

Fourthly,—It is a *righteous* reward. It is designated a *Crown of Righteousness*. There are three reasons on account of which it may be so called; first, as it is the reward of righteousness; thus in the Grecian games to which there is an evident allusion in the text, as well as in other parts of the New Testament; the reward of a successful combatant would have been called the crown of a combatant; and of a successful courser, the crown of a courser. Secondly, it may be called a crown of righteousness as consisting of an increase of righteousness. God is sometimes pleased to punish one sin by another, as he did the Gentiles whom he gave over to a reprobate mind, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; and it is reasonable to believe, that he will make his faithful servants partakers of a higher degree of that righteousness which is intimately connected with happiness. Thirdly; it may be called a crown of righteousness, as being given in righteousness, and on righteous grounds; if some parents, foolishly fond, prefer one child above the rest, concentrate their affections in him, and heap all their favours upon him to the exclusion of the others, we are not to suppose the Father of all acts so capriciously. As a Benefactor, he does, indeed, what he will with his own, giving five talents to one, and to another two; but as a Judge, he is no respecter of persons, but proceeds in righteousness to reward each according to his work. Saint Paul could not presume on getting to Heaven, merely because he was a chosen vessel; but brought under his body, and kept it in subjection, lest by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should become a cast away; and now on the prospect of being introduced into the presence of the righteous judge, he rejoices as being entitled to a reward from him who is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.

Fifthly,—It is a crown. A crown denotes the approbation of the giver, victory, honour, and dominion