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### The Concept of Reward in the New Testament

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THE CONCEPT OF REWARD  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of New Testament Theology

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Wilbur May

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Approved by: Martin H. Fraumann  
George D. Schick

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ical literature, "retribution" or "justness". The New  
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The New Testament also makes frequent references to  
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who have no faith. Sometimes the New Testament uses the  
term "reward" or "inheritance" for this gift which is  
freely given to all believers, but occasionally<sup>2</sup> when

<sup>2</sup> I. ARNDT ON THE APOSTOLIC BELIEF Art. III, p. 210;  
"if the saved-sinner will concede that we are accounted"

## Chapter I

### Introduction

As the title implies, the subject of this thesis is the concept of reward as it is presented in the New Testament. However, it will be advisable to limit this subject so that each part may be discussed in a thesis. Because of the lack of space, we shall immediately eliminate two phases of this subject which might possibly be included under the concept of reward.

The first type of reward which we wish to exclude from consideration in this paper is that of the reward for evil or, as it is generally referred to in theological literature, "retribution" or "punishment". The New Testament sometimes refers to these retributions as rewards, but for our purposes they may be eliminated from the discussion.

The New Testament also makes frequent references to eternal salvation which is God's gift of grace to those who come to faith. Sometimes the New Testament uses the term "reward" or "inheritance" for this gift which is freely given to all believers. Our confessions<sup>1</sup> state

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1. Apology of the Augsburg Confession Art. III, p. 219:  
"If the adversaries will concede that we are accounted

that this salvation may be referred to as a reward. If we call it a reward, it would logically be included in our subject. However, because of the lack of space, we are not including it.

After having eliminated these two phases of reward, there are still those rewards which the Christian receives for performing good works which are pleasing to God. It is with this reward that we are concerned in this thesis.

Since the Bible does speak of a reward of this type, the best way to determine the teaching of the New Testament on this point is by a thorough examination of the passages which pertain to this type of reward. We feel that the Biblical teaching of reward for good works is not in disagreement with the Biblical teaching of salvation by faith alone.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in this discussion,

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righteous by faith because of Christ, and that good works please God because of faith, we will not afterwards contend much concerning the term reward. We confess that eternal life is a reward, because it is something due on account of the promise, not on account of our merits. For the justification has been promised, which we have above shown to be properly a gift of God; and to this gift has been added the promise of eternal life, according to Rom. 8, 30 "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Here belongs that what Paul says, 2 Tim. 4, 8 "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me." For the crown is due the justified because of the promise."

2. "The Bible frequently employs the conception of reward to express the certainty that God guarantees the ultimate success and happiness of those who obey his law. Such expressions, however, raise two serious questions: Does not the promise of reward vitiate the motive of ethical conduct by introducing into it an egoistic element, and does it not contradict the doctrine of salvation through God's grace as taught by Paul? On closer examination it

we shall devote very little space to a careful analysis of the harmonious relationship which exists between these two teachings of the Bible. Rather, we shall devote our study to an analysis of those passages which specifically speak of the reward which the Christian will receive for the performance of good works.

In the first place, we shall examine some of the passages which give some indication that this reward is based on the merit of the works. Some of these good works, which have a promise of reward, are those performed out of love to our fellow man, and are in accordance with God's command that we should help our fellow man in his need. Others are done as an expression of our love towards Christ. Each type has the promise of a special reward.

One of the things which the New Testament stresses as a qualification of the good work is that it should confer some physical benefit to a person in need. It

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will be seen that both questions can be answered in the negative." Otto Hirn Ph.D., University of Leipsic. Schaff-Herzog Vol. X, p. 20.

the brethren, neither thy sinners, nor thy rich neighbors; least they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

## Chapter II

### Basis for reward

In this chapter, we shall examine those passages which speak of the type of works which must be performed to obtain the reward which is promised. We are not as yet interested in the qualifications which the Christians must have to be eligible for this reward; but rather we wish to examine the works objectively with no specific stress on the type of person who performs these works.

In the first place, we shall examine some of the passages which give some indication that this reward is based on the merit of the works. Some of these good works, which have a promise of reward, are those performed out of love to our fellow man, and are in obedience to God's command that we should help our fellow man in his need. Others are done as an expression of our love towards Christ. Each type has the promise of a special reward.

One of the things which the New Testament stresses as a qualification of the good work is that it should confer some physical benefit to a person in need. In Luke 14, 12-14,<sup>3</sup> the evangelist gives Jesus' illustration

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3. "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

of a good work which will be of benefit to some person and will receive a reward. Here Jesus attaches a reward to that type of charity which is performed towards those who are unable to pay for such charity. He uses the illustration of invitations to a meal. He shows that the common custom of inviting kinsmen and neighbors to a meal, with the hope that they will repay the favor, is not true charity and therefore it has no special reward attached to it. However, those who invite the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind will be blessed and will receive a special reward at the time of the resurrection.

Several passages reveal that Christ promises a reward to those who share their wealth with the poor. Here again, the poor will be unable to repay any financial aid given them but God Himself will provide the reward.

Matt. 19, 21<sup>4</sup> tells the story of the rich young man who wished to follow Jesus and who thought that he had kept the law perfectly. Jesus attached special importance to a willingness to part with one's money when he told the young man to sell all that he had and to distribute it among the poor. The point of this passage is not that it is necessary for everyone who desires to be a Christian to sell his possessions and distribute the proceeds among

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But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

4. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."



the poor. Nor does Jesus mean to imply that by distributing his goods among the poor, he would receive eternal life. Jesus merely emphasizes the importance of eagerness to share wealth with those in need.

Another passage which develops this thought is Luke 6,35 "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." This passage, in agreement with Mt. 19,21, emphasizes the importance of being willing to give to those who are unable to repay that which has been given to them. It postulates this condition of "hoping for nothing again" as a requisite for the promised reward. This is the interpretation which the Authorized Version gives for the Greek  $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\alpha\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ <sup>5</sup>. The translation of these words has caused considerable difficulty. The traditional view is that of the A.V. as given above. This translation is in agreement with the Vulgate "nihil inde sperantes".<sup>6</sup> This interpretation is in complete harmony with the thought expressed in v. 34 "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners

5. (Nestle text, 16th edition) This is the text which will be quoted for the Greek throughout this thesis.

6. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Commentary on Luke p. 337 lists the following exegetes as in agreement with this view: Euthymius Zigabenus, Erasmus, Luther, Beza, Calvin, Castalio, Salmasius, Casaubon, Grotius, Wolf, Bengel, Kebs, Valckenaer, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, de Wette, Ewald, Bleek.

also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." However, some interpreters claim that this interpretation is not in agreement with the general usage of ἀπελπίζω and therefore should be rejected. The correct interpretation hinges on the word ἀπελπίζοντες. Thayer <sup>7</sup> says "μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες nothing despairing sc. of the hoped-for recompense from God the requiter." This is the only passage in which ἀπελπίζω appears in the New Testament; therefore we cannot determine its meaning through a study of other passages. In religious writings outside of the New Testament, it usually expressed the idea of "despair" or lack of hope. <sup>8</sup> Moreover, since the context is in complete harmony with the A.V. interpretation, and since Preuschen-Bauer <sup>9</sup>, Zahn <sup>10</sup>, and Expositor's <sup>11</sup>,

7. Joseph Henry Thayer D.D. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

8. "Is. 29,19 'The poor among men οἱ ἀπελπισμένοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων shall rejoice' So in the Apocrypha, 2 Mac. 9, 18, despairing of his health; Judith 9, 11, 'A Saviour of them that are without hope (ἀπελπισμένων), therefore Lk. must have been familiar with this usage of the word." Marvin R. Vincent Word Studies in the New Testament p. 315.

9. D. Walter Bauer "Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments."

10. "Das, was man zu fordern ein Recht hat und der Andere abzuliefern verpflichtet ist, abfordern oder geradezu zurückfordern, ἀπολαβεῖν : von dem Andern das einem Gebührende oder jenem Obliegende empfangen (Lc. 6,30 cf. 18,30; 23,41; Rm. 1,27) ἀποδοῖναι geben, wozu man verpflichtet ist oder zurückgeben (Lc. 7,42; 9,42; 10,35), kann auch ἀπελπίζειν heißen 'hoffen, dass man das, worauf man einen Anspruch hat, erhalte,' seien es Zinsen von einem geliehenen Kapital oder das Kapital selbst, in letzterem Fall also, 'wieder erhalte'. Sollte Lc., was nicht eben warscheinlich ist der erste Schriftsteller sein, der das Wort in diesem Sinn gebrauchte, so wäre das weniger unbegreiflich, als dass er ohne sicheres Beispiel in der vorhandenen 'alteren Literatur' AG 20,19

agree with the A.V.; we will accept this as the correct interpretation. Preuschen-Bauer says, "δανίσετε μὴ δὲν ἀπελπίσονταις fordert wegen d. Gegensatzes zu παρ' ἑν ἐλπίσετε λαβεῖν 34, entgegen dem nachweisbar. Sprachgebrauch, d. bei den Griechen mindestens seit Chrysostomos zu belegende, dann durch d. Vulgata verbreitete Deutung leihet, indem ihr nichts davon erhofft;".

Mk. 9,41 "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." This passage emphasizes the point that not the amount of the gift but rather the spirit in which it is given is the important feature of a good work which has the promise of a reward attached to it. This also indicates that Christ is concerned about the little deeds performed by the Christians. It is important for the Christian to remember that Christ will also reward him for all the comparatively small deeds which he does because of his love to God and his neighbor.

Col. 3, 22-24<sup>12</sup> emphasizes the fact that the Christian should obey his master and perform the duties

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2 φ 1 3 1 5 im Sinn von Weggang gebraucht.

11. The Rev. Alexander Bruce, D.D. "The Expositor's Greek Testament. Vol. I p. 507.

12. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

which his master demands of him as if God himself demanded it of him and as if he were doing it to God. This indicates that regardless of rank or social station <sup>13</sup> here on earth, the reward from God is the same for the good deeds done to our fellowman. <sup>14</sup>

All of the passages listed above indicate the type of good deeds, in the field of temporal aid to those in need, which have the promise of a special reward. They all indicate that God has attached a special reward to all deeds of genuine charity which are done to those in need.

However, there are other types of good works towards the fellow man which have a particular award attached to them. These are in the field of spiritual aid to those who are less fortunate and who need aid in spiritual matters.

The most important type of spiritual assistance to one's fellowman is bringing him to Christ. Christ attached a special reward to this type of activity when

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13. "Der Satz ist dann in der Tat ein recht eigentlicher Nachtrag zu der ganzen Erörterung, bzw. speziell zu v. 23, während v. 24b als Zusammenfassung der Mahnungen vorausging: 'ihr Sklaven gehorcht den irdischen Herren in allem etc.' Was ihr etwa tut, verrichtet von Herzen, wissend, dass ihr herrenwärts her die Vergeltung des Erbes empfangen werdet. Dem Herrn Christo dienet! Der Schädiger nämlich (scil. seines Herrn; im Gegensatz zu dem, der alles von Herzen als Christo verrichtet) wird davontragen, was er geschädigt hat und zwar unangesehen, dass er ein Sklave ist.)" Paul Ewald, Zahn's Kommentar Vol. X, p. 433.

14. Eph. 6, 7-8 "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

he told his disciples, "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." 15

This passage points to the believers who are brought to faith through the work of the faithful as the reward which the faithful shall receive for their labors. 16

The entire section of 1 Cor. 3, 5-15 speaks of the reward for spiritual services rendered. This reward is not eternal salvation but is some special reward which God gives to those who faithfully perform their duties.

V. 15 αὐτὸς δὲ σωμαίνεται shows that this is something different from eternal salvation. The reward about which this section speaks can be lost and still the person will receive eternal life.

The workers all build on the same foundation but each receives his own reward according to the work which he has done. In the case of Paul and Apollos, each had his phase of the one large work. Each man did what the circumstances made necessary. The work of each required the blessing of God before it would be of any value.

However, there still were definite differences. Lenski says,

There are of course, differences between the Lord's ministers. Does he not send one to plant and another to water? This, too, is his business. But even greater differences appear, particularly in the the hard and tiring labor which each performs. Some

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15. John 4, 36.

16. Theodor Zahn, op.cit. Vol. IV , p. 255.

throw their whole heart into their labor, some have much harder tasks to perform, greater burdens to bear, some are called to labor longer than others. Hence, another difference appears: they shall receive different wages. 17

The fact that the reward will not be the same for each worker is stressed by the Greek: ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λαμβύσεται which points out that each shall receive his own wages.

Some commentators are rather hesitant about acknowledging the fact that Paul is here speaking about some special reward. They prefer to identify this reward with eternal salvation. However, their objections are answered by Bachman, 18 when he says,

Dass das Reich Gottes in seiner für alle gleichen Heilsgabe doch Raum für individuelle Ausgestaltung des Heilsbesitzes und verschiedene Stellung in der Heilsgemeinde hat, das sagten schon bekannte Worte Jesu deutlich Genug. Demgemäss konnte denn auch die apostolische Verkündigung ganz abgesehen von der Möglichkeit, das Heil überhaupt unter dem Gesichtspunkte eines Lohnes für heilsgemässes Verhalten zu betrachten - den Gedanken eines besonderen Lohnes für besondere Dienste entwickeln, mag nun dieser Lohn in dem bleibenden Erfolg, der dem Werken verliehen wird oder in besonderen Herrlichkeitsglanze bestehen.

V. 9 gives a special assurance that the worker will receive this reward from God. θεὸς γὰρ ἐσμεν οὐρεργοί They γὰρ refers back to and explains the 8th verse. However, it only refers to the last part of the 8th verse, and emphasizes the fact that the Christian may be sure of a reward because he is a οὐρεργός with God and God will certainly reward all those who labor for Him.

17. R.H.C. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 130.

18. Philipp Bachmann, "Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther" in Zahn's Kommentar Vol. VII footnote 2, p. 165.

This entire section stresses the importance of the foundation for these good works. The only foundation for these good works, and the foundation upon which the church is built, is Jesus Christ himself.

What he understands by such foundation, he himself tells us in ver. 11, namely Jesus Christ without whom (both in an objective sense: without whose appearing and work, and in a subjective: without appropriating whom in conscious faith;) a Christian society could not come into the existence at all. <sup>19</sup>

Paul stresses the fact that forsaking this one foundation which is already lying would be fatal. This foundation includes Jesus Christ and all the doctrines concerning him. Paul says that he laid the foundation. By this he means that he first placed Christ and the true gospel into the hearts of the Corinthians. A foundation is always necessary. Paul's wisdom did not consist in the mere fact that he laid a foundation but rather that he laid the right one, in the right way. While he calls himself a "wise architect" he is not thinking of some wonderful quality of his own mind and intellect but of the true gospel wisdom made his by revelation.

That which is to be built on this foundation is the building of God's church. Some take this to mean a city rather than a building. However, this is inaccurate because the figure of Christ as the foundation of a city does not occur in the New Testament.

19. Heinrich Meyer, op. cit. "Epistles to the Corinthians" p. 70.

The difference in the amount of the reward will be based on the difference in the type of building material used. In the section about "materials", Paul doesn't say much about the manner of building. The manner of building is revealed by the type of materials which are deemed fit for this building. Paul does not wish to refer to actual building conditions as man thinks of them. On one extreme, no man has ever built a house completely of gold or silver. To the other extreme, it is impossible to build a house of stubble. In this case, the common human actualities are disregarded and only the spiritual are thought of.

Three interpretations have been given for this material which is used in the building. One interpretation says that the various forms of building materials represent the various types of persons brought into the church. However, this interpretation is probably not correct because any minister who would permit all types of people to enter the church regardless of their faith etc. would himself be destroyed on judgment day. Also the fact that these materials shall *κατακαίω* "completely burn up" at the time of judgment strengthens this view point because it doesn't seem possible that he would speak of people being burned up completely.

A second interpretation is that it refers to the moral fruits resulting from the labors of the various



teachers, the character of Church members, thus being the specific object of the final judgment.

The third interpretation is that it refers to the doctrines of the different teachers, since for this they are primarily answerable and here lay the point of the present divergence. Passages which strengthen this view point are 1 Cor. 8,10f., Rom. 14,15; 2 Cor. 11,1ff., Gal. 1,7.

Expositor's gives the following summary: "The three views are not really discrepant; teaching shapes character, works express faith; unsound preaching attracts the bad hearer and makes him worse, sound preaching wins and improves the good" 20

The best method of interpreting this section, is to refer it to the different contributions of the different teachers, which are not intended to represent specific forms of truth or error, or as anti-Christian; which would be inconsistent with building on the true foundation. The idea is that teachers may build on this foundation with perishable or worthless materials. This can be seen in the history of the Church in the false interpretations of scripture, and the crude or fanatical preaching of sincere but ignorant men.

If we take this latter interpretation to be the true one, which apparently is the case, we have the loss of

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20. The Rev. G.G. Findlay in "Expositor's Greek Testament"  
Vol. III, p. 791.

reward on the part of the person who built with straw consisting in this that he will lose all the reward which might have been his if he had built properly. All of his work would then be in vain. Some of these who have received a loud acclaim from their contemporaries will lose all of their reward while some humble preacher will receive a great reward for his building of precious stones etc. The builder will save his life because he continually remained on the foundation of Christ (the true foundation). Since the builder will not be destroyed, it is evident that these false teachers who lead men away from Christ by their teachings are not meant here. Rather they, who are referred to here, merely had foolish human notions which they added to the Gospel.

Paul, in speaking of his own reward,<sup>21</sup> emphasizes the fact that the person who is performing the good work must perform it of his own regenerate free will and not because he feels that he is being forced to do it. When he does it merely because he has been forced to do so, he loses his reward.

Besides those good works done to give spiritual or temporal aid to a person in need, there are some works which are done in keeping with God's command and out of love to Christ. These latter also have the promise of a reward. One particular good work which the Christian is

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21. "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

to do to Christ is to confess him before men. This is illustrated in Matt. 10, 32 by the word *ὁμολογῆναι* 22 According to Thayer,<sup>23</sup> the general meaning of this word is that of an open, free, confession of one's faith. In court cases, it is used of a confession made in regard to one's faith or belief or activity. It is used in this way in Acts 24,14 where Paul made a confession of his faith while he was on trial before Felix. The parallel passage expresses the same thought in similar language.<sup>24</sup> "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." (Luke 12,8)

The rest of the passages which speak about the type of work which is done out of love towards Christ and which has the promise of reward attached to it speak in more general terms and refer to specific conditions which these works must meet to have this promise of reward. Matt. 6, 1-6<sup>25</sup> emphasizes the fact that this

22. Albert Debrunner "Friedrich Blass' Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch", # 220,2 says that *ὁμολογῆναι* in Matt. 10,32 means "sich bekennen zu jemand."

23. Joseph Henry Thayer, op. cit.

24. Theodor Zahn, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 494 "In der Gewissheit, dass Jesus sich im Endgericht vor Gott zu ihnen bekennen wird, wenn sie ihn vor den Menschen bekannt haben, sollen sie sich jederzeit mutig und freigütig zu ihm bekennen."

25. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand

righteousness must be genuine and without ulterior motive. It is a quality that is operative and effective in a man's life. The person must live, think, and do righteousness. It must be an essential part of his being. Therefore, it cannot be that type of activity which is done merely to attract the attention and merit the praise of others. It is much deeper than this and is a part of the whole man. It is this genuine type of righteousness which has the promise of reward and not the type which merely strives to create the impression of being active in good works.

Another thing which God promises to reward is the giving of glory to Him by man's works. This is stressed in Heb. 6,10 "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." This passage shows that the works which reveal the Christians' love towards God, will be rewarded. This passage, unlike those mentioned above (pp. 5-15), does not promise reward for the good deeds because of the benefit which they give to those in need but because of the love which they show towards God and the praise which they give

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know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

unto God.<sup>26</sup> However, these works must proceed from a love towards God, if they are to receive the reward promised in this passage. Lenski<sup>27</sup> explains this as follows: "Ἀγάπη is the love of intelligence and understanding, always coupled with corresponding purpose. This love springs only from true faith. To be sure, this love produces work, but God ever looks for the love in the work, and it is this love arising from faith that makes us and our work acceptable to him who is himself love." The expression εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ which in this case is the object of the τῆς ἀγάπης capable of several different interpretations. However, the interpretation which Meyer<sup>28</sup> gives is apparently the correct one. He says:

"the love which ye have shown to His name (sc. God's name, not Christ's, Ernesti and others). This is the more general object, which only then obtains its more special reference and indication of purport by διακορυφαίτες κ. τ. λ. . A love exercised towards Christian brethren, inasmuch as Christians as God's children, bear the name of God. διακορυφαίτες τοῦ ἀγίου in that ye have rendered service to the saints (the fellow Christians) have aided them when they were in distress and affliction (not specially: in poverty)."

26. "ἡς ἐνεσεῖσαοθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ The verb means, strictly, to show something in one's self; or to show one's self in something. Similar praise is bestowed in ch. 10, 32. Thy have shown both love and work toward God's name. That does not look like crucifying Christ. God is not unjust, as he would show himself to be if he were forgetfull of this." Vincent, op. cit., Vol. IV p. 449.

27. R.H.C. Lenski, "Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James", p. 191.

28. Meyer, op. cit. "The Epistle to Hebrews" by Göttilieb Lünemann, p. 540. (trans. by Maurice J. Evans.)

The passages mentioned above indicate that God has promised special blessings to those who show their love towards God and their neighbors by certain outward acts of love. However, the New Testament doesn't stop at that point in showing the extent of God's gracious rewards. It contains frequent promises of reward for activity which might be called passive good works. In other words, God has promised a reward not only to those who do good works but also to those who abstain from doing the evil works.

Since the New Testament was written in a time when the persecution of Christians was a common occurrence, it is quite natural that many references should be made to suffering for Christ. This suffering consisted in evil treatment or even outright persecution. Most of these passages refer to some specific type of suffering and then express the promised reward.

Rom. 8, 16-18<sup>29</sup> presents some difficulties in interpretation and many divergent opinions have arisen. However, it is evident that this passage promises some reward for suffering. Some exegetes interpret this passage in such a manner as to make salvation practically

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29. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together, For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

dependent on suffering. One of these, Expositor's <sup>30</sup> says:  
"Those who share Christ's sufferings now, will share His  
glory hereafter; and in order to share His glory hereafter,  
it is necessary to begin by sharing His sufferings here.  
The inheritance attached to Divine sonship is attained  
only on the condition expressed in the clause  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\rho$   
 $\sigma\upsilon\nu\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\epsilon\upsilon\iota\ \acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \theta\upsilon\nu\delta\omicron\varsigma\alpha\sigma\theta\tilde{\omega}\nu\epsilon\iota.$ "  
The entire meaning and consequently the difficulty  
hinges on the meaning of the one word  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\rho$ . Blass-  
Debrunner <sup>31</sup> claim that this  $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\rho$  is used concessively  
with a meaning something like "wenn noch so sehr" which  
is the meaning which it frequently has in Homer. Arndt <sup>32</sup>  
and Vincent <sup>33</sup> on the other hand prefer to classify it  
as "conditional". The interpretation by Blass-Debrunner  
is in keeping with the general context (v. 18). However,  
it presents difficulties when taken together with the  
" $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$  clause which immediately follows, therefore, the  
other interpretation(conditional) is closer to the correct  
one. Zahn <sup>34</sup> focuses his attention on the overall meaning  
of the passage and tries to avoid the grammatical difficulty.  
Each of the interpretations mentioned above. seems to have

30. The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 2, p. 648.  
Romans interpreted by the Rev. James Denney, D.D.

31. Albert Debrunner, op. cit. # 454,2.

32. Dr. William Arndt, class notes on Romans published  
1945 by Concordia Seminary Mimeo Co. p. 55 "Eiper may be  
translated; 'If indeed, as I have no doubt we do.' The  
hina-clause says that we suffer with Christ 'in order to  
be glorified with him,' namely in the world to come."

33. Vincent, op. cit. Vol. 3, p. 92 "If so be that  
( $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\rho$ ). The conditional particle with the indicative  
mood assumes the fact. If so be, as is really the case."

34. Theodor Zahn, op. cit. Vol. VI p. 398.

its own peculiar shortcoming. The best interpretation is that which interprets this clause as a purpose clause which would give a meaning something like, "Our suffering prepares us for the joy which we shall receive in heaven." This is the interpretation which is explained in great detail by Hodge. <sup>35</sup> He says,

If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Those suffer with Christ who suffer as he did, and for his sake. They are thus partakers of the sufferings of Christ. We suffer as Christ suffered; not only when we are subject to the contradiction of sinners, but in the ordinary sorrows of life in which he, the man of sorrows, so largely shared. We are said to suffer with Christ, *ἵνα*, in order that we may be glorified together. That is, the design of God in the affliction of his people, is not to satisfy the demands of justice, but to prepare them to participate in his glory. To creatures in a state of sin, suffering is the necessary condition of exaltation. It is the refining process through which they must pass, 1 Pet. 1, 6&7. The union of believers with Christ, in suffering as well as in glory, is what he and his apostles taught them to expect. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me,' Matt. 16, 24; 'If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.' 2 Tim. 2, 11&12. The blessedness of the future state is always represented as exalted; it is a glory, something that will elevate us in the rank of beings; enlarging, purifying, and ennobling all our faculties. To this state we are to attain 'through much tribulation', i.e. attain it as Christ did. And this is what the apostle here intends to say, and not that the participation of Christ's glory is a reward for our having suffered with him.

Stoeckhardt agrees with this latter interpretation. He gives the following quotation from Calov: "Passiones non conditio sunt meritoria, sed ordo, quem Deus in

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Hodge, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 276.



hominibus ad aeternam haereditatem admittendis constituit et observat. Causa enim unica constituta erat  $\upsilon\iota\omicron\theta\epsilon\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}$  vel adoptio." 36

Luke 6, 22-23<sup>37</sup> stresses the certainty of the reward which those who suffer "for the Son of man's sake" will receive.  $\nu\iota\sigma\eta\sigma\omega\sigma\iota\upsilon$  (v.22) is an ingressive aorist meaning "as soon as they begin to hate you". This implies that immediately when the first traces of men's hate for them become evident, they are blessed and should rejoice. "In that day", they are to rejoice, at the very time when others are beginning to hate them for the Son of man's sake. The word for "leap for joy"  $\sigma\kappa\iota\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\omega$ <sup>38</sup> implies a carefree, unrestrained type of joy. Matt. 5, 10-12<sup>39</sup> is a parallel passage reiterating the certainty of this reward for suffering. In this case, Lenski attaches particular importance to the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  of verse 12. He feels that this  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  is used here so that the Christians can consider the example of the prophets who also were

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36. Dr. G. Stöckhardt, "Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer p. 370

37. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

38. Bauer, op.cit. takes this to mean "to leap as sheep with joy".

39. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets before you."

forced to suffer persecution because of their faith. This example of the prophets should be an encouragement to the Christians in their suffering. <sup>40</sup>

2 Cor. 4, 17 "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This passage gives the sufferer comfort, by showing him that his affliction when compared to the reward which he will receive is relatively unimportant. The expression, "our light affliction which is but for a moment" is a poor translation of the Greek, παραυτίκα ἑλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως. A better translation would be, "for the present lightness of our affliction, i. e. our momentary affliction weighing light, not heavy to be borne." <sup>41</sup> Zahn gives a more lengthy discussion and advances reasons from the grammatical construction which favor this second translation. He says: <sup>42</sup>

Da nämlich zwischen παραυτίκα, und ἑλαφρόν kein καί steht, kann τὸ παραυτίκα nicht genommen werden als ein dem ἑλαφρόν koordinierter

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<sup>40</sup>. Lenski, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 197 "Here Jesus points to the most illustrious martyrs of the past (23; 34, etc.), so many of whom gave up even their lives for God. He ranges the Twelve and his other disciples alongside of these prophets. In one and in only one way may we join this most illustrious company in heaven: by joyfully suffering persecution for Christ's sake. Beyond question the highest glory in heaven belongs to the martyred prophets, and next to them stand in due order all others who in their various stations suffered for Christ. Not in spite of our persecutions are we to rejoice, but because of our persecutions. The wounds and hurts are medals of honor. They attest that we belong to Christ and not to the world."

<sup>41</sup>. Trans. given by Meyer, op. cit. "Epistle to Corinthians", interpreted by William P. Dickson., p. 503.

<sup>42</sup>. Zahn, op. cit. Vol. VIII p. 212, Der zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther ausgelegt bei Philipp Bachmann.

Begriff, der nur mit Hilfe eines substantivierten Adverbiums an Stelle eines substantivierten Adjektivums gebildet wäre. Vielmehr ist παραυτίκα subordinierte adverbiale Däherbestimmung zu το ἐλαφρόν die bloss momentare Leichtigkeit der Trübsal.

The passages in the section above, indicate that Jesus promised special rewards to those who suffer on account of their faith. However, there are also passages in which He promises a special reward to those who make sacrifices because of Him. One of these, ("For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life, for my sake and the gospel's the same shall save it." Mark 8,35) stresses especially the fact that if a Christian renounces all confidence in the merits of his own life and turns to Christ, he will receive a special reward.<sup>43</sup> The extent of this renunciation is emphasized in Mark 8, 34<sup>44</sup> where the condition is laid down that those who wish to follow Jesus should deny themselves ἀπαρνῆσθω ἑαυτῶν. This expression is found very few times in the New Testament besides in this passage and its parallels (Mt. 16,24 and Luke 9,23). In Lk. 12,9, it is used for the denial of Jesus by man. Besides this it is used eight times in the New Testament in the story of Peter's denial of Jesus

43. Luke 14, 33 expresses a similar thought. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

44. "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

which, as the context reveals was a complete renunciation strengthened by oaths and curses. Since even in the LXX, ἀπαρνεῖσθαι 45 is used to indicate a complete casting away of something held dear, it is evident that when Mark used this word here, he wished to emphasize that it must be a total renunciation of one's self. The Christian should have such great love towards God that he would be willing to give up the most precious thing that he has, namely, his life. He should be willing to do this even when it is connected with cruelty and disgrace as in the case with death on the cross.

The passages that have been examined up to this point generally give the impression that this reward is based on merit. However, it is not a reward in the sense that God owes the Christians a reward because they showed him a special favor. The New Testament continually emphasizes the fact that God rewards those who perform good works, not because he is obligated to do so but because he is gracious and uses this method of showing us His love. In other words, this reward is a reward of merit only because God promised to reward us for doing those particular good works. However, it is essentially a reward of grace because God is not obligated to make this promise to the Christians and the Christians do not deserve the

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45. Is. 31,7 ὅτι τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀπαρνεύσονται  
τὰ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰ χειροποίητα αὐτῶν  
τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χειροποίητα τὰ  
χρυσᾶ, ἀὶ ἐποίησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτῶν.

reward which He has promised to give them. Some of the passages show that this is a reward of grace by two different methods. One method is to show that the reward is not based strictly on the amount of works done, but that the reward is far greater than the amount of work or sacrifice or suffering which the Christian does.

The New Testament has various ways for showing that the reward is greater than the merit which the works deserved. Rom. 11,35 <sup>46</sup> points out that the reward is not merely a payment of the debt which God owes to the Christian. The question asked in v. 35, together with the first two questions, is to be answered with an emphatic "no one". This indicates that the reward which God gives is not a payment but a reward of grace.

2 Cor. 4, 17 shows that the suffering is only *παρραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως* but that the reward which God promises is *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης* .47

Matt. 19,29 <sup>48</sup> to express the same thought uses

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46. "Or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"

47. "Rev., more and more exceedingly an eternal weight, etc. An expression after the form of Hebrew superlatives, in which the emphatic word is twice repeated. Lit., exceedingly unto excess. The use of such cumulative expressions is common with Paul. See, for example Philip. 1,23, lit., much more better; Rom. 7,37, abundantly the conquerors; Eph. 3,20, exceeding abundantly etc. Note how the words are offset: for a moment, eternal; light, weight; affliction, glory."

48. "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

the word πολλὰ ἰχθυῖονα. This gives no explanation as to the type of the reward which they will receive, it merely indicates that it will be much more by far than that which they sacrificed for the sake of their love to Christ.

Luke 6, 22-23 <sup>49</sup> indicates that the reward will be so great that the Christians ought to rejoice even while suffering afflictions.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans <sup>50</sup> despairs of even trying to make a comparison between the Christian's suffering and the reward which God has promised to him. In this passage he is no longer emphasizing the certainty of salvation nor is he trying to indicate that they will receive a reward for all the sufferings that they have to endure. He has finished all of this in the earlier sections of the book. In this verse he merely wishes to point out that regardless of the sufferings which might come upon us or the evil with which we are faced, the ultimate glory will transcend this by so much that no comparison is possible.

The second method which the New Testament employs to show that the reward which God promises is a reward of grace and not a reward of merit in the strict sense of

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49. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

50. Romans 8,18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

something earned is to show that all good works which the Christian may do are the result of faith and love towards God which God created in the heart of the Christian and therefore the Christian can not demand the reward on basis of these works. A huge number of New Testament passages bring out this point. <sup>51</sup> However, the whole matter is summed up very well by Pieper. <sup>52</sup> He says:

Freilich er, der Christ, tut die Werke. Aber er tut sie nicht aus seiner natürlichen Art. Gott ist es, der mit seiner göttlichen Gnade und Kraft die Werke in ihm und durch ihn wirkt. Was aus seiner eigenen natürlichen Art stammt, ist nur Hinderung und Befleckung der Werke. Wenn Gott dennoch die Werke belohnt, so krönt er damit sein eigenes Werk im Christen, wie käme also ein Christ, als Christ, dazu, auf Grund seiner guten Werke Gott sich tributpflichtig machen zu wollen!

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51. Several other passages which have not been mentioned before and which express this truth are:  
John 15:5 "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."  
Heb. 11,6 " Without faith it is impossible to please Him."  
Eph. 2:10 "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."  
1 Cor. 6,19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"  
Phillipians 2, 13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and do of his good pleasure."  
2 Cor. 3,5 "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

52. D.Franz Pieper "Christliche Dogmatik" Vol. III, p. 66.

### Chapter III

#### Type of Reward

The New Testament speaks of various kinds of rewards which God promises to the Christian. However, it is possible to divide these into two general types. One type is the reward which the Christian will receive here on earth. The other type is the reward which he will receive in heaven. There is a great deal of similarity between the two, but in order to facilitate enumeration of the various aspects of this reward it seems best to divide them in this method.

Eph. 6, 7-8 <sup>53</sup> merely assures the Christian servants that regardless of the amount of work which he may do, he can be certain that the Lord will fully repay him, even though he does not receive the proper remuneration from his employer.  $\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$  <sup>54</sup> presents the

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53. "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

54. "In the N.T. the verb  $\kappa\omicron\nu\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$  is used once in the simple sense of carrying or bringing to one (Luke 7, 37), of the woman's  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\beta\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\nu$ ; oftener in the sense of obtaining (1 Pet. 1, 9; 2 Pet. 2, 13; Heb. 10, 36; 11, 39) or in that of receiving back, recovering one's own (Matt. 25, 27; 2 Cor. 5, 10; Col. 3, 25). The word has this last sense also in classical Greek (e.g.  $\tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\nu$  Eurip. Iph. T., 1362; Thuc., 1, 113 etc.). So here the idea is that of receiving back. The "good thing" done is represented as being itself given back to the doer; the certainty, equity and adequacy of the reward being thus



thought that everything given will be paid back.

Eph. 6, 2-3 <sup>55</sup> promises a long life here on this earth to those who honor their father and mother. This  $\epsilon\pi\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \chi\omega\mu\epsilon\varsigma$  in the O.T. always refers to the land of Canaan. Meyer thinks that it must retain its historical sense here. However, this doesn't seem to be the case, because it would be unlikely that he would promise them the land of Canaan. Probably the best translation would be something like "on the land" which would retain some of the historical sense of the term. At any rate, the point of this passage is that God is promising a long life as a reward to him who honors father and mother.

The passages above promise various forms of material blessings to those who perform good works. However, the majority of the passages in the New Testament speak of the more intangible type of blessings such as a more pleasant or a richer life or in some cases only a certain personal satisfaction received from the knowledge of having done a service to one's fellow-man.

signified (cf. especially 2 Cor. 5,10). Whether the Middle is to be taken as the appropriative Middle, expressing as it were the receiving back of a deposit (Ell.) is doubtful in view of the fact that in every N.T. occurrence but one (Luke 7,37) Middle forms are used." Expositor's Greek Testament Vol. III p. 380. Ephesians, interpreted by S.D. F.Salmond, D.D.

55. "Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Gal. 6,4 56 points to the personal satisfaction which the Christian receives from the knowledge of the fact that he is performing good works and improving in righteousness. The words which express the point of this passage and which at the same time have received a variety of interpretations are εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχηται εἶσι καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον. Since the preceding verse expressly says that "if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself," many commentators feel that it would be impossible for Paul to urge someone to rejoice in his own good works immediately after he had told them not to rejoice. However, the difficulty can be solved if the preceding verse is taken to refer to false pride which is founded upon what a person thinks himself to be after he has examined his own life and seen that he has kept God's commandments. The last part of verse 4 emphasizes the fact that the Christian is not to rejoice "in another." The εἰς τὸν ἕτερον probably has a meaning somewhat like "in regard to or in comparison with the other." εἰς is sometimes used in this sense. If it were used that way here, the two verses could easily be harmonized. Verse 3 could very well mean that no one should compare himself with a weaker Christian and then pride himself on his superiority. Verse 4

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56. "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

then would show that he should compare himself with the law of God and his present life with his past life and then if he sees any improvement, he should pride himself on this fact, keeping in mind that the goal which God has set down is perfection and that he with the help of God should continually strive for this goal. The reward which he will have after such a comparison of himself with the commands of God will be that he will find it possible to have *καύχημα*. This *καύχημα* with the article denotes not the absolute glory, which no one has, but rather the relevant cause for the *καύχασθαι* which he finds in himself as far as he does so, on the basis of the value of his own work.

Matt. 6, 1-6 <sup>57</sup> doesn't especially emphasize the fact that the reward will consist of personal satisfaction in knowing that they have done good deeds but it implies the same thing by saying that that the reward which the Father will give will be in secret. The thought probably is that

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57. "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you;" (R.S.V.)

those who do good works to be seen of men, will be seen of men and will be praised for their good works. This praise which they will receive will be their reward. The Christian is to do his work in secret; therefore it will be impossible for the world to know about his good deeds, and therefore the world will not be able to praise him for his good deeds. This section points out that the reward which they will receive will be at least as great as that of those who do their works openly for the sake of the praise which men will give them. Since this reward is in secret, it must be the type of reward which consists of personal joy or satisfaction in a job well done or in the realization that they have done that which is pleasing to God.

In general, the reward on earth which the Christian will receive is a life which is pleasant, satisfying, joyful, peaceful, calm and blessed by God. <sup>58</sup>

Frequently, it is difficult to determine whether the reward promised in a given passage is for this life or for the life in heaven. Then, too, some Christians feel that since the joy in heaven is to be perfect for every Christian who is saved, it would be impossible to have any rewards, because if a person has a perfect happiness, there is nothing more, which he might receive in addition. However, this approach is based on human speculation, and

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58. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" Rom. 14,17.

not on the basis of the clear passages of the New Testament. The Confessions of the Lutheran church have very little to say about this. Philip Melancthon says: 59

The candid reader can judge that we certainly require good works, since we teach that this faith arises in repentance, and in repentance ought continually to increase; and in these matters we place Christian and spiritual perfection, if repentance and faith grow together in repentance. This can be better understood by the godly than those things which are taught by the adversaries concerning contemplation or perfection. Just as, however, justification pertains to faith, so also life eternal pertains to faith. And Peter says, 1 Pet. 1, 9: 'Receiving the end, or fruit, of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' For the adversaries confess that the justified are children of God and coheirs of Christ. Afterwards works, because on account of faith they please God, merit other bodily and spiritual rewards. For there will be distinctions in the glory of the saints. 60

However, for a true understanding of the complete teaching of the New Testament in regard to a reward in heaven, it will be necessary to examine the passages in the New Testament which speak about this subject.

Luke 14, 14 and Matt. 16, 27 both emphasize the fact that the reward in heaven will be a payment for the work which had been done out of love to Christ and one's fellow-man.

Matt. 16, 27 <sup>61</sup> uses the word ἀπο-δίδωμι to describe the payment of this reward. Robertson <sup>62</sup> has the

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59. Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. III in Triglot Concordia, p. 217.

60. The underlined material is underlined for emphasis. It is not underlined in the original.

61. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

62. A.T. Robertson, "A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research," p. 577.

following comment in regard to ἀποδοσις ὡς μισθός.

The giver gives from himself to the recipient. In the case of a debt or reward from the recipient's point of view he is getting back what was his due. This idea appears in ἀποδοσις ὡς μισθός as in Luke 6,34. A particularly good example is found in ἀποδοσις ὡς μισθός Mt. 6,2.

In the first part of this passage (Mt. 16:24-27), Christ stresses the fact that the person who tries to save his soul or who tries to gain the whole world for his possession will lose his own soul. In the latter part of this section, He is bringing out some deeper and more significant fact. Here he points out that by a complete denial of one's property and of one's efforts to save his soul, he will in reality be saving his soul and will receive the reward which Christ promises. This reward will consist in the fact that he shall receive according to what he has done.

Luke 14, 14 <sup>63</sup> promises a reward for something more specific. It promises a reward which will equal all of the sacrifices which the Christians will make in showing kindness to the poor. This reward will be given to the Christians ἐν τῇ ἀποδοσίσει τῶν δικαίων.

This does not imply that there will be a special resurrection for the righteous at a different time from that of the resurrection of the dead on the day of final judgment, the righteous will receive this reward based on the

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63. "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"

works which they have done.

Matthew lists two instances in which Jesus promised a special reward to his disciples when they entered heaven. The first instance is in Mt. 19,28.<sup>64</sup> This passage promises this reward ἐν τῇ βασιλευσσίᾳ which according to Thayer<sup>65</sup> is a translation of the Syriac which means "A new age or a new world". This evidently means that they will receive this reward in heaven after the resurrection of the dead. The reward which is promised them is that they shall "sit upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel". The word which is translated with "judging" is κρῖνόντες which in its strict sense does mean "to judge". However, in this passage it very likely has a wider meaning something like "ruling" or "governing".<sup>66</sup> Jesus here speaks about the disciples sitting on the twelve thrones. Since Judas did not sit on a throne, it is evident that Jesus is using the term "disciples" in a figurative or ideal sense

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64. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

65. Thayer, op. cit.

66. "Mit der Thronbesteigung des Messias sollen auch die Zwölfe, deren Zahl ganz fest ist, ohne Rücksicht auf Judas, an der Herrschaft teilnehmen; κρῖνόντες im weiteren Sinne "regieren," vgl. die κριταί der Richterzeit

□ 5 19 21 22 suferes der Karthager, ferner 1 Reg. 8,5f., Ps. Sal. 17,28 κρῖνόντες φουδὸς λαοῦ ἡγιασμένου Mt. 20,21; Lc. 22,30; Apoc. 20,4." Handbuch zum Neuen Testament Zweiter Band. Dr. Erich Klosterman und Lic. Walter Bauer. p. 289.

rather than in the literal sense. Therefore he is probably speaking of the disciples of all time and not of the twelve who were Jesus's disciples. Therefore, it would be proper to say that the twelve tribes also do not refer to the twelve tribes of Israel in the usual sense but rather to the believers of all time. This figurative interpretation would be in keeping with the figurative interpretation of the "twelve tribes" which is found in other sections of the New Testament, e.g. Rev. 21,12 <sup>67</sup>

Matt. 20, 21-23 also indicates that there will be a rank in heaven. Some commentaries seem to feel that Christ is here rebuking the disciples for asking a place of honor in heaven. However, upon closer examination of this passage, it becomes evident that Christ doesn't rebuke them for making this request. He does not even deny that there will be a difference of rank among the disciples when they reach heaven. However, he does point to the fact that it is not his part to decide who should come first or second; all of this will be taken care of by the Father. However, by predicting that they will drink of the cup from which he drank, He is at least implying that they will receive this reward of a place of distinction in heaven.

The New Testament also compares this heavenly reward to a treasure for those who have done good works out of

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67. "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."



love towards God. Four passages which speak of this treasure in heaven for those who have done good works are Mt. 5,10-12; Mt. 19,21; Luke 6,23 and Luke 12,33. Two of these passages refer to this treasure with the term *μισθός*. The other two use the term *θησαυρόν*. Mt. 5,12<sup>68</sup> is one of the passages which refers to this reward as a *μισθός*. The preceding section (3-10) shows that some of this reward will be given to the Christian already on this earth. V. 12, stresses the fact that they should rejoice and be glad, not because they enjoy the reward which God has already given them on this earth but rather because of the reward which they have in heaven, *ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*. The meaning of this whole passage is that everything which the Christian must suffer or everything which he does for the sake of his faith in Christ, is immediately registered in the consciousness of God who will reward the Christian in due time, from his ample treasury.<sup>69</sup> Zahn has a beautiful summary of this passage which shows the proper attitude of the Christian toward the message of this section. He says:

Die, welche in dieser Welt als Bettler, die nichts haben, vor ihrem Gott stehen und sich demütig vor ihm beugen, und diejenigen, welche während dieses Weltlaufs um ihrer Frömmigkeit willen verfolgt werden, sollen in dem kommenden Aeon nicht nur

68. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

69. Zahn, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 192.

alle Güter der zukünftigen Welt, nach der sie diesseits verlangt haben, besitzen und geniessen, sondern sollen auch an der königlichen Herrschaft Gottes über die Welt als Genossen seiner Herrschaft teilhaben.

Luke 6, 23 is a parallel passage and therefore expresses the same thought.

Both Mt. 19, 21 and Luke 12, 33 refer to this reward as a *θναυρος* in heaven. Both of these passages speak of a reward which is given to those who give financial aid to the poor. Mt. 19,21 <sup>70</sup> gives the answer of Jesus to the rich young man who loved his money more than he loved Christ. It is very difficult to determine the exact meaning of this passage. Most commentaries disagree in the interpretation which they give. Since it is not necessary for a Christian to sell all that he has and distribute it to the poor, before he can be saved, Jesus evidently didn't mean that this rich young man had to sell everything that he had before he could be saved. The point of this passage is that it is merely the climax of a series of tests which Jesus gave to the young man to prove that this young man was not morally good. Jesus wishes to use the Law as a school-master to show the young man that he is not morally good. Jesus begins this testing with the Second Table of the Law which for a self-righteous person, who seems to feel that he is able to keep the law, would appear relatively easy to keep. Then he limits himself to

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70. "Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

those commandments which present negative mandates which apparently pertain chiefly to outward acts. Then Jesus continues with the fourth command which presents a positive attitude of the mind rather than merely the outward act. However, the young man's pride was not pierced, and he answered that he had kept all of these. Jesus then touched his tender spot which was his love for his money. Jesus showed him that since he had such a great love for his money it was evident that he didn't have the true love to his fellowman and also that he did not place his desire for eternal life above his desire for money. The command to sell all applied to the young man only, but it was based on the universal requirement of unconditional self-denial and surrender of all for Christ's sake.

Luke 12,33 <sup>71</sup> also indicates that this reward which Christ promises for giving aid to the poor is not eternal life, because in the preceding verse he has already told them that the father was going to give them the kingdom. Now in v.33 he tells them that they should provide this special treasure for themselves. Thayer's translation of this *ποιήσατε ἑαυτοῖς* is "to acquire" or "to provide a thing for one's self." The point of this passage again is not that eternal life is given to those who distribute their goods to the poor. This eternal life is given to them through the faith which produces these good works

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71. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."

of distributing these goods to the poor. Without this saving faith, man could not be moved by his love towards God to distribute all his goods. However, to those who do distribute their earthly treasures to the poor here on earth, Christ promises a treasure in heaven which is much better because it is eternal and because it can not be destroyed or taken away from them.

... a number of points which were not covered in the previous section. Some of these points are quite similar to those discussed above but are still sufficiently different to warrant a special heading. This section, as the heading implies, deals more with the attitude of the person who does the good works than with the intrinsic value of the works themselves.

The general qualifications for the recipients of this reward of good works are that the person must be a believer in Christ because if he were not a believer in Christ, he could not perform good works out of love to God. Also, God never promises rewards to those who are not doing these works out of love to God, regardless of how good these works come to the world.

The necessity of being a Christian is emphasized by Matt. 5, 3-10. This passage shows the importance of being a Christian by the fact that no one could be persecuted for Christ's sake (Matt. 5, 11).

Matt. 5, 13-16 which follows shortly after the passage (Matt. 5, 3-12) which speaks about reward, gives certain

## Chapter IV

### Qualifications which the recipients of the reward must possess.

Under this heading will be included a number of points which were not covered in the previous sections. Some of these points are quite similar to those discussed above but are still sufficiently different to warrant a special heading. This section, as the heading implies, deals more with the attitude of the person who does the good works than with the intrinsic value of the works themselves.

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Matt. 5, 43-48 which follows shortly after the passage (Matt. 5, 3-12) which speaks about reward, gives certain

qualifications which a work must possess before it is eligible for a reward. It shows that the Christian's righteousness must be truly Christian, that is, it must flow from love to God and the neighbor and must therefore be above the righteousness of even the most civic-minded, well-behaved non-Christian. If it does not far exceed the righteousness which is generally classified as work righteousness, the Christian will not receive this reward from God.

Matt. 6, 1 -6 focuses the attention on the motive behind the works. It stresses the point that God is not especially concerned about the amount of charity which the person performs but that rather He is concerned about the motive behind the giving. The Pharisees and hypocrites probably gave all that they could spare. Occasionally this may have been a large amount. However, God did not count this for righteousness because of the fact that they were stimulated to giving not by love toward their fellow man but rather by love of the praise which they knew would be forthcoming from the people who observed them. This type of righteousness has no promise of reward attached to it.

Matt. 7, 21 uses the term *ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου* to describe the doing of this work. The present participle indicates that this doing of the will of God is a continual process which will be going on until

the Day of Judgement. If Matthew had used  $\delta$  ποιήσας, it would indicate that the works had to be finished at the time of Judgement when Christ would pass the final decision on man's life. The emphasis here is on the type of person. Not the outward acknowledgement of Christ but the performance of deeds in keeping with God's will is the important thing for Christians to observe. No reward is attached to mere religiosity or lip service. A genuine Christian love which motivates true good work is necessary.

Matt. 10, 41-42 points to a particular type of good work, namely something done to a prophet or to a righteous person. Here Christ tells his disciples that not every good deed which a person does out of love to a prophet or a righteous person will be counted for this reward. Rather, only those which are commanded by God and which are motivated by the correct attitude over against God, the prophet, and the righteous person. Naturally this could only apply to those who accept the word of the prophet and desire to share in the work of the righteous person. The  $\epsilon$ 's  $\delta$ ὶς ὅμοια as used here, presents the concept of identity. The prophet comes as a prophet, and the righteous person also comes as such; and each is received as such. This receiving, as it were, joins together the person receiving and the person received, and thus the former partakes of the blessing of the later.

Before leaving this section, we will examine a few of the other interpretations which have been advanced as to the type of reward which is promised to the Christians who perform good works. Some people feel that the "kingdom of God" which is promised as a reward in Matt. 5, 3& 10 is the same as the kingdom of God which Jesus and John spoke of at great length. However, since this is promised as a special reward to those who are poor in spirit and to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, it apparently is a different kingdom of God from that which is received by faith and by faith alone. Zahn says: 72

Dieser den ersten und den letzten Makarismus (v. 3 & 10) rechtfertigende Satz ist nicht eine Ankündigung der βασιλεία, wie sie 4, 17 nach ihrem wesentlichen Inhalt charakterisirt und 4, 23 als Gegenstand der Predigt Jesu in Galiläa genannt war, sondern setzt diese Predigt und deren Annahme sowohl nach seiten ihres verkündigenden als ihres gebietenden Inhalts voraus. Weder von der Nähe oder der baldigen Aufrichtung der vom Himmel stammenden Gottesherrschaft, noch von der νετάρωσις als der notwendigen Vorbedingung für die Teilnahme an der neuen Weltordnung ist hier die Rede.

Several arguments which could be mentioned in favor of Zahn's opinion is the fact that these people were already Christians and they had already inherited the kingdom of heaven through the baptism of repentance which John and Jesus preached. Only those who had accepted the preaching of John or of Christ and thereby entered the kingdom of God could meet the conditions mentioned here. Therefore it is evident that He is not speaking about the

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72. Zahn, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 191.



Kingdom of heaven which we enter through faith in Christ and through faith alone. Walther <sup>73</sup> agrees with the interpretation given by Zahn. He criticises the Pietists who make the conditions of the Beatitudes requisites for salvation. Walther points out that this would be impossible because a person must be a Christian before he could meet such conditions.

Some people feel that the sense of this reward is the fact that those who fulfill these conditions will receive the praise of men. However, this interpretation is shown to be false by the fact that Christ criticises this type of religion Mt. 6,1 when he tells the disciples that they should not do good works  $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \theta\epsilon\alpha\theta\eta\eta\upsilon\alpha\iota$ . The very fact that this theatrical type of religion is so popular is an indication of the fact that there must be some reward attached to it, but it is not the reward which is called  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\ \pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\rho}\iota$ . Therefore it is not the reward which Christ promises to his followers.

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73. C.F.W. Walther, Gesetz und Evangelium p. 88

## Chapter V

### Purpose of the Reward

Of course the general purpose of this reward is that God takes this means to show his grace to man. However, many of the passages in the New Testament indicate that God has special reasons for granting this reward to the Christians. From these passages, it is apparent that God offers this reward for two reasons. One is that he wishes to comfort the Christians in their suffering. Another reason is that He wishes to provide an additional stimulus or motive which will encourage man to do these good works which God wants him to do.

Luke 6, 23 shows that the promise of the reward should be a comfort to the Christians which will enable them to leap with joy when they are persecuted because of their Christianity. This is typical teaching of the New Testament showing that the rewards do have value as a means of encouraging and comforting the Christians in their sufferings.

John 4, 36 <sup>74</sup> shows that the fact that those who reap the spiritual harvest and bring the heathen to Christ will be the ones who will receive a reward. Zahn finds a

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<sup>74</sup>. "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

great deal of comfort for the Christian minister in this passage. He says, 75

Überall auch unter den Samaritern und selbst bei den Heiden finden sie viel vorbereitende Arbeit getan; nicht sie, sondern andere vor ihnen haben sie getan, und sie sind in deren Arbeit eingetreten. Das soll ihnen freudigen Mut geben, wenn sie zumal auf fremden Boden ihr Werk angreifen, und soll sie in der Demut erhalten, wenn sie rasche Erfolge erzielen."

1 Pet. 4,13 also emphasizes the fact that the Christians should rejoice when they suffer for Christ's sake. They should rejoice because they are assured that they will be partaker of Christ's glory. All of the other passages which deal with this subject of reward for suffering bring out the point that this reward is so great that the mere assurance of the fact that they will receive the reward should move them to rejoice even while they are being persecuted.

As far as the reward being a motivating force for good works is concerned, none of the passages explicitly states that the reward should be a motivating force for the Christian to do good works. However, many passages <sup>76</sup> give some indication that the reward should be an additional motivating force to do good works.

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75. "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

76. Some of these passages are:  
Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers to the prophets."

1 Pet. 4, 12-14 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

Matt. 5, 10-12 shows different ways in which this reward should be of value to the Christian in his sufferings. One is that others before them, whom they respect have borne these same sufferings and that therefore there is fellowship in suffering which should enable them to carry on in the face of difficulties. The second reason for joy as expressed in this passage is the fact that the prophets before them received a great reward and that the disciples too, will receive a great reward if they remain faithful in their sufferings.

Matt. 10, 41-42 points out that God will provide a reward for all of those who assist God's messengers in their work. The fact that God is concerned about them so much that he is willing to provide this reward is a comfort which will give the Christians additional courage in their trials and perplexities. In verse 15, Jesus had promised the disciples that those who would refuse to accept them would be punished. Now he looks at it from a different viewpoint and says that those who accept the prophets and aid them in their work will receive a special reward. The realization that God is providing the reward, is a comfort to these disciples who must go out into danger.

## Chapter VI

### Conclusion

Any discussion of a reward on the basis of the teaching of the Bible is faced with two difficulties. In the first place the Bible clearly teaches that salvation is not earned but is the gracious gift of God the Father, made possible by the suffering and death of God the Son on the cross for the sins of the human race. The only way in which the human race can profit from this gift is through faith which is worked by God the Holy Ghost. Therefore, any thought of an earned salvation has absolutely no place in the discussion.

The other difficulty is that even while speaking of rewards, the New Testament makes it clear that this reward is a reward of grace and not a reward of merit. Such a teaching is directly opposed to anything which we usually connect with the concept of reward. However, since the New Testament repeatedly stresses the fact that the reward is based on grace and not on merit, there can be no doubt that this is true.

On the other hand, the New Testament is equally clear and equally persistent in its teaching that there definitely is a reward for good works and for a Christian life. Since this reward cannot possibly refer to salvation and since it is not a reward of merit, it must

be a reward of grace based on God's promise to man.

God gives this reward to man both on earth and in heaven. This is very difficult to grasp with finite human reason. It is difficult to conceive of a special reward for the Christians here on earth because they are generally thought of as being poor and persecuted by the world. Still according to the passages listed above,<sup>77</sup> God clearly promises a reward here on earth to those who live a God-pleasing life. Even though human reason, based on human experience, argues against such a special reward on earth, still the New Testament definitely states God's promise of such a reward. The Christian harmonizes this intellectual difficulty by accepting God's promise by faith.

The reward in heaven presents similar difficulties. The question is asked, "Now can God give a special reward to those who do special good works or suffer special persecutions on account of their Christian religion when all Christians are promised that they shall have perfect joy when they enter eternal life? How can there be anything more joyful than a perfect joy? In this case, there is no difference in bliss. Each Christian will have perfect bliss, but Christ states that there will be a difference in glory.

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77. Some of the things which these passages promise are personal satisfaction gained from the knowledge of having performed works pleasing to God. (Matt. 6, 1-6). Another reward is the satisfaction which a Christian receives when he knows that he is improving in righteousness. A long life on this earth is promised to those who show the proper love to their parents.

The Christian accepts this because it is stated in God's Word even though he cannot understand it.

However, the purpose of the reward presents the most difficult problems. God frequently reminds the Christians that all of their good works must be motivated by a love towards God and to their fellowman. If the works are motivated by any form of personal glory which might be attached to certain good works, they are no longer good works and have no reward attached. On the other hand, God does not record truths in the Bible merely to satisfy man's intellectual curiosity. Since the New Testament clearly speaks of these rewards, there must be some purpose or reason why man should know about these rewards. This purpose, as given in the New Testament, is not that the reward should be the only stimulation to good works but rather that it should be an additional motivation besides the motivation which the Christian has because of his love to God. However, the chief purpose of the reward is to comfort man in his sufferings and in the difficulties which confront him in living a God-pleasing life. Therefore, the reward assures man that regardless of the difficulties which he must face, his reward will be so much greater that a comparison is impossible. Luther's statement as to the purpose of this reward could well serve as a fitting conclusion to this thesis on the concept of reward in the New Testament. He said, <sup>78</sup> "Durch die Worte

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78. Sämtliche Schriften St. Louis Edition, XVIII, 1810.

des Lohnes werden die Gottseligen gereizt, getröset und aufgerichtet zum Fortfahren, Beharren und Ueberwinden im Thun des Guten und Ertragen des Bösen."

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