

Reward of Grace

By Edgar T. Gieschen

Studying rewards is something like studying the arms of an octopus with each of his arms a different color—one has to study each arm to get the composite picture. I have only studied a few arms which seemed to me outstanding. Nevertheless, a number of facts have impressed themselves upon this essayist concerning our subject. The first is the Christ-centeredness of nearly every aspect of the subject. The second is the importance of studying contexts for proper understandings. The third is the judgment day emphasis for rewards. The fourth is the great goodness of the Lord. He even rewards the sparing of a bird's life. Deut. 22:6-7. It shall be well with such a person (יִטֵּב). God said that good word. Abraham's word to Sarai proposing a lie, that she be his "sister," is not so pure. Abraham gave as his reason "that it may be well with me," Gen. 12:13 (יִטֵּב). That's the difference between God and human nature.

Romans 4:4 reads: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Again, Romans 11:6 reads: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." With these two familiar passages which stress grace in mind, and recalling the importance of contexts for our study, a tightly laced rigid word study, to start out with, does not seem to fit the bill in the subject of rewards. The Apology does not permit itself to slip into that. It even ridicules what the adversaries can all spin out of one term reward. Nevertheless, since there appear to be about four, merging into three main ways of speaking with which we should be familiar in relation to our subject, we still in any case must be acquainted with the terms. These terms are used pregnantly and it would be a mistake to be abortive here. Let me therefore attempt an unusual type of

Term Orientation

For the purpose of term orientation, let me compose a sort of extended parable, or analogy. Mr. Abundantmercy, a very gracious man who has given each of us an estate of house and home, is speaking to us. This is my grace (חַסְדִּי, חֶסֶד, χάρις), he says, which has given you this estate, or inheritance (נַחֲלָה, κληρονομία). Note that term grace well, since you have asked me to speak on rewards. I have never used the expression "reward of grace" as such. In fact, I don't speak of rewards often, and only very infrequently do I bring the term grace into very close connection with reward.

But I do come before you (קִדְמִי) with blessings of goodness. (כִּי־תִקְדָּמְנוּ בְּרִכּוֹת טוֹבוֹ Ps. 21:3, Ps. 79:8). In the estate I have given you there is a garden where fruits (פְּרִי, καρποί) abound from my gift which indeed I sometimes use to bring you even more blessings (בְּרָכָה, εὐλογία), even as I said, or promised, they would (דְּבַר, ἐπαγγελίᾳ, 2 Cor. 11:20). For the sake of exactness, please do not confuse that word for promise with another term, Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον). I love to give additional gifts (נְתַתִּי, מַתָּה, אֶתְנֶנָּה, אֶתְנֶנָּה) which some call rewards even though others give gifts for evil purposes. In the estate I have given you, you sometimes help your neighbor, but he sets (שׁוּם), or some say, he rewards, evil under (תַּחַת), or instead of, your good. (Ps.109:5.) The blessings I give upon your fruits, however are very good.

The whole matter of which I have just spoken is terrific hireling's wages indeed (שְׂכָר, שְׂכָר), a truly wonderful bonanza (שְׂכָר). But that's the way I am. These blessings (שְׂכָר) were earned, by me. The doing (פְּעֻלָּה) or should I say the wages (פְּעֻלָּה) reflecting the doing (פְּעֻלָּה) were earned by myself. Remember Peulthai ("the wages of the Lord") the eighth son of Obededom? He was my gift to Obededom. "Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him," 1 Chronicles 26:5. My gifts, as they come to you are my blessings. I myself will continue to surprise you openly with such super wages (שְׂכָר) in the future, for I am the Highest (עֲלִיוֹן). How's that for a hireling's gift (μισθοποδοσία)? Yes; I will come again with my blessing (μισθός) to give forth (ἀποδίδωμι) to each as his work (ἔργον) is (ἔσται) just as I gave to Abraham his blessing of hireling's wages

(שָׂרָר). So remember this: every abiding work (ἔργον) done for me by my people will be given hireling’s wages (μισθός) but this is cause for happiness, not haughtiness, for I am not speaking of your earning salvation. The worker of inferior works in my estate is saved “so as by fire,”—by the skin of his teeth—he still has salvation, and that is the important thing.

I should also use another line of speech, which I sometimes use rather summarily. In my covenant of peace (שָׁלוֹם) which peace (εἰρήνη) surpasses all understanding. I will complete (שָׁלַם - Piel) all my pleasure toward you (in connection with Cyrus, type of Christ, Is. 44:28: וְכָל־הַפְּצֵי יְשָׁלַם) and I will render (שָׁלַם) double to you for or your suffering. Expect it in the future (שָׁלַם, Prov. 24:14). The price (מְחָרֵר) you pay is nothing at all. Remember, in my multiplied (πληθύνω) mercy I want your reward to be full (πλήρης). Epaphras has as his ultimate goal that Christians might be perfect, and complete in the will of God. (τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ, Col. 4: 12). Particularly would I, in not misleading you, point out that ἀνταπόδομα is the which the LXX uses for translating שָׁלַם. Concerning my use of complete, or secure (שָׁלַם) Mr. Delitsch has said that the picture of want and completion is common to every application of meaning.

To give these three ways (fruits, שָׂרָר, שָׁלַם) of speaking some coherence, recall Boaz’s words to Ruth, which wish the completing, or securing (שָׁלַם) of a work (פְּעֹלָה) and the giving (נָתַן) of a gratuitous premium (שָׂרָר) of completeness (שָׁלַם) out of a source of trust (הִסְתָּה - take refuge, trust) in a situation of reaping fruits. Ruth 2:12 KJV: “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

I haven’t spoken of a “reward” (גְּמוּלָה) in a stronger specific sense of the term yet, but I will give you that also for labours. How’s that for cherishing warmth, as the sun ripens fruit (Numbers 17:9), as a mother warms her child with benefits (Schultens in Gesenius). Note well that I will reward my Servant according to his righteousness. (Ps. 18:20-24, 2 Sam. 22:21-25.) In the matter of benefits, here it is true that one often reaps what another has sown. (Cf. Gesenius’ reference to מַעֲמָל, “the produce of labour” under גְּמוּלָה). Ecc. 2:19: “Yet shall he (the man after) have rule over all my labour wherein I have labored.” Psalm 105:44: “And they (Israel) inherited the labor of the people (heathen).” By the way, if another child is born to your wife, may I suggest his name be Gameliel (גַּמְלִיֵּאל, “benefit of God.”)? After all, I am he who give you this child. (Apparently this word, then, can be used in a very simple way, though in a pregnant way. Pieper translates this verb finely, I believe, in Isaiah 63:7 with a simple *An uns getan* and *angetan*.) Your soul blesses me for all my benefits, “rewards” (Ps. 103:2). Of course, you don’t want a reward (גְּמוּלָה) according to your iniquities (Ps. 103:10). Two proverbs may make clear my further use of this word. Proverbs 12:14: “A man shall be satisfied with good (טוֹב) by the fruit (מְפְרֵי) of his mouth; and the recompense (גְּמוּלָה) of a man’s hands shall be rendered (יִשָּׁר) unto him.” Proverbs 19:17: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given (גְּמֻלָּה, his reward) will he pay him again” (יִשָּׁרְלֹ - “secure for him”). In a sense then, let me say that “pregnancy” is a key to understanding the whole matter of reward giving toward the works of my people. I crown my own labours, not yours, as though your labours could come from nowhere and could earn of themselves a reward *de condigno*. As Mr. Feine suggests, when you’ve said “It is God who maketh us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” you’ve said it all. That passage thought of Phil. 2:13 is the very first Dr. Beck presents under “good works” in his book *Bible Truth*.

Now I realize that I am really speaking, as it were, to children (τέκνα, 2 Cor. 6:13) so let me likewise use other apparent strong terms, recompense (ἀντιμισθία) and reward (ἀνταπόδομα, Luke 14:12. Cf. Romans 11:9 with 11:6 and Ps. 69:21-23 and the Messianic implication of verse 21). (The real strength of these words seems to be in the prefix. Despite that prefix, because of the root of the words the terms in themselves are *vox media*.) Those who reject me will receive a reward (ἀνταπόδομα) all right, but your attitude must not be to seek to be rewarded back (ἀνταποδίδωμι) for your deeds. (ἀνταπόδομα is the Greek word which the LXX uses for both שָׁלַם and גְּמוּלָה). Do give a recompense (ἀντιμισθία, 2 Cor. 6:13) to those who have shown you

kindness. I will give a reward (ἀνταπόδομα) in connection with the resurrection of the just. Meanwhile rest (ἀναπαύω) in my security. In your giving ways, don't give forth (ἀποδίδωμι) in a recompense way of thinking and acting προ-...αντ-, Romans 11:33-35, 12:17). I will do the reward giving (ἀνταπόδοσις) in the inheritance I give.

It all leads us to judgment day, and perhaps the best way I might describe my just judgment (δικαιοκρισία) is to say it is the springboard or trigger switch by which I reveal my goodness and give rewards. Or, to use another picture, call this word a “funnel” word, presenting a cornucopia to my people.

Above all, you must not think of a reward or recompense of debt which you can pay off by your own power (τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα) in the matter of salvation (Ro. 4:4). Grace is grace, and works are works—do not void these terms of their meaning, or you are apt to be drawn into unbelief and a strict recompense to be received for yourselves (Ro. 11:9). Salvation is of grace, not of a quid pro quo (προ-...αντ-) dealing of man with God (Ro. 11:33-36).

There are other things I would like to make clear. There is much “rounded corners” defraud (בָּקָע) in the matter of rewards on man's part, though the true end (בָּקָע) will make it clear. A largess for my people (hb@fz : b ; ni) there will be, but you are not seeking this largess (הַבָּרָכָה). Don't think that I who am also the judge will take a bribe (דָּבָר) in any way, as others do. Sin pays wages (ὀψώνια) in a very simple and powerful way, but you will receive things to benefit and to be preserved (κομίζομαι) at the end of your pilgrimage.

I really would like to talk further, but I have only permitted myself a relatively infrequent use of those sometimes stronger “reward” terms for my people we have mentioned. Let me just say that I could talk also, in related ways to this subject, of the things of vengeance (בָּקָע, ἐκδίκησις), of visitation (בָּקָע, ἐπισκέπτομαι), of judging (בָּקָע, κρίνω), and of responsiveness, or balancing of the scales under my eye (ἄξιος). But enough. I am the Most High (יְיָ). Don't try to understand all. Salvation is of grace. I am the beginning, center, and end of history. (Romans 11:33-36.)

What can we say after touching upon what appear to be the chief ways of speaking concerning rewarding? Perhaps only something very general. I am convinced that rewards in the New Testament belong to those things which “accompany” salvation. Hebrews 6:9. I think this could serve us well in all instances if this is remembered. I say in the New Testament because much of the thrust of the Old Testament is toward Christ the reward earner, and that framework of reference is quite different from the New Testament, now that Christ has come. Even when speaking of eternal life as a reward (which it does only briefly, for it usually speaks of *rewards*) the *Apology* speaks to this effect: “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... p. 219b, lines 6-10. That is the unsimple, more involved “reward” framework of things which needs to be remembered.

If we would want to be more specific about it, and try to define “reward” already, the application of these manners of speakings falls in the New Testament most naturally to rewards, rather than reward (which term to eternal life the *Apology* does, however, grant). Omitting, rather than denying, that “granting”- and we can find justification for doing so in such passages as 1 Cor. 3: 15 and Rev. 14: 13 - we would have a definition something like the following. The “rewards” of Scripture for Christians are the gifts God gives upon the works of a Christian, which works are fruits of the Gospel, which Gospel is the expression of God's saving grace. It helps concerning our subject to distinguish four things: 1. Grace. 2. Gospel. 3. Fruits. 4. Gifts upon fruits. If we were to add something else, it would be our calling, or being brought to faith between 2 and 3. Number 4 is our subject, but the proper understanding is simply in the relationship of 4 to 3 and 2 and 1. In this case and context the works (fruits) of *justified* Christians who enjoy Christ as their *meritum* for salvation may be considered *meritoria* for other than salvation rewards. In the case of the *Apology*'s “granting” of the term reward to refer to heaven, Christ is the sole *meritum*, and remains so even if heaven is considered as something *added to* justification.

Or, to put it differently, if we would look for a *fundamentum dividendi* in the subject of rewards it might well be the *Apology*'s frequent statement: “*Without Christ there is no fulfilling of the law.*” It follows from this

and Scripture that Christ earns heaven alone since man is sinful. The fruits of the faith of a man in Christ indeed may be further blessed, rewarded with other than salvation rewards. The opposite is no quid pro quo earning of heaven by unbelievers, or for that matter, other than salvation rewards (in His Kingdom) either. The quid pro quo which such a person gets for sins is hell. Another way of saying the same thing is that God rewards, as Stoeckhardt frequently reminds us, “good things with good bad things with bad things.” The difference between good and bad is Christ (Mt. 7:17-20, 24 etc.).

Subject Orientation

Our subject has been studied before. A short but incisive article is found under *Lohn* in Meusel’s *Kirchliches Handlexicon*, and F. Pieper has a fine presentation in his *Dogmatics* under “Good Works”. In the periodicals, mention should be made of a work with a long and telling title characteristic of the subject: *Gehört die dem Gesetz bei der Gesetzgebung hinzugefügte Verheissung, dass Gott denen, die ihn lieben, das Halten seiner Gebote aus Barmherzigkeit belohnen wolle bis in das tausendste Glied, in das Gesetz oder in das Evangelium? Lehre und Wehre*, July-October, 1895.

And, of course, Article III of the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* has said much and said well under good works. Although much is pointed toward the Catholic error, yet it remains invaluable. For the purpose of studying “rewards,” perhaps the following subject index might be helpful:

- A. Works and rewards. 175a, 26 lines from bottom - 197b, middle.
- B. Works and the promise of forgiveness. 197b, middle - 203a, top.
- C. Works, forgiveness and grace 203a top - 217b bottom.
- D. Salvation and the term reward: 217b, bottom - 218b, 22 lines
- E. Rewards and grace. 218b, 22 lines from bot. - 227. (from bot.)

For the purpose of this study Kittel has been helpful, though there is much that is in error in his *Theological Dictionary*. A concordance such as Bagster’s to the LXX is a must. William Arndt’s remarks on Luke 6: 32-36 and 14: 1-34 in his commentary on Luke are valuable reading.

We might mention three typical studies. For an interesting detailed Catholic study, see *Die Frohbotschaft Jesu Über Lohn und Vollkommenheit. Zur Evangelischen Parabel Von Den Arbeitern Im Weinberg*. Mt 20:1-16. (von Dr. Karl Weiss. Muenster 1927.) Weiss does go into various interpretations and tries to establish the exact relationships of the thoughts of the sections Mt. 19:16-26 and 19:27-30 and 20:1-16. Although his work is provocative, it is not Gospel-based, quite in contrast to Luther as reviewed by Pieper in his *Dogmatics*.

In the Reformed tradition Floyd Filson has written *St. Paul’s Conception of Recompense*. (Cambridge, 1931.) By far the most interesting chapter is chapter eight. It is sad that Filson’s approaches are dominated by an antithesis of grace, on the one hand, and responsibility of man on the other. This dualism unfortunately is carried in a rationalistic way to false conclusions, and these in regard to salvation. The end effect is devastating: “On the judgment day, therefore only those whose lives deserve eternal life will be received into the kingdom. It is clear that the rare references to leniency or mercy are not expected to save great sinners. The recompense principle dominates at the judgment.” With such a misuse of his antithesis, which also is evident in chapter eight, Filson could not be expected, at the end of his book in Appendix II, to take kindly to Luther’s emphasis on God’s active grace alone in the matter of salvation.

To fill out the picture, one should take note of Wetter, *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus*. (1912.) Filson refers to Wetter quite frequently; to whom however this essayist has not had access. If we can believe Filson, and there would be considerable reason to doubt him, the tendency of this book is to diminish, or remove, the reality of “rewards” from the scene. Likewise, A. Ritschel, according to Feine. Let those beware who would jump to this conclusion. The *Apology* does go so far as to speak of works (fruits) as *meritoria* for

rewards. That is, among other things, reality language. Rewards exist. They are for real. Of course, the Apology speaks thus “in context” and thus will not permit a simplistic, mechanical understanding of this expression - a man under God without Christ understanding. e.g. p. 175b, lines 8 - 15.

When the English term reward is used, there often seems to exist the strictest type of law orientation out of which the malefactor spoke when he said: “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward (ἄξια) of our deeds.” Where there is law thinking, there is apt to be fearing, and admission of wrong doing. Indeed, the subject of rewards would be dismal if that were the end of the story. But the malefactor went on to speak of Jesus: “But this man hath done nothing amiss (out of place – ἄτοπον)” Luke 23:41. If there is going to be a discussion of reward giving in a happy sense, Jesus will have to occupy center place, and does in Scripture reward earning. Paul was considered a “god” when, after being bitten by a snake, no vengeance was exacted in that no harm (μηδὲν ἄτοπον) came to him, Acts 28:6. If there is to be a reward distribution, then the God-man Jesus must be the real *meritum* of that right, since all men like sheep have gone astray. That *meritum* to cover sins must always be there, even when the works (fruits) of Christians may be termed *meritoria* for rewards. The Apology says as much, e.g. p. 175b, lines 8-15.

In the New Testament, after the death and resurrection of Christ, the reward is “with” Jesus, and “his work,” prophecied in the Old Testament is behind him in a discussion of the reward distribution. This simply means the Gospel and the Christian’s inheritance in it, is already assumed. At Pentecost Jesus was declared both “Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. We may give this background as in Acts 17:31 “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” God ordained a man for judgement day, Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus shows it.

The Gospel, we note, satisfied the strict righteousness of God, and forgiveness is complete, 1 Peter 3:18 (δικαίος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων), Gal. 3:13, Hebrews 10:10.

This Gospel is the Gospel of grace. Grace is the main message of the Jesus Book, the Bible, and leads us to the apocalypse of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:10-13. In speaking of this grace of God, Charles Ryrie points out that its ramifications extend into eternity, as it shines forth, for example, in the Davidic covenant. In Pauline literature, he notes that every Pauline epistle opens *and closes* with a mention of grace, pointing out the unusual nature of this, for the usual closing greeting was, he claims, *errosthai*. That has to tell us the ramifications of the teachings of grace are great. 1 Peter 1:13: “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” That revelation of Jesus Christ is the main point of departure, in thought, at least, if not in time, for the giving of rewards in the New Testament. Studying our subject in the New Testament perspective means, among other things, to look at it from the pinnacle of the apocalypse of Jesus.

There is a connection, in common language between the straight norm of Justice (δικη) and reward (μισθός). It is the truism we even have in English in “just reward.” In Hebrews 2:2 we have “just reward” (ἐνδικον μισθαποδοσία) in reference to what the ungodly receive. In the LXX, payment (רָכַץ) is unfairly reduced (ἀπαδικεῖν) Deut. 24:14. Kittel calls μισθὸς τῆς ἀδικίας a stereotyped expression, 2 Peter 2:13 (See Spittas in Kittel), Acts 1:18, Jd. 11.

The apocalypse of Jesus, the background of the relationship of “reward” terms to justice (δικη), the earliness of 2 Thessalonians, and the use of the word ἀνταποδοῦναι, plus the fullness of the passage, all seem to make 2 Thess. 1:1-12 the interesting place to start, even if part of verse 6 (δικαίον) has seen commentators looking at, back, and forward (εἴπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῶ ἀνταποδοῦναι...). The reader will recognize that there is a preference here for ἀνταπόδομα (cf. מְשָׁל, מְשָׁל) rather than the other manners of speaking, in regard to which approach to our subject is used. The most obvious of the reasons for this approach is that the essayist feels this word most closely resembles “reward” as we might have it in English. The reader will remember, however that with the choice of this avenue of study, no claim is made to have said it all. To put it differently, we are taking ἀνταπόδομα as our main river of thought, but this is not to say there are not other rivers. It’s easier to drive one car rather than three at a time.

That will lead us into two passages, 2 Thess. 1:6 and Romans 2:10, which are perhaps “heavier” than many. I believe these passages, together with Luke 14:14, to be mainstream and hence have not “dodged” them. It is good, however, to recall the issue of the *Apology* and even the manner in which the *Apology* stated the issue, very clearly, page 219a, line 11-17: “We do not contend concerning the term reward. We dispute concerning this matter, namely, whether good works are *of themselves* worthy of grace and of eternal life, or whether they please only on account of faith, which apprehends Christ as Mediator.” Later the *Apology* makes clear that this issue goes beyond the mere use of the *term* reward, p. 218 bottom: “If the adversaries will concede that we are accounted 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.” To fill out the picture, we should also hear of rewards, plural, p. 219b & 221a, top: “We also confess what we have often testified that although justification and eternal life pertain to faith, nevertheless good works merit other bodily and spiritual rewards...and it is merit, because they do these good works whom God has adopted as children and heirs.” In brief, then the *Apology* has given a clear brief statement of an issue, and clear positive statements concerning both reward and rewards, as the case may be. It is good to remember the *Apology*’s way of stating the issue it dealt with, in studying any Bible passage.

We cannot go into a detailed exegesis of 2 Thess. 1:1-12. Our interest is with rewarding (ἀνταποδοῦναι). Suffice it to say that “in connection with the apocalypse” is prominent and appears to be central here. In chapter 2:8 we are all familiar with how the Antichrist will be destroyed “at the brightness of His coming.” In chapter one, in connection with the apocalypse there will be a “just judgment,” (τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως) a “counted worthy,” and a rewarding.

At this apocalypse there is also a giving of justice (διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν) to the ungodly, and an admiration of Christ on the part of the believers. Perhaps the best grouping of verses 3 - 10 is 3-4 (ending with enduring), 5-8a (ending with flaming fire) and 8b-10 (ending with in that day). To get the general thrust of this section we turn to Luther. His expositions on this section are first rate, as usual. See St. L. XII 986 - 987. We only note a few general points here. After reading Luther, it is obvious: 1. Comfort is written all over this text for him. 2. The believer-unbeliever contrast at the apocalypse of Christ marks a deliverance at that time for the Christian in which he must rejoice. These two facts, plus the obvious glory of Christ at the apocalypse almost eclipse the “rewarding” of the Christian - subordinate it, if you will. By the time one gets to “rest” (ἀνεσιν, surcease Lenski) as the reward, one is apt to call it, a H. A. W. Meyer’s commentary does, “the negative aspect” of glory which Christians will receive in heaven. NEB translates “relief.” Perhaps Luther has pointed us to one of the biggest points concerning the study of rewards in Scripture’s presentation. It is salvation and comfort that Scripture is above all interested in. When we study rewards within Scripture we will need to remember not merely to keep contexts, but priorities in mind. There is a definite perspective in 1 Cor. 3:7-8. God is the important Being there, and yes, everyone will receive his reward “According to his own labour.” “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” In fact, it is just the outstanding facts of the comfort and deliverance of the Christian and the glory of Christ which, as in 2 Thessalonians, make a specific nailing down of the details of rewarding (ἀνταποδοῦναι) rather difficult, perhaps impossible.

We must tread carefully here. It is a reductionism to reduce this section of 2 Thessalonians to law entirely. We shall not be like those that answer back (judge in turn) to God (ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ, Ro. 9:20). The whole section of 2 Thessalonians in general focuses on Jesus and judging, and there is an “answer in turn” on His part to the situation of the ungodly now persecuting the Christian (ἀνταποκρίνομαι). Although this word is not used in 2 Thessalonians yet this answer-judging is a good word to characterize the general thrust of this section (Cf. Luke 14:6 & Job 32:12). It recalls Isaiah 63:4. The day of recompense (מִקְוָה) is also the day of the great Redeemer: “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart and the year of my redeemed is come.” Again,

Isaiah 35:4: “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.”

Specifically, if the rewarding seem rather open-ended, one thrust, however, the usage in the Old Testament and LXX make clear here: Just rewarding is “good things with good things, bad things with bad things” (Note: τοῖς θλιβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν). Stoeckhardt understands this Hebrew and LXX way of speaking well. In his commentary on Romans he makes reference to 2 Thess.1:6 in this vein. Specifically, Stoeckhardt seems to hit the nail on the head in regard to verse six. Lenski speaks also in regard to verse six in the more general vein of Is. 63:4.

To fill out the picture here, we should mention it is of course possible to connect δίκαιον...ἀνταποδοῦναι with καταξιοθῆναι as D. Pentecost does. This word does directly reflect grace, “counted worthy,” but the Old Testament background usage and LXX usage, I believe, does not favor this. (A study of ἀνταπόδομα from Bagster’s LXX concordance does, I think, lead one to think of Stoeckhardt’s “good things with good things and bad things with bad things.”) One thing is sure, there was no first-giving by men which compelled God to strictly pay back in a legalistic way (Romans 11:35). The expression that Stoeckhardt uses which seems to go as far as we can go, once we have clearly established the fact of rewarding, in regard to the details, is that rewarding will be “*in freiem Ermessen des Richters.*” (In the free measure of the judge.)

It all causes us to rejoice for the grace of God behind it all, somewhere. (cf. vs. 2 & 12) 1 Thess. 3:9: “For what thanks can we render to God again (τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι) for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.” How far we may advance this grace right up to the ἀνταποδοῦναι of 2 Thess. 1:6 is a good question. Certainly ἀνταποδοῦναι is reflective of grace. Whether it *directly* reflects grace is the specific question. In thought, it is on the other side of the judgment; we usually think of that as being in glory.

Concerning the connection of grace with verse 6, Lenski definitely makes it, correctly, I believe, through verses 11 and 12. “ἀξίωση harks back as far as καταξιοθῆναι in verse 5 (and the author of this paper would say through that word in εἰς τὸ καταξιοθῆναι back to δικαιοκρισία) so that we need not hesitate in regard to making the relative (εἰς ὃ) refer to all of v. 5-10 and need not confine it to what v.10 states.” Again, Lenski’s general thrust in a later comment is worth noting: “It is proper to stress the power of grace in the fulfillment of...our work and to stress the undeserved favor of God (χάρις) in the reciprocal glorification as the purpose of that fulfillment.” In other words, Paul in 2 Thessalonians seems to carry out one step further his subject of 1 Cor. 15: 10 “And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” With that, the general posture of this paper is established. “Reward of grace” is not generically or categorically incorrect, just a *curt condensation* to say something it took Paul twelve verses to say, or at least to encompass or “couch” properly.

With verse six of II Thessalonians 1 (εἶπερ δίκαιον...ἀνταποδοῦναι) in mind, we might compare the very similar Romans 2:5ff. and the just judgment (δικαιοκρισίας) of God there. That is one word for the two words in Thess. (τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως) but Thess. does follow up with the δίκαιον ἀνταποδοῦναι. The just judgment is very close to occupying the place in Romans which τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως, the similar expression does in Thessalonians. The well attested καὶ reading in Romans 2:5, linking ὀργῆς and ἀποκαλύψεως to δικαιοκρισίας is very appealing. “Wrath and apocalypse and just judgment.” The variant ἀνταποδόσεως (!) for ἀποκαλύψεως is not that well attested, though it is certainly instructive that this variant exists. People were aware of ἀνταποδοῦναι in connection with the apocalypse of Christ. In verse 8 we have those that obey iniquity (τῇ ἀδικίᾳ). Also, to be noted here is verse 11: “There is no respecter of persons with God” - almost a virtual paraphrase, says Lenski, of δικαιοκρισίας. δικαιοκρισία is basic for a study of rewards. Apparently behind this word as background is Gospel (Romans 1:17) and goodness (2:4), after this word is the rewarding to the fruits (works) of Christians the big rewards: “Glory honor peace.” Filson calls these the “privileges” of eternal life. To the Gospel-less doer of evil, indignation of wrath, the full cup of eternal destruction. (2 Thess.) Lenski gives a very broad encompassing interpretation for δικαιοκρισίας here. That may be correct. It may also suggest the Thessalonians passage is more explicit with εἶπερ δίκαιον...ἀνταποδοῦναι following τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως.

Concerning the great gifts Filson quotes Heinrici on 2 Cor. 4:17: “*Die δόξα ist also Vergeltung für die θλίψις gedacht.*” Lenski says concerning glory here: “Glory consists in the heavenly attributes that are on the last day bestowed on the godly as a personal possession of both body and soul, this glory shining forth in heavenly radiance.” Also see Pieper on Isaiah 62:11 later in this paper.

We have already noted the fact of the Gospel (δικαίος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, 1 Peter 3:18). That is the grace of God. (1 Peter 1:10) Having noted this we no longer have to consider the “wrath” of the tremendous trio of “wrath and apocalypse and just judgment” of Romans 2. Our calling unto eternal glory is of grace also (2 Peter 5:10). In view of this, the “recompensing at the resurrection of the just” of Luke 14:14 does not sound strange at all. Luke 14:14: “For thou shalt be recompensed (ἀνταποδοθήσεται γάρ σοι) at (in connection with) the resurrection (τῆ ἀναστάσει) of the just (τῶν δικαίων).” This passage seems to stand out as characteristic of the New Testament’s strong but not exclusive emphasis of the “in heaven” aspect of the Lord’s rewarding of his people. Only a believer receives these rewards, Mt. 10:41: “And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward” (δικαίος three times). Mt. 16:27: “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.” That is apocalypse and just judgment, or resurrection and recompense. (Note also here 1 Cor. 3:3-13 for judgment day emphasis as well as 2 Cor. 5:9-10. Cf. Mt. 19:28-29.)

There is more than a double benefit when Floyd Filson speaks of the dynamic duo of resurrection and recompense or of apocalypse and just judgment, if you will, in connection with 1 Cor. 15: 32 and 34, for it leads us to think of one of the basic attitudes of the Christian who realizes the surpassing grace of God, -one of awakening to a battle against sin. “It is the thought of future privilege and reward which sustains Paul and which is regarded by him as a strong prop of morality (1 Cor. 15:32f.)...Let a man lose the faith in resurrection and recompense to come, and the way to sin is wide open: that this is Paul’s idea is clear from v. 34 -*eknepsate*, etc..The benefit (*ophelos*) of reward which he expected for dangers undergone was to be received in the future.” While some of Filson’s choice of words might not be the happiest, yet note well that in a resurrection context, Paul speaks of his benefit: “If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die ... Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” Also note that the salvation-given Christian begins to “wake up righteously” - begins, but only begins, to think in terms of God’s holy will, rather than selfish sinfulness or the way of evil buddies. It is a hot air balloon which would let Paul think of an immediate citation, a golden plaque on his living room wall with pictures of himself victorious over “beasts” as his reward. A recompense orientation is inevitably coupled, in one way or another, with the more important resurrection orientation. I believe 1 Cor. 15:32-34 has a message for our day: thankfulness, stewardship of the heart to the will of God. (Monetary stewardship will follow in that context, if it must be mentioned.) The basic attitude of Christians here is: But now is Christ arisen! God help us, then, to wake up righteously, and sin no more. A second thrust is missionary, with eternal joy in heaven in mind. The similar pattern of grace and living righteously is found in Titus 2:11-14 in, however, a non-reward context (Cf. Hebrews 11:25-26).

We quote more from Filson to capture the New Testament emphasis we have been talking about: “The scarcity of references to immediate visible reward, however should be emphasized. This phase of recompense cannot have bulked large in Paul’s mind since it was axiomatic for him that the Christian life was one inevitably connected with hardship and suffering. (Ro. 8:17). To be sure, God always gives consolation and comfort to those who undergo such hardship. Where sufferings abound, His consolation also abounds. (2 Cor. 1:3ff). To some extent, then, it is clear that the afflicted Christian receives a present compensation of a spiritual nature. This is a higher viewpoint and one more capable of general application than the thought of outward, material reward, for in Paul’s day as in every age there was no correspondence between material prosperity and spiritual merit, but it can always be maintained that hardship endured in God’s service brings its inner satisfactions and compensations.”

Still in the vein of thinking basics Filson says: “An incidental reference to 1 Th. 2:19f. has been made but the verses deserve emphasis. They do not refer primarily to present honor and joy which Paul derives from

the Christian church at Thessalonica. As is shown by the phrase *emprosthēn... parousia* in v. 19, he means that the Thessalonian Christians will be his hope and Joy and crown of boasting at the return of the Lord. His present joy in their Christian standing is *subordinate in thought* to the hope they give him as he faces the test of the last day, to the expectation of the joy and crown of boasting that they will bring him when men's records are examined." That is beautiful pastoral perspective.

It is, however, in regard to judgment day itself that Filson falls into the very trap of transferring merit of man to justification which the apology warns against: "Only those whose lives deserve eternal life will be received into the kingdom... It is clear that the rare reference to leniency or mercy are not expected to save great sinners. The recompense principle dominates at the judgment." The Apology is resurrection and recompense, or apocalypse and just judgment. Filson is synergism in regard to salvation itself. We should not pass by the error of Filson too quickly—not only because of its gravity. The judgment day setting or springboard of much of reward thinking makes this rationalistic trap extremely easy to jump into. When reward is heard as a term, the Gospel, as the Apology reminds us, is apt to be forgotten; and zingo, the jump may be taken into a simple quid pro quo, works being rewarded with (earning) heaven. Filson himself is too sophisticated to jump thus in a simple way but his "recompense predominates" synergism is just as bad. The making of this error is something like standing before a swimming pool and wanting quickly to jump in. Better to know there is water in the pool. Salvation is no quid pro quo earning on man's part. There is no water in the pool, and the bottom is hard.

Nor is the trap of Filson isolated. It is basically a trap of mixing, in a supposed essential way, law and Gospel. This type of thing is common in Reformed writings in the expression "sovereign grace." Charles Ryrie's book *The Grace of God* is an example of how this expression leads into troubles, such as "grace under law," grace "mixed with" law, faith as the responsibility of man after grace, grace no longer the cause of faith, etc. It is regrettable that this expression has found more and more acceptance among Lutherans the last decades. This reviewer can still recall the venerable Prof. Meyer stating clearly that "sovereign grace" is really a contradiction in terms. I suppose sometimes it may be used without harm in a loose way, the grace of the Lord who rules almighty in the vein of "The Lord reigneth" of Psalm 93 and 99, etc. One fears that nine times out of ten the expression is not being used advisedly, mixing the teachings of law and Gospel. Sovereign grace does not separate, essentially, law from Gospel, recompense from resurrection. For a case with which one is hard put to find fault, see Pieper on Isaiah 54:11, where he uses "sovereign" as synonym for majestic, and grace indeed as "cause" which condescends to help man. "*So laege hier in dem Grund von Sapphir die majestaetische, souveraene Gnade als Grund der Kirche.*"

If it is not to be denied that rewards are given here also on earth, the Apology also correctly reminds us that they may, in the heavenly Father's hands, be deferred, thereby underscoring Luke 14: 14 which we have cited not only as a fact, but as an interpretation principle as well. Discipleship does indeed have promise of this life and that which is to come. Luke 14:14: "For thou shalt be recompensed the resurrection of the just" remains the flagship in the fleet of reward boats in Scripture. Again, with these words in mind the ship of reward thinking is carried along by the breeze of God's goodness. Without these words the ship is sure to run the rocks of legalism and be destroyed. The parable of the pounds, Luke 19:11-27, and the parable of the talents, Mt. 25:14-30, uphold and unfold the perspective of Luke 14:14. It is indeed, a little difficult to become very concrete about rewards in heaven, not being there yet. In connection with 1 Cor. 3, Lenski points out that these two parables mentioned illustrate that "according to works" is not meant to be taken in an exact strict sense. The "rewards" are too great.

One definitely gets the impression the overwhelming usage of Scripture is with rewards rather than reward. Nevertheless, the Apology reminds us the issue it faced is one of substance rather than of terms. Let us briefly, then, in what could be called a digression, make a few remarks concerning heaven as reward. Again, this is a digression because when we grant, with the Apology, "heaven" as reward, we may in no way speak of the justified Christian's works as *meritoria* for heaven, as we may speak of the justified Christian's works as *meritoria* for other than salvation rewards. It is essential to remember that. We must, of course when we read Scripture, remember with Mt 25:31-46 that the Christian's works are signs of his faith, rather than violate the

sense of Romans 4:4 and Romans 11:6. It is imperative that we remember Mt. 25 as well as Luke 14:14 if we are not going to mix law and Gospel hopelessly, and that in regard to judgment day. Those that reduce pregnant ways of speaking down to stress heaven as “reward” in a supposed simple direct “reward” framework are apt sooner or later to forget God as the source of all good, and despite talk of not being “mechanical” about it, are apt to drop their guard and speak of man “deserving” and “earning” the reward, as Filson does in regard to Gal. 6:8. There is no contradiction between works as signs of faith of Mt. 25 and Luke 14:14. But there is a contradiction between when heaven per se is said to be “deserved” or “earned” with Romans 4:4 and Romans 11:6. Nor does referring to the “life-direction” of works help things if justification is not pleaded as our salvation, and that by grace alone. Indeed, works as signs as an interpretation principle is very familiar to us Lutherans. The only reason I mentioned Mt. 25 after Luke 14:14 in this paper is that rewards are my subject, rather than salvation by grace. There are few Bible passages which speaks of works and judgment day, it would seem which can not be understood quite readily if we remember Mt. 25 and Luke 14:14.

For an Old Testament passage somewhat similar to Mt. 25 see Genesis 22:1-18, esp. vs. 16-18, where God promises His huge blessing(s) upon the obedience of Abraham in regard to Isaac being sacrificed. This passage is found (advisedly for New Testament children?) under question 133 in our catechism: “What does God promise?” For more on this and similar passages, see the article with the long German “handle” we have referred to. While we are on the catechism, Luther’s well-known statement about Christ our reward in the preface is probably better in German since *Lohn* is apt to be less misleading than “reward,” and the Latin is very interesting: “*Christus ipse nobis satis ampla premia proposuit, si modo fideliter in eius vinea laboraverimus.*”

Paul Feine speaks of Romans 6:22 and Gal. 6:8 in a separate paragraph, more or less by themselves. Romans 6:22: “But no, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Gal. 6:8: “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” There is at least some reason to do this, since these passages perhaps are somewhat less formal than Mt. 25. The “end” of eternal life is hardly strict reward language, and must be traced back through faith of course. Lest we misunderstand Romans 6:22 Paul says in the following verse: “The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Such passages as Romans 6:22 remind me of the end of a long train ride. The Gospel is the power that carried the train along. Heaven is the end of the line. We haven’t been such great passengers. Our works did not have enough power to pay the way. It was a ride carried along by the grace of God through the Gospel. Our works were like the waving of hands through the window to a person watching - they were evidences only that we were on the train, not that we had paid the way. In Gal. 6:8, among other things, there is the test of genuineness of faith. True faith sows to the Spirit; “God is not mocked.” The *Apology* often reminds us that the Lord speaks of fruits and works to test the genuineness of faith. Here also, a *simple* “earn heaven” framework denies the pregnancy of “reap” as well as the fact of Gal. 6:14: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is misleading to make a pregnant way of speaking become hard and crisp and legalistic contrary to the facts of Romans 4:4 and 11:6. Salvation is by the sweet grace of God alone.

The *Apology* frequently reminds us the reward is given for the sake of the promise. If in the letter to the Hebrews (10:34-36 and 11:25-26) the author would seem to speak of heaven in a close, apparently synonymous way with reward (μισθαποδοσία), it would be with the word “promise” in close context (See 10:23, 10:36, 11:11, 11:13, 11:40). That word is most significant. It should be mentioned that not every commentator undoubtedly will find himself compelled to equate reward here with heaven. (More on these passages later.) So much for heaven per se. We have by no means been exhaustive here in this digression. We see no need to be. The *Apology* has stated the issue clearly.

We return to resurrection and recompense. When it come right down to which is more important, matters of salvation, or matters of rewards for the Christian, there is no contest. First things first. 1 Cor. 3:15: “If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss., but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

And, for that matter, second things second. Revelation 14:13: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

Thus perspective is very important in the larger scene of things. Perhaps a comparison is appropriate here. Studying rewards is some thing like looking at one of those unusual bikes which you may have seen. The bike has one big wheel (salvation) which for the lack of visibility lustre we shall say is not apt to appear so brilliantly colored and the bike has one of those very small wheels, a trailer wheel, if you will (rewards), but which appears, because of our flesh, in “here and now reward red.” Yet to ride this bike properly one rides on the big wheel; and the other wheel comes along. But sinners because of their flesh and the visible appeal of the brilliance of the second wheel, are quickly tempted to ride the smaller wheel. This fails miserably, since their lives are not perfect, and only in sinlessness could the bike be ridden that way, the ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν be given. Obviously God is interested in having us ride the big riding wheel, salvation by grace. The other wheel of rewards will then follow. “Their works do follow them.”

Ryrie tells of the basketball team leading in the final minutes of the game and stalling to keep their lead. But during these last few moments a team member took a senseless shot. Then asked why he had done this, the coach explained the player was a “glory hound.” He had endangered severely his team’s chances of winning the game. It may be that way with too much talk of rewards. With good intentions, without trying to do evil, we may nevertheless be teaching glory hounding, rather than comforting souls. To capture more of this vein of thinking, read Luther as summarized by Pieper in his *Dogmatics*. Luther says in effect, teach rewards as signs for the common people that they are Christians and may thus be *comforted*.

I am sure nearly all of us have heard something like this in a conversation. Parishioner: “What about rewards?” Pastor: “Never mind, be clear on salvation. As for rewards, you’ll get yours. Don’t worry about it.” We should not be too quick to condemn that pastor for not getting into various details too quickly - he had the basic Scriptural perspective. If we go on to teach the details of rewarding, the same salvation that is the primary perspective must be kept. The apostles did not mention rewards in their sermon on Pentecost. In the matter of rewards also, Christ must have the preeminence. Col. 1:18: “*That in all things he might have the preeminence.*” The *Apology* p. 179a, middle: “*Thus the human mind always exalts works too highly, and puts them in the wrong place.*”

Rewards come from Jesus the Righteous and the Gracious. What about rewards and grace, then? It is an outstanding fact that the expression “reward of grace” is *not* found *as such*, to my knowledge, in Scripture. This perhaps suggests the question could probably be phrased better. What action does the grace of God which gave us the salvation-bringing Gospel which brings forth fruits finally lead to? Answer: rewarding. Or, going backwards: To what may we trace the just rewarding of the Christian according to his works? Answer: The rewarding according to works must be considered as coming out of fruits, which the works of Christians are, these fruits being of the Gospel, this Gospel of pure grace alone. In Proverbs 17:8 it is reported that the “stone of grace (ןן) is the reward (דן) for him who has it” but reward (דן) seems to be used there in the customary sense of bribe. The LXX reports for this passage that “benefit of graces” (μισθὸς χαρίτων) is the education of the person using it (Christian wisdom). Grace and “rewarding” are found very close together a few times: Jer. 32:18-19ff. (דן and דן), Psalm 62:12 (דן), Isaiah 63:7-8 (דן), 1 Cor. 3:10 (μισθός). We have already mentioned 1 Thess. 2:1-12 (ἀνταπόδομα). Special note needs to be made of Luke 6:32-25 as well as Romans 4:4. Thus there are rewards of grace, rather than something flat earned, but Scripture’s way of telling about rewards safeguards the doctrine of salvation by grace, and the terms of grace, and leaves no room for any thought of man earning his rewards (in a good sense) in a simple *opera operata* way.

It is probably noteworthy that apparently the strongest of these Old Testament terms (דן) is used in Isaiah 63:7-8 at the beginning of the section 63:7-17 immediately after the presentation of the unique Wine-press Treader, our Savior who trod the wine press of God’s vengeance for us alone (Is. 63:1-6). Isaiah 63:7-8: “I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them

according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Savior.” A. Pieper’s remarks on these verses are simply excellent (pp. 609-610). It is here that the noble works of Christians as a *sine qua non* for the term *Gimul* cannot be readily illustrated, although it is possible to see them in the verse. God’s goodness overflows - and that to His people, for His name’s sake and for the glory of His name. Pieper translates verse 7: “*Des Herrn Gnadentaten will ich preisen, des Herren Ruhmestaten, Nach allem, was der Herr an uns getan. Sowie des Guten Uebermasz am Hause Israels, Das er nach seiner Brunst und Gnadenfuelle ihnen angetan.*” This verse could be a stronghold for anyone wishing to speak of “reward of grace” as to terminology. Yet 1) *Gamal* is used as a verb. 2) *Gamal* seems to be used very simply, though pregnantly, of God’s “benefiting” or acting toward his people (“*an uns getan.*” “*angetan.*”). 3) No deeds of Christians are patently present, which is almost certainly implied in the English term reward. I prefer to think of this verse with Pieper as describing “*die Ruhmestaten des Herrn.*” The absolute “*couching*” of *Gimul* in grace alone, however, cannot be denied and should not be forgotten. There is a beautiful chiasm of the words *chesed* and *gamal* in this verse. Read Pieper’s explanation of this verse!

Psalm 62:12: “Also unto thee O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.”

Jeremiah 32:18-19 undoubtedly recalls Exodus 20:6 and a host of further passages where the terminology of rewarding of grace is not specifically used, but the substance is there: Exodus 20:6 and Deut. 5:10 (doing mercy), Exodus 34:1-10 and Deut. 10:1- 22 (keeping mercy). In regard to Deut. 5:10 and doing mercy, it should of course, be noted that this expression is not restricted in use to a context following obedience of commandments. In connection with Exodus 34:10 it is good to note the “rest and presence” of the Lord in Ex. 33:14. Note in Deut. 10:14 and 17 the Lord does not “take reward.” To say that man earns, forces, or pays for, or pays off the favor of God for rewards is not only far too simple a picture, it is wrong. The Song of Moses speaks of vengeance and recompense in Deut. 32:35-43, and this song does end with a note of the Lord’s mercy to the Lord’s people (not however, *chesed* in this instance). Jeremiah 32:18-19: “Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: The Great, The Mighty God, The Lord of hosts, is his name; great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”

In 1 Cor. 3:10 Paul at least traces his labours to grace in the midst of reward instruction. The thought that the reward would be anything but of grace would be impossible here. In short, the God of grace is the source and background and forefront of rewards all right, but “giving” is one preferred way of speaking: “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth,” Rev. 11:18.

One surely should also note that in Luke 6:32-35 the word “benefit” is *charis* in the Greek language. “Benefit” may be a proper translation but that objective use of *charis* still has the background of *charis* as grace, This is a fairly common thing in the history of the usage of “grace.” This passage makes it difficult to criticize the “grace” part of the phrase “reward of grace.” We are on much safer ground in critically looking at the term “reward” as used with “reward of grace.” F. Pieper rightly recalls that grace is the only thing that counts in God’s kingdom.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, Romans 4:4 should always be before us. The way this passage starts out is probably both unique and impressive, “for the one working for himself.” The term of *misthos* is here, I believe, clearly *vox media*, and we are left with two ways of thinking, one clearly condemned by Paul and the other affirmed. Again that *misthos* of necessity be considered equivalent to “heaven” this interpreter does not find mandatory. Lenski’s tracing of the thought train of verse 4 and 5 seems to be correct. In verse four merely a principle, in verse five, the blessed reality. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of

grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,” Romans 4:4-5.

“There is fruit...there is God,” Ps. 58:10-11. The way to express the Lord’s blessings to the Lord’s people having salvation is not usually that of works and reward language but of fruit language. Not all fruit language is reward language, of course. Also fruits is so fitting a description for the effects of the Gospel that heaven as the end subject in a series of events hardly even raises the thought of work righteousness to anyone (Cf. Romans 6:22, Gal. 6:8). In fruit language, we all realize that usually the fruits are mentioned, and the train of thought is not carried further. The difference between this and the other ways of speaking seems to be that the other ways of speaking have a measure of *apparent* law orientation. In fruit language the thought hardly suggests itself. Ps. 58:11 is very interesting here, fruit apparently being in usage equal to “reward”: “So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward (fruit) for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.” Jer. 17:10: “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” The fact that fruit (פֶּרִי) is used 113 times in the Old Testament and fruit (καρπός) is used 66 times in the New Testament speaks for itself. Of course, only a Christian can bring forth good fruit, Mt. 7:17, Jh. 15:4. The thought goes as deep as the cross. Jesus’ death is the cause of all fruits, Jh. 12:23-24. Jeremiah 32:18-19, which we have quoted characteristically, makes the transition from blessings upon fruits to rewards upon deeds very smooth indeed. Deut. 9:10: “Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.” We should not miss the “blessing” background in the original (ἐπ’ εὐλογίας) in the word “bountifully” in 2 Cor. 9:6 either: “And he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Also very interesting is Phil. 19:22: “But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not.” One has to read all of verses 19-26 to get the fuller picture.

It is to the Lord’s people, then, to whom the rewards of giving are given toward their fruits, or works of thankfulness. It perhaps clarifies to speak, then as Meusel does of the rewards of God’s *elective grace*, those given graciously to “his people” of Deut. 32:43 and a lot of other passages. This being the case, the importance of studying the larger contexts in all the more important. For example, Romans 11:33-36 is an enlightening framework of God’s workings centering in grace, and all of chapters 9 to 11 should be studied therewith, for example, Romans 9:6 and 9:11. We note that some covenant and dispensational Reformed theologians use the expression “elective grace” and related expressions in a way in which grace is something less than the source and cause of calling, etc., but we are using the expression in the Lutheran sense of grace as source and cause of our calling (See Ryrie, *The Grace of God*).

We have noted that the Lord’s blessing hand upon the Christian’s deeds is indeed bountiful, as recorded for example, in Lev. 26, Deut. 7, and Deut. 28. But for the true Christian, the Lord Himself is always far more a joy than lesser blessings He might give. The material blessings even in the Old Testament, before the reward earner had come into the flesh were not the important thing. The term which denotes the doing of things for material reward or happiness therein in a simple doing with that seeking in mind, is called *eudaemonism*, a term which deserves to be better known than at present. *Eudaemonism* (“good spiritism”) is the more respectable younger brother of hedonism except that its joy is in materialism and the seeking of materialism, rather than sensualism or aesthetics. We use it in the sense that Meusel does, a simple *do ut des*. (“I give that you give.”) The *eudaemonisms* of Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism are more involved and somewhat more subtle, but nevertheless similar. (See Kittel for a very brief digest.) Meusel reminds us that this is surely against the spirit of the Lord’s extra blessings. Lev. 26:11: “And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.” Psalm 4:8: “Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.” Ps. 63:4: “Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.” Ps. 76:4: “Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.” John 13:14: “If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” *Eudaemonism* is not only wrong, it is a simplification - there is not manifest thankfulness behind the deed and there is not the Lord before the deed

Who is being served, or the Lord's will being sought. Rather, a simple material or "good spirit" reward is sought and happiness is assumed to be therein.

Perhaps a leading, and certainly one of the most interesting passages of our topic is Gen. 15:1: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (שָׂכָר). The stock approach to this passage seems to be: "*Nun, Geliebte, es wuerde zu weit fuehren, hier auf naeher einzugehen,*" -R. Pieper. Certainly the setting is to be remembered. The promise of Gen. 12:1-5 already has been given, and in chapter 14 Abram has been blessed by Melchizedek, priest of the Most High. Abram tithes to Melchizedek, refuses to take from the King of Sodom the booty of war. A study of Hebrews 7 hardly permits us to forget this context. Also, Abram's reaction is to be noted: "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" hardly meant in a *eudaemonistic* way, but recalling the promise given by God earlier. In short, *sakar* is the general term for "blessing" gratuitously given upon the work of a man already called and given the promise. Hence I commend Taylor's translation in the Living Bible: "Afterwards Jehovah spoke to Abram in a vision, and this is what he told him: Don't be fearful Abram, for I will defend you. And I will give you great *blessings*."

That these blessings are of elective grace towards God's people, the use of this term in Isaiah makes quite evident, and in a beautiful way. Any thoughtful reading of such chapters as the following from Isaiah will bring this out clearly: 41, 43, 44, 48.

But somewhere these blessings have to be earned and it is Isaiah who indicates clearly that Christ earns them. He is the all important *meritum*. The wages (פְּעֻלָּה) of doing are thus used with the blessings (שָׂכָר). Although probably used in parallel in Isaiah 40: 9, 10 the blessings seem to be to the doings as the general to the specific, the effect to the cause. Reading August Pieper in his *Jesaiiah II* is an education in itself on these passages: Is. 40:10, 49:4, 61:8, 62:11.

In Meusel's account, it is regrettable that in speaking of the Old Testament reward (שָׂכָר), he does take note of (פְּעֻלָּה) the doing word used with it. With this omission, it is to be expected that the here and now rewarding in the Old Testament perhaps is inordinately stressed, rather than the coming of the reward earner, even though Meusel points out the error of *eudaemonism*. August Pieper grasps the bigness of what we are talking about far better when, for example, Pieper says that Isaiah 40:9-11 takes us back to verse 2: "They shall receive double from the Lord for suffering." Isaiah 40:10: "Behold his reward (שָׂכָר) is with him, and work before him" (Pieper: *Lohn und Erwerb*, Siegesbeute). Pieper goes on to say that this double reception is propounded in a far reaching way in the third part of the book, chapters 55-66. Every chapter treats of this in most different poetic pictures. The high points are 61, 62, 63. In 58:8 everything is thematically grasped together in the restitution, the leading of grace and the final full glorification of Israel, p. 38, bottom. Is. 59:8: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward (no relation to the term reward)." (See verse 7 for a reward framework of verse 8.) Undoubtedly *sakar* finds its broadest use in Isaiah.

That the Savior's work is with the Lord is very explicitly stated in Isaiah 49:4, the Savior's labour (פְּעֻלָּה) being parallel to his judgment or case (מִשְׁפָּט) with the Lord. Pieper gives the sense: "The fruit, or the success, of my work, stands with the Lord." The success of the Savior is overwhelming and for the Old Testament Christian His work is future. This is thus a very good passage to remember in connection with Isaiah 40:9-11. It is the work of the coming Savior which assured the reward. Isaiah 49:4: "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with the Lord."

The Lord promises to bless in His inheritance, *the work of His people, eternally* in Is 61:8: "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering: and I will direct (set, secure Pieper) *their work* in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." Pieper explains the sense, and I think correctly. After the Lord restores His people to His inheritance and gives double therein, His people will rejoice in this inheritance forever. Pieper points out the "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them" is the cause of the first part

of the sentence, “and I will direct...” “*Das u vor b’rith hat begruendete Bedeutung.*” That is Old Testament prophecy and leading into the New Testament “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

Pieper stresses in Is. 62:11 that it is the Savior’s reward and His work (“*sein Lohn, sein Entgelt*”) that is with the Lord. “Behold thy salvation (Savior) cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.” Pieper asks us to compare Isaiah 40:10 here and says the reward here is that which the Lord has taken from the enemies and gives to his people for their glory (*Verherrlichung*) (Cf. Romans 2:10).

A check of usage in other less central passages concerning *sakar* bears out the fact of the contrast between the High God who rewards and the low hireling, the literal meaning of the term being hireling’s wages, Ex. 12:45 tells us the hireling is not to eat of the Passover. The Most High God is also the God of warm love; in Lev. 25:39-46 the hireling servant was not to be ruled with vigor as a bondman might be. Deut. 15:18 is interesting if somewhat involved: the master is not to grieve much at the loss of a hireling who has labored well, -for he has indeed received double benefit -and the Lord will bless. There is here a double benefit through the labours of the hireling, and one is left suspended with the rather vague but yet definite: “The Lord will bless!” It ought further to be noted that the significance of the Highest as the bountiful giver is found in quite a few instances in Scripture, for example, Ps. 91. Job 14:3 and 14:6 are probably typical of the high and low situation. Job says in verse three: “And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?” In verse 6, Job asks why doesn’t God let man enjoy his days like the hireling - the hireling is glad to have a livelihood, and to be left alone, he is more than satisfied with that. “Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day.”

An interpretation of Gen. 15:1 then, might run like this: God says to Abram, “Abram, to you who are the child of promise and the child of my inheritance, I the Most High and Gracious Lord God Myself will be your super premium, and your continual giver. Upon your generous deeds I will shower blessings upon blessings for generations.” (A further exposition would reveal the avenue of making this possible, with the promising of Isaac, etc., verse 4.) There is, as it were, a super lifting of “hireling wages” to its highest level - to the Lord’s limitless giving. It seems to be clear the germ for the elaborate Isaiah passages is found already in Genesis 15:1 and 15:4.

The word which the LXX regularly translates blessings (שָׂכָר) with is *misthos* (μισθός), the New Testament word for hireling’s wages. The question here is, how much Old Testament background and flavor is included in the New Testament word (μισθός). My own conclusion is that the generality and gratuitous and hireling flavor is very prominent. Mt. 6:1-18 and 10:40-42 use *misthos* and the reward is to the Father’s children. Luke 6:35 (“hoping for nothing again”) really seems conclusive in linking the usage of *misthos* with *sakar*, as well as Luke 17:7-20 (“unprofitable servants”). I thus would agree with Meusel that John 17:1-5, the words of our Savior, then about to complete His work concerning His *giving* to His people is a key to understanding the distribution of rewards in the New Testament. With Meusel I would say that it is very helpful to keep this in mind when reading the parable of the pounds, Luke 19:11-27, and the parable of the talents, Mt. 25:14-30. That is just another way of saying that these two parables uphold and unfold the perspective of Luke 14:14. To really capture the significance of John 17:1-5 and giving in this situation read Mt. 20:1-16 in the fine-flavored translation of Taylor. We have already quoted Rev. 11:18. The simple phrasing “to give reward to his servants” is noteworthy. Rev. 22:10 certainly has a lot of Old Testament (in fulfillment) flavor: “And behold I come quickly, and my reward (μισθός) is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” A check of related words in the KJV will reveal more “hireling” flavor than we are at first apt to see: hired servant, hired house, hire, hireling. Actually, this root, then, is really quite a natural word for a neutralizing effect in a compound word, *antimisthia*.

The author to the Hebrews with his refined Greek uses *μισθαποδοσία*, which has to be a beautiful word, three times, in addition to the very basic use of this word in Hebrews 11:6. In 2:3 we have a ἔνδικον *μισθαποδοσίαν* used in a retributive sense for the ungodly. That labels this word, if we keep the good uses in mind, as a *vox media*, in itself, as a term. It is Hebrews 10:34-36 and 11:25-26 which are particularly interesting to our study. Certainly one is plunged into interpretation here, admittedly, but permit a few remarks. This reader

(and probably others), first of all, does not find it mandatory to take the word cited as “salvation” or “heaven.” Second, both uses of this word may have been suggested by “wealth” and in the previous verses. Thirdly, it is a fact that earthly wealth here means little to the writer in both cases. Fourthly, the despising of the opportune time for the enjoyment of sin is mentioned in the latter passage. Fifthly, it may be argued that “doing the will of God” (10:36) in the first passage may be directly connected with the boldness (*παρρησία*) (10:35) which has “great reward,” thereby emphasizing the constant “doing the will of God” as the New Testament does. Hebrews 10, 34-36: “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Hebrews 11:25-26: “(Moses) choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

Delitsch seems to be correct in saying the picture of want and completion is common to every application of meaning of the word “to be whole, complete,” (*חֲלֵץ*). Isaiah 60:20: “Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (*חֲלֵץ*-Qal.) We have already quoted Ps. 62:12 and Jer. 32:18-19. The structure of the last passage is interesting. First the use of complete (*חֲלֵץ*) in a vengeful sense, then a reference to the nature of God’s name, then the giving to men according to his way, which is used undoubtedly, in a blessing sense, as the following verses indicate. Somewhat similar is Ps. 91:8: “Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.” This is followed by a reference to the Most High in verse 9: “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.” What follows these verses is the security the Most High gives the Christian. Kittel does make some ties with the “full” family of words (*πληρής*) and the “end” family of words (*τέλος*), but the main linguistic point here is that for both *Gimul* and *Shilem* the LXX and generally the New Testament uses *antapodoma*. We are left after this brief approach to the subject of completeness with a humble thankfulness, not a greedy desire. Prov. 11:31 keeps us humble: “Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the sinner” (Cf. Ps. 31:23). For an extra-bible passage on *Shillem* and the Most High God, see *Wisdom of Solomon* 5:15-16.

It may be that first when we come to the word *Gimul* that we have something akin to “reward” as used in English often, that is, with a measure of *apparent* law orientation. Is. 66:6 is about as strong as you can get for the ungodly. One might debate concerning English usage of “reward” but one of the revealing things to me is that “reward” is stronger than “award.” Hebrew usage is noteworthy here, however, with “*cause to return*” (*הָשִׁיב גְמוּלָה*, Ps. 28: 4) for the retributive sense upon the ungodly. A second root found in Gesenius reflects cherishing and warming, leaving no doubt that God is the author and finisher of rewarding in the good sense. He rewards what really are His own works, crowns His own labors. Furthermore, the uses of this word in the Messianic prophecies of Ps. 18:21-24 and 2 Samuel 22:21-25 call for no further comment than to recall what the Apology loves to remind us of: Without Christ there is no fulfilling of the law.

In the New Testament, beside the Thessalonians passage and Luke 14: 14 the stronger (*ἀντ-*) reward patterns seem to be used often with attitudes in mind. Paul, in seeking a return for his kindness says he is speaking “as unto children,” 2 Cor. 6:13. Christians are urged to be benefactors with no return in mind (*ἀνταποδοῦναι*), Luke 14:12. Those who reject the grace of God in Christ are in danger of a strict recompense (*ἀνταπόδομα*), Romans 11:9. God will do the rewarding in the resurrection of the just, in contrast to those men who can not, Luke 14:14. It is this Lord who calls us to His heavenly feast.

In connection with attitudes, Meusel speaks of the Christian’s “quietude.” *Lohnsucht*, a simple working for mercenary wages (*ἐπιθειᾶ*) is condemned, Romans 2:8. The malefactor, without denying that the Lord could bless Paul’s works with many rewards of grace, was more than delighted with being a member of the Kingdom. He knew Christ was the only one who did nothing out of place, (*ἄτοπος*). An involved seeking of “extras” in a long discussion with Jesus would not only have been improper, it would have been beside the point. For the malefactor Christ was “bulking large.” In any reward discussion for any Christian in the confidence of faith he

has, doing the will of the Lord can be his only goal, Eph. 6:9-10. Hebr. 10:35-36, 2 Thess. 19:1-12. Any other motive misses the point that the great gift of salvation has been given to us by grace. The psalmist knew it well: "Whom have I in heaven but thee!" Ps. 73:25.

Whether fruit language, or hireling's blessing/doing language, or securing language, or reward according to uprightness language, showers of gifts without Christ are impossible. I suppose that Christ-centeredness endorses the tag "reward of grace" somewhat but the expression does little to point out the various specific relationships of concepts in the different manners of speaking. It is far too brief for that, and therein lies its inadequacy to tell the fuller story. Still it is true, one can not call it incorrect. The *Apology*: "In the teaching of rewards, *grace is set forth*," p.219b, 17.

Comments Concerning Usage

From the foregoing it should be obvious that I do not take exception to the concept *behind* the expression "reward of grace."

I would, I suspect, often question the appropriateness and accuracy of the use of the word "reward" as it might perhaps be used in every day language, as compared to Bible usage, especially in the activist and materialistic culture we live in. As a positive suggestion, "fruits," blessings, and completings are thought channels which might be used with better understanding and less misunderstanding.

I would, I suspect, often question the effect, either *eudaemonism* or work-righteousness, which a presentation might have, if the Bible concepts mentioned are not used in a Bible way, especially if the Gospel and the inheritance of the Lord's people and the larger perspective of the God of grace "before and after" are not specifically included or if the God-centeredness of God's world would be omitted, cf. Ps. 139:5. The trap which Filson falls into, a mechanical-rationalistic trap, stands as a stern warning to all, that work-righteousness is a real danger.

Because of an apparently too strong law orientation among some of the laity, I would urge, without trying to be facetious, a continued preaching centering in the forgiving grace in Christ. He must "bulk large." Among some of the laity a "ministry for wages" (a "professional" ministry) filled with all sorts of "now rewards" and *eudaemonistic* apples actually might be far easier and more highly valued by some than a salvation by grace ministry. The Lord warns us of a "vicious circle" which could exist and which really helps no one if that is the case (Cf. Zech. 11:4-17). In this context, it is difficult to be a "salvation by grace" preacher.

Wherein lies the specific danger of work-righteousness in using the expression "reward of grace?" It is a simplification. That word is used in the sense of condensation and in contrast to oversimplification. The larger, important-to-remember, primary interpretation principle of Luke 14:14 etc. simply does not shine through. It could mislead to a simple work-rewards view of things and from thence also to workrighteousness or salvation-earning by man's deeds. Also, in using the expression "reward of grace," a simplification, there is a real danger of voiding of terms. On the surface of things the expression does sound like a contradiction. This untrustworthiness of terms can only lead to confusion, and this lack of trustworthiness in terms could lead to synergism if Scripture is forgotten.

Wherein lies the specific danger of *eudaemonism*? Again, "reward of grace" is a simplification. It could lead to a simple "*do ut des*" attitude, or a somewhat more subtle good spirited man at the end of things. It could be acutely man-centered on both ends, man's earning and the reward deserved by man.

Let me illustrate. I believe a perhaps not too subtle *eudaemonism* as a product of today's materialistic and activist thinking has crept into several passages of *The Living Word*. Compare the simplistic spotlighting of "Pursue that reward!" in Hebr. 6:11-12 and 10:25 with the far better KJV. Since we have mentioned translations, at the risk of generalizing, I would even go so far as to say that the term "reward" in most instances, should be restricted to *gimul* and the *ant-* words. The other channels of thought can in most cases be rendered more appropriately with other words and ways.

What about the stewardship, or motivation, use of the expression? It must be in keeping with Scriptural usage. *Lohnsucht* is condemned, Romans 2:8. In practice, there may appear to be a fine line between that and the knowledge of the fact that God does and will bless with additional gifts, and there will be plenty of room for charity. Our thankful deeds should be done with God's will in heart and to His glory (Deut. 12:21, Col 3:17, Hebrews 11:25-26, 1 Cor. 9:5-11, 2 Cor. 9:5-10, etc.). Our appeals toward greater stewardship must be to the heart, never mere external pressure (Micah 6:6-8), nor a form of *eudaemonistic* glorying of man in man (Jer. 9:23-24).

Are there better ways of expressing what we mean by "reward of grace?" Probably. Rewards of promise, blessing, giving or elective grace are more accurate. But the answer to this question is largely absorbed in the longer answer to the next. Or, gifts following fruits, etc.

What must be remembered toward a proper usage? Above all *Romans 4:4 and Romans 11:6*. Also, such passages as Luke 14:14, Romans 11:9, 11:33-36, John 17:1-5, Mt. 20:1-16, Romans 8:28-38. Note verse 34 and its rejoicing in non-condemnation, Col. 1:18, Rev. 14:13, Rev. 22:12, etc.

Are there proper uses? Plenty. It may seem to some that I have been rather negative in my comments on usage until now, but the real dangers seem to warrant speaking of those dangers first. It is, however, the old case of the baby and the bath water. In this case the bath water is perhaps rather often apt to be dirty but don't throw out the baby (proper use) with the dirty water. From Scripture, the *Apology*, and Carpzov we might list the following salutary uses of the concept behind the expression "reward of grace":

1. Comfort for the simple. A Christian's works are signs of his faith, and an external witness of the Spirit.
2. To test the genuineness of faith, Rev 2:23, Jer 17:10.
3. Aid in cross bearing.
4. To indicate the value of works as things not forgotten by God.
5. To indicate the reality of God's blessings upon fruits of faith.

An off-shoot of the first use is the common "explanatory use" of pastor in their sermons when they come to reward, it is a "reward of grace" and further explanation is given. That explanation needs to be given, and given in a Scriptural manner. If anyone wishes to be brief about this subject, let it be in the vein of Isaiah 63:7: "Praise the Lord for His *Ruhmestaten!*"