will not come, we are perplexed in mind, harassing thoughts will not be kept out, and we cannot collect ourselves even to know clearly what to ask for. At such a time, do not rise from your