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SERVICE AND REWARD.

ST. MATTHEW x. 41.

I KNOW not how it may have been with others, but, to me, this Verse was for many years more perplexing than many passages much more difficult and of far profounder meaning. But I must not assume either that many other readers of the New Testament find no perplexity, no difficulty, in it, or that they do. For it is not every man who has formed the habit of "breaking his mind" on every "craggy" Scripture he meets; and even those who have formed that habit, as surely every thoughtful commentator must have done, can hardly have been perplexed by this Verse, since in no commentary that I possess is there any solution of the difficulty I used to feel in it, nor even so much as any suspicion of a difficulty which needs solution. The best commentators, indeed, take the Verse in their easiest stride, and do not so much as pause at it; nay, seem quite unconscious of anything in it to give them pause.

And yet surely I cannot be mistaken in thinking that there is a very real difficulty in it, and a difficulty which will be felt and recognized the moment it is pointed out, if at least heart still answers to heart in man. The difficulty I used to feel in these words was the apparent *injustice* of them. To my mind it did not seem fair that there should be only one and the same reward for the prophet and the man who simply received a prophet, for the righteous man and those who simply received—*i. e.*, listened to and welcomed—a righteous man. It appeared to me that a man who, by studious cultivation of his spiritual

gifts and a growing fidelity to the Divine Voice within him, had become a prophet; a man, that is, who could both see and teach men to see the gradual evolution of a Divine significance and purpose in human life, and the great moral principles by which that evolution is controlled; a man who had discovered new truths, or new applications of familiar truths to the conditions and needs of the time in which he lived, was worthy of more honour and a greater reward than those who listened to his message with sympathy, and profited by the instruction he brought. And, still more, it appeared to me that a man who, by years of thought and endeavour, had originated a new and loftier ideal of righteousness, or had risen to the rare and difficult achievement of embodying an ideal righteousness in his daily life, might well look for ampler reward and higher distinction than those who simply admired his ideal or set themselves to copy his example. Do we not all admit that to have *discovered* truth, or to have *originated* purer manners and higher laws of life, sets a man apart from and above his fellows, gives him a claim, invests him with a worth, which they do not possess? Must we not all feel, then, a certain difficulty in a promise which reduces him to the level of his fellows, and confuses his reward with theirs? When, at least, that difficulty is once pointed out, must we not all recognize it, and confess that the Promise sounds inequitable and unjust?

The young are especially likely to recognize this difficulty, and to resent it. For in our earlier years we have a crave for justice, and are apt to be somewhat too rigorous in demanding that it be exact and full. Till a wider and painful experience has taught us how much we ourselves stand in need of mercy, how strangely good and evil are blended in our own nature and conduct, and what a poor figure we ourselves should present were a strict justice meted out to us, it is natural that we should be hard in our

judgments and rigorous in our demands. But even when the fire of youth has somewhat abated, we still crave to see justice done, though now we are thankful that "God makes allowance for us all;" we still resent open and manifold injustice; and even to us there does seem a manifest injustice in meting out one and the same reward to men of such different calibre and claims as the prophet and the righteous man, and those who only "receive" men so gifted and of such high desert.

My aim, then, will be to discharge all appearance of this hateful injustice from the Promise of our Lord, and to shew that under its apparent injustice there lies a most substantial and Divine justice. And there are two points—and only two, I think—which are essential to this vindication. (1) We must consider the claims of those who are here described as *receiving* men more gifted or more righteous than themselves. And (2) we must try to define the nature of the *reward* in which they are to share.

I. The world at large is, as a rule, too preoccupied with its own affairs and pursuits, too content with its own aims, or too set on its own views and methods, to listen to and welcome the prophets and righteous men who address it. And even the great bulk of those who constitute the Church are too busy in doing honour—in building sepulchres or raising monuments—to the great teachers and reformers of bygone ages, in enjoying the benefits they conferred or defending the liberties they won, to receive the new truths or the nobler ideals which the seers and saints of their own age urge upon them. Those who do receive a living prophet, therefore, simply because he *is* a prophet—*i.e.*, simply because he is a man versed in the moral principles by which human life is governed, and capable of applying them in new ways to the new needs of the time—must at least have some sympathy with his studies and conclusions; and those who receive a righteous man, simply because he

is a righteous man, must at least have some sympathy with righteousness, and some aspiration after it. In other words, they must have a keener eye for truth, and a prompter sympathy with noble and ennobling ideas, than most of their neighbours, whether in the Church or in the world at large. For the question here is not of the welcome we give to a man who is agreeable to us for his own sake, either because he teaches what we already believe, or because he holds up an ideal of human life which jumps with our inclinations or sanctions the habits we have formed. And, still less, is it a question of shewing our liking for a man commended to us by his personal qualities and charm, or of shewing our respect for him because he has been ordained our spiritual pastor and master by an authority to which we defer. The claim of the prophet on us is simply that he is a prophet, that he brings us some disclosure of the will of God which we feel to be true, however little we like it; and the claim of the righteous man is that he presents us with an ideal of conduct which we feel to be pure and fair and good, however far we ourselves fall short of it.

Nay, more, the implication of the Verse seems to be—its very construction suggests—that the man whom we receive is as yet an unrecognized prophet, or a man whose conception of right living is not yet admitted by the many; not a popular hero, acclaimed by the multitude, therefore, nor a popular teacher or preacher, followed by an admiring crowd; but a man whose wisdom it takes some wisdom to perceive, or whose goodness it takes some goodness to recognize and admire. And, on the other hand, it is not enough that men run after a teacher simply because he is a reputed heretic, because they love novelty, and he has a new theology or a new morality to offer them. *That* is not to receive a prophet simply because he is a prophet, or a righteous man simply because he is a righteous man. But

if we have stuff enough in us to receive an unrecognized or a discredited prophet purely because we see that he truly interprets God's will to us, however unattractive he may be to us in other respects; or to receive a righteous man purely because we believe that he is living by a Divine law, although that law may condemn much that we love, then this Promise is ours, and we shall share in the reward of the prophet or of the righteous man we have received.

Then, too, *we shall have proved that we ourselves are of the stuff out of which prophets and righteous men are made*, and so may fairly have part in their reward. That is to say, we shall have shewn that we too can recognize a truth which most of our neighbours have failed to recognize, and can admire and pursue forms of goodness to the claims of which most of our neighbours are insensible. If we love the prophet simply for the truth he teaches, our quick eye for truth, and our hearty appreciation of it, prove that we too are of a prophetic spirit; for what after all is a prophet but a man who sees truth more quickly, more accurately, more largely than his neighbours, and sets a higher value upon it? And if we love a righteous man purely for his just and noble way of life, our keen eye for noble ways of living, and our zeal for them, prove that the spirit of the righteous man is in us also; for what makes him righteous but his quick perception of that which lends nobility and beauty to human life, and his supreme care for a growing correspondence with its highest laws?

If, then, those who receive a prophet because he is a prophet shew that they share his keen eye for truth, and those who receive a righteous man because he is a righteous man shew that they share his keen and hearty appreciation of righteousness, why should they not share in the reward of those in whose spirit they share? What is there unjust in that?

We may be *dumb* prophets, indeed. With the prophetic insight and appreciation, we may lack both the originality of the prophet and his power of eloquent and impressive speech. No vision may break on our inward eye, no oracle flow from our lips; no call to public and eminent service may fall on our ear. And with all our appreciation of a righteous life when we see it, we may lack both the power to imagine, discover, invent a nobler ideal of life for ourselves, and the power so to impress it on our fellows by word and deed as to make it a potent influence for good. In other words, we may have the essential qualities of the prophet or of the righteous man, and yet not have either his gifts or his call to public duty and function.

In his noble *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, Gray has the familiar verse :

“ Some village Hampden that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of the fields withstood :
Some mute inglorious Milton, here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country’s blood.”

The village Hampden may be as true a patriot as the great John Hampden himself, though he moves in a smaller sphere and though the burden of a kingdom’s welfare may not rest upon him. The inglorious Milton may be as true a poet as the glorious John Milton, though he be “muted” for lack of culture, or for lack of opportunity. And we may be sure of this, that the glorious Milton would be the very first to recognize a brother poet in the muted inglorious Milton, and that the great and famous patriot would be the first to recognize a kindred spirit in the village Hampden, and the more than regal Cromwell to see himself reflected in the “company of poor men” who followed him; and to declare, that these were worthy of the same recognition and reward with themselves.

But we need not go to the past for examples. We have

had many prophets and righteous men in our own time, many men who have brought us new or clearer interpretations of the will of God, or have placed truer and nobler ideals of life before us; statesmen, such as Peel, Cobden, Gladstone, who have in some measure discerned the laws which should govern the intercourse of nation with nation, or the relation of class to class: poets, such as Wordsworth, who have taught us to find a Divine Presence and thoughts beyond the reach of words in the whole round of nature, from the clouds that float above our heads and the stars that shine through them, down to the meanest flower that blows: men of letters, such as Carlyle, who have summoned us to live for unselfish and noble ends, rather than for the passing shows and petty gratifications which degrade us while we pursue them and fail us when we grasp them: teachers and preachers, such as Arnold, Maurice, Robertson, Erskine, Lynch, with many more, who have offered us broader and deeper readings of the Word of God, truer conceptions of his character, more comprehensive and catholic views of his providence and his salvation. All these were unpopular for a time, rejected and condemned; prophets without honour; righteous men who were denounced as the enemies of all righteousness. If we received them when the world or the Church rejected them, that could only be because it had pleased God to give us a keener eye for truth or a keener appreciation of that which is right than they had attained who neglected, despised, or denounced them; because, that is, He had in some measure bestowed upon us the very Spirit by which prophets and righteous men are inspired. By our reception of them we gave them courage and helped them to do their work. And hence, in common with all who shared their spirit and aided them in their task, we shall share their reward. *Not unjustly*; for men are to be tried, and ought to be tried, not by their gifts and opportunities mainly, but by the use they

make of them. And if they are faithful in the few things committed to them, what could they do more?

II. Still the question may be fairly asked: "Is there not after all a grave difference between men who have faithfully employed many rare gifts, and so have wrought wonders, changed the face of the world, or touched the heart of the Church to finer issues, and those who have only been faithful with few gifts, and hence have done but little whether for the Church or for the world? Is there not a grave difference, for example, between prophets and righteous men, men who have power to originate and courage to publish new and wider views of truth or new and happier forms of goodness, and those who simply receive them and follow where they lead—a difference in desert, and therefore in reward?"

Surely: we all feel and acknowledge that there is, that there must be, such a difference.

"But if there be, is it not after all unjust to attach the same reward to the services of men of such different calibre, though they are animated by one and the self-same spirit?"

Well, we reply, that depends on what you mean by *Reward*. This is the vital word of the Verse, the word on which all hangs and turns. And it is, I am afraid, our gross misconceptions of the true nature of Reward which have made the Verse difficult and perplexing to us. We too habitually conceive of Reward as some external wage or honour, felicity or advantage, to be conferred upon us, rather than as the inward and inevitable issue of our character and deeds; as some outward good to be added to us, rather than as the internal wealth and power which naturally flow from our being what we are and doing what we have done. Yes, and even when we have learned that the true reward of any wisdom we have gained and used is a larger capacity for wisdom, and that the true

reward of any service we have rendered is power to serve in a more faithful spirit and on a larger scale; even when we have learned that the true reward of having been faithful in a few things, and above all in ruling our own spirits, is to be made rulers over many things, and that we can only rule by serving, we are apt to forget this lofty and generous conception when we read such a passage as that which we are now studying. We fall back on our untaught undisciplined instinct, assume that Reward is an adventitious wage or honour—something to be added to us, not something which grows inevitably out of our life and work,—and to complain of the injustice of the same reward being meted out to men so widely different in their gifts, and in the comparative value of the services they have rendered.

We have only to remember and apply the great principle of Reward which Christ Himself has laid down in order to banish the last shadow of difficulty from the Promise of this Verse. For, of course, the prophet's reward is not a higher seat in heaven, nor a more glorious pomp of happy and splendid circumstance, but a profounder insight into the Will of God and a growing power to utter it; and who will grudge *that* to those who have but received a prophet in the name of a prophet? It is simply their due. It is the natural and necessary result of the qualities they have proved themselves to possess. For they too have shewn that they had some insight into truth, or why did they recognize as true the message which the prophet brought them? They have at least added their Amen to his message, confirming and insisting on it by their very reception of it. And is it not natural that their appetite for truth should grow by what it feeds upon? Is it not just that their insight into truth should be enlarged and their power of affirming it to be true?

So also those who have received a righteous man simply

because he was a righteous man, who have welcomed the new and larger forms of goodness which he has disclosed to them, have, by that very act, proved their affinity with righteousness, their capacity to recognize and appreciate it even when it is rejected and despised. And if the righteous man's reward is to be an added power of discerning righteousness and of serving it, are not they fairly entitled to share in that reward? Must not their keen perception of right and noble ways of life grow keener by exercise, and their love for them deepen as they grow familiar with them?

Thus the apparent injustice of this Promise utterly vanishes, and is replaced by a deep sense of the blended justice and mercy of God's dealings with men. We have only to consider what are the qualities which enable us to receive a prophet or a righteous man, and what the reward of the righteous man and the prophet is to be, in order to see how equitable it is that even we should receive their reward.

III. But though the Promise is thus vindicated, and its true meaning, I trust, brought out, our hearts are so forgetful of what we most need to remember, that it may be well to impress that meaning on them still more deeply by one or two illustrations which lie conveniently at hand. One of our best Reference Bibles¹ points to the Chapters in the Old Testament (1 Kings xvii.; 2 Kings iv.) which record the sojourn of Elijah with the widow of Zarephath, and the sojourn of Elisha with the "great lady" of Shunem, as containing choice illustrations of this Verse. Such illustrations they do undoubtedly contain. But he would be a bold man who should assume that either the Editor of that Bible saw, or that most of his readers will see, *how* these stories illustrate the Promise of Christ.

The widow of Sarepta "received" the prophet Elijah,

¹ That edited by Mr. Gurney, and published by Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode.

although she was of Phœnician and not of Hebrew blood, and when, having come to his own, his own had not received him. She received him purely because he was, because from his aspect, robe, tone, she knew him to be, a prophet. She fetches him water; she bakes him a cake of her last handful of meal; she hospitably entertains him for many days. She even listens to and is moved by his words. By her keen eye for the prophetic credentials, her cordial reception of the man of God, her ready and unaffected deference to his authority, she proved herself to be spiritually akin to the Prophet—proved herself to possess, at least in their rudiments, the very qualities by which he was distinguished; a quick eye for religious truth and an unusual devotion to its claims.

And surely she received a prophet's reward; Yes, but *how*? Are we to find—as so many have found—the reward of her sympathy with truth and righteousness in the fact that, for many days, her barrel of meal wasted not and her cruse of oil did not fail? or even in the fact that she received her son alive again from the dead? Does God requite the hunger for truth with daily bread, and the thirst for righteousness with happy family life? Is *this* the coin in which his prophets take their wages? No, the moment we think of it, we feel that this cannot be their proper reward. Their bread may be certain and their water sure. But physical ease, freedom from care, even the purest earthly happiness, is not that which the prophet seeks first of all, nor is it in this that he finds his real reward. Most of the Hebrew prophets came, indeed, to what the world calls a bad end. Destitute, afflicted, tormented while they lived, after trials of mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment, they were stoned, they were sawn in sunder, they were slain with the sword. The true and proper reward of those who have shown a keen insight into truth, and an ardent devotion to righteousness cannot, therefore,

be a prosperous and happy life on earth; it is rather, as we have seen, a still keener and deeper insight into truth, a still larger capacity for righteousness. To be faithful in little is to earn the chance of being faithful with much; to have done well is to secure an opportunity of doing better.

What was Elijah's own and exceeding great reward? That he could smite the living with death and quicken the dead to life, call down fire and famine from heaven, shake even the hard proud heart of a despot with foreboding fears, and put a whole nation to the ban? Nay, but rather that, as he fulfilled his stormy function, he learned that there is more of God in the still small voice of conviction and persuasion than in the tempest, fire, and earthquake of judgment, and so was prepared for a gentler, that is, a higher, ministry above; insomuch that we may well believe that he who was caught up to heaven as in a car of blazing fire, now rides through the plains of heaven as in a chariot of radiant but healing and gracious light. If we would find the true reward of the poor widow who received him, therefore, we must listen to her as "receiving her dead (son) by a resurrection," she cries—not "Thank God, I have my boy again!" but—"Now by this *I know* that thou art a man of God, and *that the word of the Lord* in thy mouth is *truth*": for here, too, insight was rewarded by deeper insight, and deference for what she thought might be true grew into a strong belief in what she knew to be true.

So, again, the great lady of Shunem, who dwelt, and was content to dwell, "among her own folk," on her own estate, rather than to stale herself in the courts of kings, simply because she perceived that Elisha was "a holy man of God," *i.e.*, a truly righteous man, "received" him, built him a pretty chamber,¹ furnished it with her best,² and

¹ Not, as in our Authorised Version, "a little chamber *on the wall*," but "a little chamber *with walls*."

² Not "a stool," but "a seat of honour."

constrained him to lodge and eat there as often as he passed that way.

And she, too, had her reward, the reward of a righteous man. But her reward was not simply that her son was given to her when her husband was old, or even that her son was brought back to her from the gates of death: and still less was it that she was taught how to escape the horrors of a seven years famine, and regained her estate when she returned to the wasted land because of the kindness she had formerly shewn to the Prophet.¹ Children and estates are not the natural and proper rewards of righteousness. No, her true reward was the natural growth of her trust in the man whom she felt to be righteous, and a growing value for the righteousness she saw in him. The Shunamite's husband saw little in Elisha, and could not understand, even when their only child lay dead in the house, why his wife should want to ride over to him, since it was neither new moon nor Sabbath. The good rich farmer did not care that too much fuss should be made about righteousness, or religion, even when hearts were sore and sorrowful, though he was not adverse to a decent observance of religious customs. But *she* felt that her only

¹ The sequel to the pretty idyllic story told in 2 Kings iv. 8-37, is given in 2 Kings viii. 1-6; but it is so much less known than it deserves to be—for it contains one of the most striking and picturesque coincidences in the whole field of literature—that I doubt whether the allusion to it in the text will be taken. In effect, it runs thus: Elisha forewarns the lady of the great famine, and bids her go abroad to escape it. She dwells in the land of the Philistines for seven weary years, and returns “to cry unto the king for her house and her land.” “And the king,” continues the sacred chronicler, “talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, *this* is the woman, and this her son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain eunuch, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land even until now.”

comfort, and her only hope of help, lay in the righteous man whom she had received. And so she "runs over," and clings to his feet, and will not leave him, no, not even when he has sent Gehazi to "awake the child." Her trust is in righteousness, and in its power with God; and perhaps she knew too much of Gehazi to think him a righteous man. None but Elisha will serve her turn: for, to her, Elisha is the holiest man on earth. In fine, as we read and ponder her story, we cannot but mark how her trust in the man of God, and in the God of this good man, strengthened and deepened; we cannot but feel that it was in her growing trust in Righteousness she found her share in the righteous man's reward.

IV. Thus explained and thus illustrated, the Promise of our Lord is not only purged from every shadow of injustice, but grows rife with valuable suggestion. For it is not hard for us to see that the best and highest reward both of the poor widow of Zarephath and of the great lady of Shunem, for the love of truth and goodness which led them to receive a prophet and a righteous man, was not any temporal and therefore temporary advantage which accrued to them thereby; but that they were thus led to love truth more and to pursue a loftier ideal of life. "This," we say, "was their true reward, since it elevated and enriched them, not in time only but for eternity as well as for time; since it was inward, not outward; choice, not vulgar; permanent, not transitory—raising them indeed above "all the chances and changes of this mortal" world.

What, then, except our own worldly prepossessions and carnal inclinations, hinders us from seeing that what was best for them is also best for us, and that we are to take, as our reward for any love of truth or right we have already shewn, power to see truth more clearly and to live a nobler life? "Walk in the light, and you shall have more light; Do that which is right, and you shall learn to do

it more easily, more deftly, and more effectually:” is not this the constant teaching of the Gospel? Does it not set forth the natural, logical, and proper connexion between our deeds and their results, and therefore the natural, logical, and proper conception of Reward?

(a) But if we have once reached the conviction, that the true reward of loving truth and seeking after righteousness is not outward happiness, but inward peace; not easy temporal conditions, but permanent elevation of character and aim; not a wage which we may take and spend in a few days or years, and after that be none the better for it, but an interior wealth which will accumulate the more the more we spend it, and for which we shall always be the better and the better off: if, I say, we have once grasped this conviction, what a flood of light it pours on all the darker aspects of our lot! Love of truth and devotion to simple and noble ways of life may not bring us, we have no right to expect that they should bring, the kind of success, prosperity, reputation, or honour which most men seek; for these, instead of quickening our perception of truth, might only dull it, instead of elevating our ideal of conduct, might only lower it. And if they *would* dull the inward eye and lower the tone of our inward life, we do not and cannot desire them, since to gain these would be to lose our truest and highest reward. On the other hand, pain, loss, sorrow, bereavement, the ill-will and ill-word of men who love the world and the world’s law, may and should drive us to seek truth and righteousness more earnestly than ever, and to rest in them as the supreme, the only satisfying and enduring, good. And if they do, if they open our eyes more widely to the value of truth and nerve our hearts to a more steadfast pursuit of righteousness; if, as we stand stript and well nigh alone, we feel that little but our own life is left us, and that no consolation or resource is open to us but to make that life as pure, noble, serviceable, and

kindly as we can, the very things which were once most hateful to us become welcome; our loss is our gain, our sorrow must turn to joy. We shall feel our kinship with prophets and righteous men, and acknowledge that we have received their reward—a reward infinitely more precious than any or all the gifts of earth and time.

This is the most general, and perhaps the most valuable, practical suggestion of our Promise; for it belongs to all men as well as to us, and brings us strength and consolation just when we most need them; but there are other practical applications of it which, though more special and limited in their range, are not without value.

(β) It holds both warning and encouragement for a considerable class very likely to have some representatives among the readers of this Magazine; a class of men each of whom might honestly say for himself: "Well, *I* have always given a cordial reception to the prophets and righteous men of my time; I have loved to listen to their new and larger views of truth and duty, and I have adopted them. There is not a statesman, a poet, a man of letters, a preacher or divine, among all those who have been referred to as the saints and seers of our own day and generation, whom I have not admired and followed. Nay, I admired them, and espoused their cause, long before to honour them became a fashion, when they were neglected, reviled, condemned. If, therefore, any man may take this Promise to himself, and look to share in their reward, surely I may."

Granted; but remember that you have not truly "received" these prophets and righteous men unless you have allowed their wider interpretations of the Divine Word and Will to shape your thoughts, your habits, your ideals, your aims. Remember that your reward is to grow out of your character and conduct, and is to consist in new power to recognize what is true and to do what is right. No

admiration of truth is genuine which does not make you true; no admiration of righteousness is sincere which does not make you righteous.

This is your warning; and your encouragement is that, if you honestly admire, if you have sincerely loved truth and righteousness, even when they came to you in new and unpopular forms, you are of kin to the prophets and righteous men whom you received, and by whom God has made you what you are and taught you what you know; and, therefore, you will share their reward. Before you, as before them, there opens the happy prospect of ever coming to a closer and fuller knowledge of the truth, and of ever growing into a closer correspondence with the righteous and perfect will of God: than which no higher honour, no dearer reward, no purer bliss, can be conferred on any of the sons of men.

(γ) Ministers and clergymen, again, are often pitied on this very ground, that their reward is so uncertain or so small. The more thoughtful and kindly members of our congregations are apt to speak of the sacrifices we have made, of the success, or fortune, or honour we might have secured in other professions, and to lament that so little is done for us, that even they themselves can do so little. And, no doubt, there are some of us who might have done what the world calls "well" for ourselves, had we cared; as there are others for whom the Church might reasonably do a little more; and still others, alas, who are too prone to join in the lament over their lost opportunities and wasted lives. But *we* of all men, ought to remember that the reward of the prophet and of the righteous man is always open to us, that it is never withheld from any who deserve it; and that this reward is the most enriching and ennobling, the most satisfying and enduring, which God can bestow or man receive. If we really love and serve the truth, we are always coming to a larger and closer know-

ledge of the truth ; always enlarging, refining, illuminating the eyes of the soul ; always gaining in insight and in power to utter what we see. If we love and serve righteousness, our conception of it is always growing, its attraction for us always becoming more potent ; its transforming energy is always working more harmoniously and effectually upon us. And if that be so, of what have we to complain after all, we, who are the sworn servants of truth and righteousness, and who profess that, as compared with these, all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them are but dross ? The very narrowness, simplicity, and poverty of the conditions under which so many of us live and work may but throw us the more exclusively and more earnestly into those interior aims and pursuits in which alone men truly live ; and if they do, even these should be welcome to us, since they are helpful to us—as they should also be welcome to every Christian man to whose spiritual insight and capacity they minister. Ill-paid by men we may be, or under-paid, or even not paid at all ; but if we are learning to see truth more clearly and handle it more wisely, if we are learning that nothing but righteousness can sustain and strengthen us as we pass through these brief broken hours of time or prepare us for eternity, and are therefore ever seeking after purer manners, nobler ideals, higher laws, *God* is paying us well enough, and a great deal better than we deserve ; paying us *here and now*, and not only hereafter ; enriching us with the only true wealth, distinguishing us with the only true honour. We of all men ought to rejoice that our real reward lies purely in our own power ; that it is one which neither the world nor the Church can either give or take away.

(δ) And, last of all, I should like to raise this question : Are we not apt to pity the prophets and righteous men of our own day a little too much, and to mourn more than is good for them or for us over the hard fate of the statesmen,

poets, artists, men of science and men of letters, preachers and divines, who were before their time ; who saw truths their neighbours did not see and *would* try to make them see them ; who discovered ideals of life larger and higher than those which were currently entertained and which were endeared by long use and wont, and even to press them on a stiff-necked and reluctant generation.

As we look back on the years in which these noble spirits were slighted, thwarted, reviled, condemned, we grieve over the wrongs, sufferings, and persecutions they were called to endure from men unworthy to tie their shoes, and glow into hot indignation against those who so evil entreated their wisest teachers, their most generous benefactors. And perhaps we *ought* to pity men to whom we owe so much, and to resent the ill-usage they received. But surely we ought not to forget that such men as Hampden, Milton, Galileo, Erasmus ; or, to come nearer home, such men as Carlyle, Wordsworth, Arnold, Maurice, Kingsley, Robertson, Lynch, *had* their reward, and an exceeding great and precious reward, even before the world or the Church "received" them. Such men, themselves being witness, are often the better for the very neglect and opposition they encounter ; for they are driven in upon themselves and on the truths they have seen, the ideals of conduct they have framed ; they are compelled to test and re-test them ; their faith in them deepens ; their advocacy of them grows more ardent and irresistible ; they are loved by a few even more cordially than they are hated by the many, loved all the more because of the unjust hatred to which they are exposed ; and at last they conquer all opposition, and secure an influence which is all the wider and the more potent because it has been secured by conquest. But what we have chiefly to mark is that, all the while the strife goes on, before they conquer, and even though they should never conquer, they get their reward, get it in full. God

pays them, if man does not—pays them liberally, lavishly—in that He gives them a surer vision of the truths they teach and a firmer grasp of them; or in that He gives them a larger conception of what Righteousness includes, and a devotion to it which fills and absorbs their whole soul. *This* is the prophet's reward; this the reward of the righteous man. And if they have this, what more can they ask, save that *all* the Lord's people should become prophets?

In proportion as they are true to their high calling, they will be content with their true reward; content? nay, elate, as those whom God, not man, has crowned. In the very proportion in which they are not content, but harp on the sacrifices they once made, the wrongs they once endured, and the dangers they once affronted, we may be sure that they lack the true prophetic character. The men who are for ever recalling and bewailing what they have suffered and lost by their fidelity to conviction—and it must be sorrowfully admitted that there are some such men among those who have been the champions of neglected truths and despised ideals—are too often men who have grown fat on their losses and risen to distinction by their very persecutions. And their eternal lament does but prove that they are not true followers of Him who was and is the Truth, and yet had not where to lay his head.

S. Cox.
