

Introduction

It is the joy and wonder of God's Grace that all saving merit in our Lord's life and death becomes ours on simple faith: "for by grace have ye been saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; *not of works*, that no man should glory" (Eph. ii. 8). A sinner's works, so far from saving him, have actually to be repented of—"REPENTANCE from dead WORKS" (Heb. vi. i) :—for "the FREE GIFT of God"—unfettered therefore by any obligation on the part of the Giver, and thus completely severed from our merit—"is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. vi. 23). The saving efficacy of simple, vital faith has been beautifully expressed in the moving words of Hooker. "Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in Him; and God findeth us in Him, for by faith we are incorporated into Him. Then, although we be in ourselves altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man who is in himself impious, full of sin, full of iniquity ;—him, being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye; putteth away his sin by not imputing it; taketh quite away the punishment due thereto, by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Christ Jesus, as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that is commanded him in the Law; shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? Such are we in the sight of God the Father, as in the very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever, it is our wisdom, and our comfort: we care for no knowledge in the world but this,—that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered: that God hath made Himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God." We thus draw eternal life solely from the Son of God. "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the Son HATH THE LIFE; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (I John v. ii). Eternal life thus rests forever on simple, saving faith, which produces immediate regeneration, incorporation into Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and indefectible life. "He that *believeth* on the Son hath EVERLASTING life" (John iii. 36).

REWARD.

But even a casual study of the Word of God reveals that a new horizon now opens on the redeemed soul. If life is by faith, *reward* is consequent on *works* done after faith. For Scripture regards each saved soul as a runner racing, an athlete wrestling, a warrior fighting, a farmer sowing, ~ mason building, a fugitive flying, a besieger storming; and all this strenuous intensity rests on a fundamental of revelation—"that God is, and that He is *a Rewarder*" (Heb. xi. 6). "With many disciples the eyes are yet blinded to this mystery of rewards, which is an open mystery of the Word. It must be an imputed righteousness whereby we *enter*; but having thus entered by *faith*, our *works* determine our relative rank, place, reward" (Dr. A. T. Pierson). Calvin, though seeing this truth but dimly, has packed into a sentence the Scripture doctrine of reward :—"There is no inconsistency in saying that God rewards good works, provided we understand that, nevertheless, men obtain eternal life gratuitously."

Nor is there any doubt that this is a truth for the Church of God. “Behold, I come quickly; and my *reward* is with me, to render to each [disciple *according as his work* is “ (Rev. xxii. 12). To whom is this said? “ I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *for the churches*.” Too often, as Dr. A. J. Gordon says, “just as the Legalist resents the doctrine that good works can have no part in effecting our forgiveness, so the Evangelical recoils from the idea that they can constitute any ground for our recompense.” But Paul says :—“ He that planteth and he that watereth are *one* “—in standing and redemption—” but each- shall receive his own *reward* according to his own *labour*” (I Cor. iii. 8). So also he balances the double-edged recompense. “Servants, obey: ¹ . . . knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the *recompense of the inheritance*: ye serve the Lord Christ. For “—on the other hand—” he that doeth wrong *shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done*: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. iii. 24). It is thus a truth that concerns us. In the words of Dr. Eadie :—“ The Christian doctrine of reward is too often lost sight of or kept in abeyance, as if it were not perfectly consistent with the freest bestowment of heavenly glory.”

All honest difficulty concerning Reward vanishes, I think, when we examine *what* God rewards; and, first of all, God’s recompense rests supremely on godlikeness, and godlike conduct. “Love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; *and your reward shall be great*, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: *for He* is kind toward the unthankful and evil” (Luke vi. 35). Here reward turns upon likeness in character and conduct to our Father in heaven. Secret devotion, also, will be rewarded. “Pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall *recompense* thee” (Matt. vi. 6): not only will the prayer be answered, but the praying will be recompensed. Moreover, our attitude of heart will help to sway the Lord’s adjudication on our service: “Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke vi. 37). Our life is putting, word by word, the sentence upon ourselves into Christ’s lips: we are manufacturing, as servants, our own adjudication. For goodness and glory are but two halves of one whole: goodness is the suffering side of glory, and glory is the shining side of goodness.

So all labour, also, will be exactly recompensed. “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water *only* “—the minimum of gift—” in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall *in no wise* lose his *reward*” (Matt. x. 42). For what is reward? “To him that *worketh*, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as *of debt*” (Rom. iv. 4): so, as requital for services He graciously owns, God is pleased to bestow tangible and equivalent evidences of His approval. Its measure will be exactly graded. “ He that receiveth a prophet in the, name of a prophet shall receive a *prophet’s* reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in

¹ Space forbids the quotation of all Scriptures in full; nor is to be regretted if the reader is (in a sense) compelled to verify and study both text and context for himself. He will find that the abbreviations are not mutilations.

the name of a righteous man shall receive a *righteous man's* reward" (Matt. x. 41): "for *whatsoever* a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7).

But, most searching truth of all, God rewards supremely the *why* that underlies the service. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness"—conduct really good in itself—"before men, *to be seen of them*: else ye have NO REWARD with your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 1). Motive is thus revealed as decisively crucial. "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest *the counsel of the hearts*; and *then* shall each have his *praise* from God" (I Cor. iv. 5). God gives unmerited salvation, but He never gives unmerited praise. So exaltation in the Age to Come is in inverse ratio to lowliness of service in the present Age. "For whosoever would [wishes to] become *great* among you, shall be your *servant*: and whosoever would be *first* among you, shall be *slave of all*" (Mark x. 43): for greatness, service; for actual primacy, slavery.

Reward is also reserved for all suffering undergone for Christ. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: *for behold, your reward is great* in heaven" (Luke vi. 23). Suffering generally ensures purity of motive; and the Lord counterbalances the fear of man, not only by the more tremendous fear of God (Rev. ii. ii, x6), but also by the magnitude of His rewards. "Every reward suggested is a prize of a value inconceivable by us at present, and can only be appreciated at the Judgment Seat" (J. H. Lowe) So Moses accounted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: *for he looked unto the recompense of reward*" (Heb. xi. 26). He who of all mankind best knew the value of the Prize, and who perhaps, after our Lord, laid down the costliest price for it ever paid, said, "This *one* thing I do." For reward is merely the tangible expression of the approval of GOD, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we need abjure it for ourselves. *He who despises a throne despises Him Who confers the throne*. It was one of our Lord's rebukes of the Pharisees,— "The glory that cometh from the only God ye seek *not*" (John v. 44).

Thus Reward not only supplies a motive in itself legitimate: it is a motive to which our Lord and His Apostles make frequent and direct appeal :—*e.g.*, Christ (Matt. vi. 1), Paul (I Cor. ix. 24), Peter (I Pet. i. 17), James (Jas. i. 12), and John (2 John 8). "I believe for my part," says Dr. Alexander Maclaren, "that we suffer terribly by the comparative neglect into which this side of Christian truth has fallen. Do you not think that it would make a difference to you if you really believed, and carried away with you in your thoughts, the thrilling consciousness that every act of the present was registered, and would tell, on the far side beyond?" A concordance at once reveals that no one so emphasized reward as the Son of God Himself, who, as Maker of the soul, knows best what stimulants it is wise and right to apply.

Three facts are of importance :—that Sadoc, the founder of the Sadducees, started his career of unbelief by denying the doctrine of reward: also, that this principle took full effect even upon our Lord—” who *for the joy that was set before Him* endured” (Heb. xii. 2): moreover, that no wise disciple can afford to neglect so great a mass of Scripture, or to throw away so mighty an incentive to holiness. *Our discovery of this truth at the Judgment Seat will be too late.* Every seed we drop into the soil—every thought and word and act—is banked in God, and will one day spring up in lovely, or alarming, harvest,—as we sowed, *what* we sowed, as *much* as we sowed, and *why* we sowed. Therefore ”LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT YE LOSE NOT THE THINGS THAT YE HAVE WROUGHT, BUT THAT YE RECEIVE A FULL REWARD” (2 John 8).

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Introduction (pages 3-8)
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