

using it. It is of interest that he was not averse to describing the power and consequences of sin in dramatic fashion. So, when confronted with that deformed woman [mentioned above](#) (who was probably seriously affected with arthritis) he described her as being bound by Satan. On another occasion, during the last days of his ministry, he said, "now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jno. 12:31).

In the 'Beelzebub' incident of Matthew 12:22-28, Jesus interchanges the terms 'Satan' and 'devils [demons]': "if Satan cast out Satan", and, "if I cast out [demons] by the Spirit of God". In the same context, and referring to the same sin-power, 'demon' and 'Satan' are synonymous terms. It did not seem to matter to Jesus that demons were

mythological, but it did matter that "the kingdom of God is come unto you". They were witnessing "the powers of the age to come", demonstrated by the Son of God in their midst. There was no mistaking the priorities of our Lord.

There is no need for us to feel embarrassed at the rhetoric of Jesus concerning demons. Similarly, there is no need for us to think that our Lord is compromising our beliefs as Christadelphians. (It is more likely we compromise his.) He had a good reason for the position he took. The contemporary demon culture in which they were steeped was one he chose to use to good advantage. He became "all things to all men, that [he] might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). The Son of God would not be deflected from his priorities.

The reward of the saints

A crown of righteousness

Curtis Rice, Jr.

This article, first published in June 1947, looks at the teaching of Scripture about the reward of the saints, described variously as a crown of life, a crown of glory and a crown of righteousness.

REWARD IS THE motive of the greater part of human endeavours. Parents stimulate the efforts of their children, and teachers the efforts of their scholars, by the inducement of reward. When the child reaches maturity and must depend upon his own resources, he finds employment for the sake of the reward he receives in his wages. If induced by greater recompense, he will increase his efforts, and the motive of the individual is the motive of humanity in the mass.

Our whole commercial, industrial and economic system is based on the hope of reward. Not only do we see the competition incited by reward in the business world, but nations also plan, strive and manipulate, induced by visions of greater power and acquisitions. In short, reward is the mainspring of almost all human action; little is performed from a selfless motive.

Reward in Scripture

When, therefore, we find the Scriptures speaking about rewards, the question arises, Does, then,

this motive of reward which governs secular life govern religious life also? Jesus himself speaks of a prophet's reward, of a righteous man's reward and of a great reward in heaven (Mt. 10:41; 5:12). The apostle enquires, "What is my reward then?" (1 Cor. 9:18).

There is a danger of having an almost carnal outlook on this matter. We are called to inherit the promises to Abraham and to become heirs of the Kingdom of God. We are called to become kings and priests in the earth; we are assured of indisputably material rewards according to our service, to become lords over two cities, or five, or ten. Is our service to God governed by the ambition of our own elevation to power and glory in the eternal ages to come?

On such a promise as this it is conceivable that a man may coolly weigh the rewards the world offers and those that God presents, and, being convinced that God's rewards are more profitable to him, may engage to give the minimum service necessary to qualify his acceptance. Such business acumen, perhaps legitimate in secular life, is surely grossly out of harmony with the principles of truth. Let us, then, take a closer view of the Christian conception of reward.

The Apostle Paul, exhorting the Corinthians to increase their efforts to obtain their reward, uses these words: "Know ye not that they which

run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:24,25). The figure is drawn from the Greek games, with which all Gentile converts would be familiar. No doubt Paul makes particular reference to the triennial Isthmian Games that were the glory of Corinth. The victor would receive a pine wreath from the neighbouring groves, whilst at other contests the crown might be of olive. At all events the crown was evergreen, a fitting symbol of the everlasting reward for which the Christian strives: an incorruptible crown.

It is interesting to observe the different descriptions given to this crown by the New Testament writers, descriptions that portray to us the nature of the reward:

- James speaks of the crown of life
- Peter speaks of a crown of glory
- Paul speaks of a crown of righteousness.

These three apostles give to us their particular conceptions of the reward according to their different temperaments and experiences.

The crown of life

James writes: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (1:12). This statement is a direct contrast to his reference to the fleetingness of riches: "the sun . . . withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" (v. 11). While considering the vanity of the wealth of this world, its transitoriness and ephemerality, and the certain death of the rich with the poor, the apostle's mind turns to the conception of the direct opposite, the reward of those who are poor in spirit and who serve the Lord to receive at his hands a crown of life.

James had been brought up under the Law, and no doubt was one of the devout Jews of his day, having a profound respect for Moses and for all the ordinances that God had given Israel through him. If he shared the orthodox views of his day, he would have believed that life could only be obtained through the complete fulfilment of the Law.

But the risen Lord had appeared to James, and the revelation had opened his eyes to behold the one who had brought life and immortality to light; his understanding had been opened to

Christ, who was the end of the Law to those who believed. Therefore, when we see him as president of the council at Jerusalem, he is regarding Christ as the perfection and completion of the Law. He recognises that the Law was only established until Christ should come, and that the life looked for in the Law was to be found in Christ. Therefore says James of the enduring, "he shall receive the crown of life" from the Lord.

Paul drew his figure of the crown from the Greek games, which would be abhorrent to James as a Palestinian Jew. Paul was a Hellenist and had received a liberal education. James had been brought up in the conservative environment of legislative Judaism. Therefore we rather seek his figure in the Old Testament.

Perhaps it is to be found in the priestly crown of gold that was set on the head of Aaron and his descendants in office, and also, as Zechariah records, on the head of Joshua the high priest (Ex. 28:36-38; Zech. 3:5). These priestly crowns of gold are seen on the heads of the twenty-four elders, the priestly representatives of the saints in the vision of John (Rev. 4:4). James has in mind the everlasting life bestowed on those who are made unto God priests and kings, whose faith has been purified as the gold of the crown.

The golden element of faith is brought out by the condition of the reward; the crown is given to him that "endureth temptation", or trial. This refers us directly to the words, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials from without rather than temptations from within]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work [let patience be thoroughly exercised], that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4). Trial from without is sent by a loving Father to purify our faith as gold, to develop the perfect man in Christ Jesus. If the fire touches the inflammable material within, it is because we allow ourselves to be led away of our own lusts and enticed: "Let no man say when he is tempted [from within], I am tempted of God" (v. 13). We see, therefore, that the crown of life is given only to those whose own characters have been formed in the day of probation.

The crown of glory

Peter speaks of a crown of glory: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4). There is a reason why he perceives the reward as glory rather than life. If there was one event

above all others during Peter's association with the Lord in the days of his flesh which remained indelibly graven in his mind, it was the transfiguration. We have his vivid reminiscence in his second letter: "Moreover . . . we . . . were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory . . ." (1:15-17). And so we find in the writings of Peter, who saw the earnest of the glory that is to be revealed, more references proportionately to the word 'glory' than in any other book of the New Testament.

But the word 'glory' means more than the visible manifestation of the Divine presence. Not only did Jesus' robes and face shine in splendour, he was honoured and glorified by the declaration of God: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 17:5). The Apostle John says: "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1:14). This refers us to God's revelation to Moses upon his request, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory", where we read, "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 33:18; 34:6). The glory of the Lord was the revelation of His character, and this was manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore was Jesus glorified and honoured in the testimony of the Father, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

Going one stage further, it almost seems that the apostle refers to 'glory' as a term for the Lord Jesus himself: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Pet. 4:14). Therefore, "if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (v. 16). If in suffering the Christian can show forth the true virtues of Christ, in whom the glory of God was revealed, he glorifies God. So Peter, using the same figure of trial and faith as James, can say, ". . . that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1:7). Thus the crown of glory is reserved for those whose lives even now redound to the honour and glory of God; and when they thus partake of the glory that shall be revealed, the manifestation of the character

of God, already developed in weakness, will be made perfect by the removal of the body of this death.

The crown of righteousness

Paul speaks of a crown of righteousness: "For I am now ready to be offered . . . henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:6,8). The apostle was a prisoner in Rome. He no longer dwelt in his own hired house, but in the inaccessible dungeon, though chained still to the wrist of a Roman soldier. Confined in intolerable inactivity, he reflected with gratitude on the visit of love by Onesiphorus, who diligently sought him out, but grieved that others had forsaken him: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (v. 10); "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (v. 16). Paul was reserved for trial before the court of Rome. He had been tried on one indictment but none had come to his side: "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge".

So the apostle awaits his second trial, which he realises will bring about his death. Yearning to see once more his dearly beloved son in the faith to give him parting exhortation and admonition, he writes: "For I am now ready to be offered [or, as the RV margin has it, "poured out as a drink-offering"], and the time of my departure is at hand" (v. 6). Paul referred to the custom both of the Jews and the heathen of completing the sacrifice itself.

He used exactly the same figure many years before to the Philippians: "Yea, and if I be offered [poured out] upon the sacrifice and service [offering up] of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (2:17). The apostle, the minister to the Gentiles, draws the figure of himself as the priest offering up the sacrifice of the faith of the Philippians, and ready to add to or complete that sacrifice by the pouring out of his own blood. Now the time foreshadowed by that earlier premonition was at hand. He who had given his body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, was about to complete that sacrifice by pouring out the drink offering of his blood in martyrdom, and also by this act complete the offering up of the Gentiles unto God, the work to which he had devoted his life.

When the Holy Spirit testified long before that bonds and afflictions awaited him, the apostle said: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which

I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Now he had finished his course, he had kept the faith inviolate and pure by preaching and by living. In sublime confidence he saw the crown of righteousness. Shortly he would appear before the profligate, dissolute Nero, the unrighteous judge, this mere youth, whose face was blotched with the premature scores of intemperance. But this vision had given way to the vision of the Lord, the righteous judge, "that man whom [God] hath ordained" to "judge the world in righteousness" (17:31). He would give the crown to Paul in that day, "and not to [him] only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

This, then, was Paul's conception of the reward. As the son of a Pharisee, from his youth he had gone about to establish his own righteousness; "touching the righteousness which is in the law, [he was] blameless" (Phil. 3:6). Yet he felt the burden of a yoke he was unable to bear, and, after receiving the vivid revelation on the Damascus road, he recognised the futility of his efforts and sought rather to "be found in [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (v. 9).

Thus Paul, the great seeker after righteousness, having righteousness imputed unto him by grace, looked to the reward when, free from the body of this death, that righteousness would be his in reality. But this crown will be given only to those who finish their course, keep the faith and love the coming of the Lord (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Only those whose lives attain a measure of Divine righteousness or likeness will receive the crown at the great day.

The purpose of the reward

The reward of the Christian, then, consists in righteousness, glory and immortality. All these attributes are embodied in the words of Peter, that we should become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4).

But if we take the final step and enquire, 'What then is the purpose of the reward?', the answer is that God created all things, and "for [His] pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11), and that "as truly as [He lives], all the earth shall be filled with the glory of LORD" (Num. 14:21). To accomplish this it is necessary that a people should be prepared to glorify the Lord in immortality, for a temporal glorying of His Name would be ineffectual.

The salvation of man is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end; we are not called primarily to obtain our own salvation, but that we may glorify God in the earth. To do this it is essential that we should manifest the moral and spiritual attributes of the Father. Therefore, at the great day, there will be no change of character, but rather there will be a perpetuation of those characters only that reflect the righteousness and glory of God. Now is the time to build those characters, and a true recognition of the reward will entirely remove any carnal notions of a striving for the final elevation of self.

New collection of poems

Sisters Peggy Rawson and Colleen Simons have published an eighth collection of their poems in a forty-page booklet. We have space here to print a short sample, entitled "Our future", by Sister Simons:

We came into this world with nothing
And we'll leave taking nothing away,
Our money and all our possessions
Will be given to others some day.
But if we put God first in our living
We'll be counted as children of worth,
For only the meek and the godly
Will be those who inherit the earth.

The booklet is obtainable from Sister (Mrs) Rawson at 5 Piltdown Road, Watford, WD19 6LD; Tel. 0208 428 7359. Cost £3.50 including postage and packing. Cheques payable to 'Watford Christadelphians'. All proceeds to the Christadelphian Bible Mission appeal for Kiev and Kenya. Previous collections still available.