

The Recompense of the Reward

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A Future Reward?

THE reward of the Christian is something that is much talked about, yet little understood. This misunderstanding on the part of so many who profess Christianity is the cause of much scoffing on the part of infidels, who look at the professors as cowardly people who are afraid to meet the consequences of their own actions, and who therefore invest in a sort of life insurance, the policy to be paid at the end of life. These say:

“They are looking out for what they will get by and by.”

As for themselves, they do not think it worthwhile to give up something that they at present possess, for the prospect, which to them seems altogether uncertain, of getting something better by and by.

It is a fact also that this view of the case affects not a few professed Christians, and is one great cause, if not the solo cause, of their low living. Regarding the Christian’s reward as something wholly future, and the Christian life as simply one of “giving up” something that they cherish, they very naturally lose courage, and are unable to “hold out.” It is not in human nature to labor long in uncertainty, or continually to keep in mind a reward that lies only “at the end of the race.”

Now it is true that there is a reward for the well-doer, and that the coming of the Lord will put every Christian in eternal possession of that reward; but why? Simply because the coming of the Lord destroys all the curse, and takes both dead and living to be forever with the Lord, who is the reward.

The Lord says:

Revelation 22

¹² Behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as His work shall be.

Isaiah 40

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

What is this reward that is “with Him”? It is Himself—His own presence.

A Present Reward

To Abraham, the father of all the faithful, God said:

Genesis 15

¹ I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward.

And the psalmist wrote:

Psalms 16

⁵ The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; You maintain my lot.

⁶ The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

God gives His Holy Spirit, His own personal representative, to be with His people for ever, so that Jesus says:

Matthew 28

²⁰ Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

By the Spirit we are made “heirs of God.” *Romans* 8:17. It is not that we are heirs of His property, but that we are heirs of

Himself. He is our portion; He is our reward. Jesus brings His reward with Him, because His coming assures His eternal presence with His people, and it is “with Him that God freely gives us all things.” *Romans* 8:32. When the heavens and the earth shall shake, and be removed,

Joel 3

¹⁶ The Lord will be the hope of His people.

We are exhorted to...

Hebrews 12

¹ ...run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith.

Yes, but we are not told to look far away or to some distant time; no:

Acts 17

²⁷ He is not far from every one of us.

Look to Jesus, not simply as One who “is to come,” but as One “who is.” Our only hope in the coming of the Lord is our personal acquaintance with Him now. If we know Him, and love His presence with us, then we shall “love His appearing.” When Jesus comes, all those to whom His coming is indeed a reward, will say, “Lo, this is our God.” *Isaiah* 25:9. The Lord can never be the eternal reward of any of whom He is not the present reward.

And the Lord, the “very present help in trouble” (*Psalms* 46:1), is the reward. No one can have anything worth having outside of Himself.

The Example of Moses

Take the case of Moses.

Hebrews 11

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Take that word “respect” in its primitive significance, namely, to look toward, and you have the exact idea of the text. Moses looked continually at the reward. How often have we read this passage, and thought that Moses was sustained in his arduous labors by the thought that by and by he would get something that would recompense him for it all. What a mistaken idea!

We have tried to revive our flagging zeal, and that of others, by appeals to think of the reward that will come by and by, but we have not by any means always been successful. That which is distant is uncertain; only that which we have are we sure of. And so our Christian life has been a mixed career, success and failure, and possibly more failure than success, because we had not a steady spring as its source. In the business of the present, we naturally forgot the future, and so lost our only incentive.

Not so with Moses. He looked constantly at the reward, which was present; that is, he looked to Jesus, whose presence went with Him.

Hebrews 11

²⁷ ...he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

No matter how pressing the cares of the present time, no matter how numerous were the daily duties, nothing could distract his attention from “the recompense of the reward,” because like the Psalmist when he said,

Psalms 16

⁵ The Lord is the portion of my inheritance,

He could say,

Psalms 16

⁸ I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

He saw the invisible God, his reward, and therefore there was no uncertainty in his actions. The reality and the fulness of this present reward is seen by the fact that Moses, who had had ample experience, esteemed “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.”

The Reproach of Christ

This word “reproach” is the same that occurs in *Matthew* 27:44, where it is rendered “cast in the teeth.” That is the meaning of the word. How expressive! It conveys to us the idea of bitter taunts, and especially of taunts over our helplessness or our seeming failures.

Yet Moses found that this very reproach contained more of reward than all the riches of Egypt, because it was the reproach of Christ. “The unsearchable riches of Christ” (*Ephesians* 3:8), which are Christ’s own personal presence, His own life, are so great that even though accompanied by reproach and suffering, they outweigh all the riches of earth.

2 Corinthians 12

⁹ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Let us then bear in mind that the Lord Himself is our reward, and that He is always present. Then we get our reward as we go along, and that which comes at the last is so much

extra.

So shall we always be satisfied, and to the end that our zeal and courage may not abate, but that we may ever have before us the recompense of the reward as an incentive to action, let us heed the message, “Behold your God!” *Isaiah* 40:9.

Isaiah 45

²² Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.