

The Idea of Reward in Morality

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“To will the Good for the sake of reward is doublemindedness. To will one thing is, therefore, to will the Good without considering the reward.” (Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart*).

I am going to try to explain what this remark might mean: one of the many possible things it might mean.

We should bear in mind that all through Kierkegaard is operating with a presumption which influences the logic of his argument. This is the presumption that willing the Good is willing one thing and, conversely, willing one thing is willing the Good. By calling this a ‘presumption’ I don’t mean that he doesn’t argue for it. He argues for it, and his arguments follow the lines of tradition. But I shall not be examining these arguments.

Consider the idea of a man’s willing the Good – whatever this amounts to – for the sake of the reward. I don’t mean necessarily for the sake of something particular that he has set his heart on. I mean only that he believes that for willing the Good there is somewhere laid up something that will reward him sometime – he knows neither where, nor when, nor what.

Now it is plain that in his man’s thinking there are *two* factors at work: the idea of the Good that is the object of his will, and the idea of the reward. The two are distinct. The reward that is to come to him as a reward for willing the Good cannot be identical with the Good that he wills, whatever this may be. It looks at once as if such a man cannot really be described as ‘willing one thing’. For he wills the Good, but has also set his heart on the reward. It would follow on Kierkegaard’s view that he cannot really be described as ‘willing the Good’ at all. What passes in such a man for willing the Good must, then, be a spurious and illusory kind of willing the Good. Either the willing, or its object, must be spurious and illusory.

The two factors in this man's thinking are naturally conceived as related in a particular way. The idea of the reward is the operative factor in his will; we might call the reward the 'end', the goal, of the willing and of whatever activity this involves. Then the willing can be no more than the means he adopts to gain this end, and his idea of the Good will simply be his idea of what has to be willed in order to gain the reward. So it is quite possible that for him what he sees as the Good may appear as something which he would not will were it not for the reward to come.

Now we have to make a distinction. For how is willing the Good thought to be related to gaining the reward?

If it is thought that there is just a 'contingent', i. e. causal or quasimechanical, connexion between willing the Good and gaining the reward, then it must also appear that willing the Good may be only one possible way of gaining the reward. And then it must appear at least possible that there is a better way of gaining the reward. 'Better' is ambiguous. For example, our man may think it possible that there is a way of gaining the reward which involves less time, less effort, or less suffering. If he has a definite idea of the reward, especially if he conceives the reward in terms of the natural goods of this world, this is even more likely. For successful deceit seems a better and safer way of getting, say money or fame than honesty does.

On the other hand, if he believes that genuinely willing the Good *must* be the best way, perhaps is the only *possible* way, of gaining the reward, then clearly he is under the influence of an *a priori* presumption. He is presuming some kind of non-contingent, 'necessary', relation between willing the Good and gaining the reward. If, like Kierkegaard, he claims that the reward is *certain*, then obviously he is not thinking in terms of what actually does or might happen.

One way in which he may see a necessary connexion between willing the Good and gaining the reward is this: he sees a *conceptual* connexion between 'willing the Good' and 'gaining the reward'. This might be because he understands 'willing the Good' as 'doing what will gain the reward' — a kind of Utilitarian 'getting what a man will get for willing the Good'. Roughly, he defines the reward in terms of the Good.

This way of thinking is clearly more likely to characterise the man who has no definite idea of the kind of reward to be expected, who simply believes that

somewhere there is something laid up for him to receive at some time, he knows not when nor where.

Now we have to consider what is involved in the idea of a 'reward *for* willing the Good', and in general the idea of a 'reward'.

Obviously not every good, or desired, thing that comes to me as a result of what I do or say counts as a 'reward' for my deeds or words. And obviously not everything that I am given as a reward need be for me good or desirable, although it must have seemed so to the givers. You could not be 'rewarding' somebody unless you gave him something you believed he would appreciate.

In the most common sort of case, there is no necessary relation between my doing whatever I do and my getting whatever counts as the reward for doing it. For the reward is *given* for doing this, and the decision whether or not to give a reward, and, if so, what to make it, is obviously up to the people who give it. We might call this sort of relationship 'purely conventional'.

But we also speak of 'rewards' and 'being rewarded' in cases where there isn't any relationship of that sort. For I might be rewarded for what seemed a tedious study of counterpoint by a sudden understanding and appreciation of a whole area of music which had previously been nothing to me. This is a reward, but not a prize, for the study of counterpoint!

This is an interesting sort of case, for it seems very relevant to the case of the reward for willing the Good that I am studying. A number of its special features will bring out this relevance.

Unlike the common sort of case, no human agency is involved in my gaining the reward I do gain: probably no agency at all. We may be tempted to say that it just depends on the operation of some complex and no doubt undiscovered laws of psychology.

Again, there does not seem to be a purely external and contingent, still less a purely conventional, relation between the nature of my activity and the nature of the reward. It is much more like the relation between running fast and getting tired than the relation between running fast (winning the race) and getting a silver cup.

And most important of all, there is something about my reward which I could not have foreseen or understood. Of course, I may have known other people who studied counterpoint and, as a result, came to appreciate whole areas of music

which had previously meant nothing to them. So in a sense I might well have foreseen and understood the possibility of the same sort of thing happening to me. And I might easily have hoped for this. But what I could not have foreseen is what it was going to be like to come to appreciate this meaningless region of experience.

My being thus rewarded does not depend on my having hoped for this reward. It doesn't depend on my having studied counterpoint *for the sake of* coming to appreciate, say, 16th-century music. I may be suddenly and quite unexpectedly rewarded by finding a good where maybe I have never even expected to find a good. But obviously my having hoped to be rewarded in this way does not in the least prejudice the outcome: no more than would hoping to win a race and the silver cup prejudice the getting the cup. Silver cups are not given only on condition that the winner have been running for the sake of the race but *not* the silver cup!

Willing the Good, whatever this amounts to, may be accompanied or followed by the winning of good or desired things. Honesty is sometimes rewarded. It might be rewarded either by some human agency – the man whose wallet I have returned decides to give me five dollars –, or in the kind of way exemplified above.

Respect, honour, and perhaps even fame and power, can be 'rewards' for virtue. Aristeides was rewarded for his justice by becoming known as Aristeides the Just.

Moralists and moral philosophers have always tried to minimise the value of suchlike 'rewards' for virtue – for willing the Good. But their reasons have not always been clear.

One obvious consideration is this. Money, fame and even respect can all too easily go to the man who does not really deserve them: though this description is already somewhat odd. Apparent virtue can be rewarded, in the world's sense of 'reward', just as easily as can genuine virtue, and perhaps more easily.

Another, less obvious consideration is this. What the virtuous or the talented man gets 'as a reward' for his virtue or talent, i. e. the money or the fame or the respect, may be only on the surface a reward for his virtue or talent: only an 'apparent reward'. What does this mean?

What is at issue here is a strange conception. It is the idea that the *true reward*

for any kind of activity must be *homogeneous* with that activity in a particular sense. That any good which is not homogeneous with the activity can be no more than an 'apparent' reward for it.

The idea of homogeneity is partly explained by the idea of an internal relation. Running fast and winning races, studying counterpoint and coming to appreciate 16th-century music, are 'homogeneous', there is 'homogeneity' between the activity and its reward. Running fast and winning silver cups, studying counterpoint and becoming famed as a conductor, are not 'homogeneous'.

The idea in connexion with the subject of this paper is that for willing the Good, too, there can be both a 'true' and an 'apparent' reward: and that a mark of the true reward will be its homogeneity with willing the Good, as a mark of the merely apparent reward will be its heterogeneity.

In part, I have said, this idea is explained by the idea of an internal, non-contingent, non-conventional relation between an activity and the good acquired as the outcome of this activity.

But it is also, I think, partly explained or at least illuminated by considering the traditional distinction between 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' goods.

I have said that one man might run for the sake of the pickings to be got out of running, another simply in order to win. Now you might run not for either of these reasons, but simply for the sheer enjoyment of running. Again, one man might study counterpoint because he liked it, another only because he hoped to acquire fame or wealth thereby. And I suppose (like the second case above) you might study counterpoint with the idea of becoming the best contrapuntalist alive!

The man who runs for the sheer enjoyment of running, and the man who studies counterpoint because he likes it, are commonly said to be doing what they do 'for its own sake'. And this is commonly contrasted with doing it 'in order to get something else out of it'. Or: in the latter case the activity is simply the means to some further and distinct end, in the former case the activity is the end in itself. For one the activity is a good only 'instrumentally', i. e. as a way of getting something acknowledged as good in itself: for the other the activity is a good 'intrinsically'.

I think, though am unable to argue here, that the idea of instrumentality used

in this distinction is the idea of an external and contingent relation. If I am right in this conjecture, it follows that any relation conceived as internal and non-contingent will also be conceived as 'non-instrumental'. It will not be conceived in terms of means and end. Roughly: the means and the end must be conceived as things, or events, related to each other only externally and contingently.

Asked why you study counterpoint, you may answer, "Oh, I just like it": or you may answer, "Because I want to become the most famous conductor in the world". There are other answers too. Roughly we may say: the first sort of answer expresses your appreciation of studying counterpoint as an intrinsic good, the second expresses your belief that it is an instrumental good, and most likely describes the kind of end – intrinsic good – which makes it, for you, instrumentally 'good'.

Becoming the most famous conductor in the world as a result of studying counterpoint is an obvious example of gaining a 'heterogeneous' reward for one's activity. Just enjoying one's studying seems to be 'homogeneous' with the studying, in a sense not quite the same as that so far described: but doesn't seem to be a 'reward' for studying at all. Coming to appreciate contrapuntal music too is obviously 'homogeneous' with this study, and can be called a 'reward' for such study in the way I mentioned earlier.

Now *both* coming to appreciate counterpoint *and* just enjoying its study might be called gaining the 'true reward' of studying counterpoint. So the distinction between 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' goods does not quite work to explain the notion.

A third feature of the concept of 'homogeneity', and the 'true reward', is this. Someone who studies music just to become rich and famous will often be thought to be missing the point of music – of studying music. This is partly just another way of saying that for him music does not appear as an intrinsically good thing. But obviously it *is* saying this, only if you presuppose that music *is* an intrinsic good. So it is from the musician's point of view that such a man is missing the point. And it is from the musician's point of view that the true reward for studying music is defined: and, indeed, is visible *as* the 'true' reward.

I shall return to these points in a moment. The idea that the true reward for

any form of activity must be homogeneous with that activity, in the ill-defined sense indicated, is used by Kierkegaard with especial bearing on the *ethical* concept of willing the Good.

If willing the Good – virtue – is rewarded by fame, riches, or even the world's respect and honour, still by the criterion of homogeneity, Kierkegaard believes, we shall be able in these cases only to say that it has been 'apparently' rewarded. For willing the Good, as for anything else, there must be the possibilities both of an apparent reward and of the true reward. And the true reward of willing the Good must be homogeneous with this activity, whatever it is.

Not very helpfully, we might try saying: *any* sort of good may come to a man as a reward for willing the Good. But only some *ethical* (or religious) good could possibly be a candidate for the 'true' reward for this activity, since it is obviously an ethical (or religious) activity.

The line between the 'ethical' and the 'non-ethical' is, of course, drawn quite sharply by Kierkegaard. Not that he was the only, or the first, philosopher to do this. Kant, and Plato in the *Gorgias*, both do what comes to the same thing.

In particular, all three distinguish sharply between the idea of an 'ethical good' and the idea of a merely 'natural good', examples of which will be fame, wealth, and the world's respect.

Thus, for Kierkegaard, no merely 'natural good' can possibly be homogeneous with the ethical act of willing the Good. So the true reward for willing the Good can only be some *ethical* good. Here we cannot help thinking that others have claimed either (i) that virtue is its own reward, or (ii) that happiness, in a peculiar sense of the term, is the reward of virtue. Kierkegaard is, I think, getting at both these points.

If there is such a thing as an *ethical* activity, and if such an activity can be described as *truly* rewarded, and if its reward is *homogeneous* with its own (ethical) nature, then there must be some sort of *ethical reward*. And this will describe the true reward for willing the Good.

Now Kierkegaard himself provides us with an example, an analogy, for what he is saying. We shall be well advised to consider this example. We are to consider the idea of a young man's loving a girl for the sake of her money. Loving the girl stands to getting a hold over her wealth as willing the Good stands to gaining the appropriate reward – whatever this is conceived to be. So we might

call the girl's money the 'reward' for the young man's love. What can be said about this example?

The most striking thing about this example is that nearly everybody will feel immediately that something is wrong with this young man. And by and large we shall agree, in general terms, what is wrong: what is wrong is that he has a mercenary attitude towards the girl.

I think this common feeling hides a common conceptualisation. For we should quite naturally say that someone like this young man does not *really love* the girl at all. Certainly it does not seem that he loves her for her own sake, for her own charms, for herself! And we find it hard to conceive of anything worth calling 'love' which is not directed upon its object for its object's own sake.

We might put it in this way. For true love, its object must appear an intrinsic good: if its object is merely an instrumental good, then, whatever the appearances, the attitude in question cannot be 'love', but, at most, the appearance of love.

We might put it in another way too. In the example we are considering, it looks as though the young man has two things in mind: the girl, and the girl's money. And of the two it is the money which appears to be the operative factor: the ultimate end, the goal, of what he does. His loving (or appearing to love) the girl can only be regarded as the means he adopts towards getting her money.

I don't think we need suppose Kierkegaard's example is meant to show us someone of *quite* this coldly calculating and money-grubbing nature. We need not suppose the young man quite unaffected by or oblivious to the girl's own lovable qualities.

The distinction between means and end, between instrumental and intrinsic goods, should not be pressed too hard. For we can quite well suppose that for the young man in question the girl herself appears intrinsically desirable. Not all instrumental goods need be purely instrumental, i. e. 'good' only insofar as they are means towards purely intrinsic goods. An instrumental good may quite well be seen as itself intrinsically good too. And obviously this adds a great deal to the enjoyment of the pursuit!

Let us, for the time being, suppose that young man *both* loves the girl *and* wants to get her money, and, to remain faithful to the example, that wanting to get her money is his aim or motive in loving her. There is a pretty obvious strangeness about this last assumption, and I shall return to it later.

At the least there is supposed to be some kind of connexion – relation – between his love for the girl and his desire for her money. Now on the plane of psychology we may be able to make sense of this. It is on the plane of values, if I can so speak, that it looks odd.

For on the plane of values it is very tempting to say that loving the girl and wanting her money *must* be quite unconnected: or, more probably, opposed. In other words, to value the girl is one thing, to value her money is another. The point is hard to see.

It is that, from a certain point of view, such a case must actually involve a kind of *conflict* of values.

Remember here a feature of the concept of the homogeneity of the true reward. It is possible to study music to become rich, disliking music all the while. This is a case where there is no conflict of values, but rather a subordination: something in itself disvalued is given a contingent and instrumental value by being subordinated as the means to something which is positively valued. It is also possible to study music to become rich, but actually to enjoy the music and the study too. This is analogous to the young man's both loving the girl and wanting to get her money. Now contrast this case with the case of someone who studies music for its own sake, not for the money involved, and perhaps even looking on the possibility of future fame and wealth with dread rather than hope. In this third case, as in the first, there is no conflict of values, since the only thing positively valued is the music: the possibly resulting wealth is seen as an actual disvalue, but as something that must, as it were, be 'risked' for the sake of studying music.

In the second case there are two things valued, and it is which creates the possibility of a conflict. I say 'possibility' and not 'necessity', since not all values conflict with one another, and in particular not here. I think it is only from a certain point of view that these two values are seen as conflicting.

We can bring out the nature of this 'conflict of values' by returning to the musician's view of someone who studies music to become wealthy. Now suppose we have here a case of the second kind, i. e. that the man actually likes music for its own sake. Such a man studies music *both* for its own sake, *and* for the sake of the reward – the money to be gained. And the conflict emerges if we ask: how does this man think of the 'reward' for studying music?

Obviously he thinks of *both* the enjoyment of studying *and* the financial benefits therefrom as 'rewards'. But this means that he cannot be operating with anything like the conceptual distinction between 'true' and 'apparent' rewards, or the concept of 'homogeneity'.

For someone who, explicitly like Kierkegaard or implicitly like our hypothetical musician, operates with these notions, there must look to be a kind of conflict in such a man's thinking. For he will appear to be treating things of fundamentally heterogeneous kinds as 'rewards' for one and the same activity. And worse: he will appear *both* to be operating without this conceptual apparatus *and*, implicitly, *with* it. For that he is implicitly operating *with* the apparatus in question will appear to be shown by his recognition that music is something worth studying for its own sake. For this makes it possible for him too to distinguish between studying music for its own sake and studying it *merely* for the financial 'rewards' (cases three and one above). And he too must, since for him music is something valuable in itself, see someone who studies music merely for the money as missing the point — as missing at least *that* point — about music.

I think the same point can be put more informally (!) thus: to describe somebody as both enjoying the music for its own sake and doing it for the money is to ascribe to him *two conflicting value-systems*.

Let's drop this case and return to Kierkegaard's young man and his girl. The claim is that, from a certain point of view, to describe the young man as 'loving the girl for the sake of her money' must be to ascribe to him two conflicting systems of values.

How can it be true *both* that he loves the girl for her own sake *and* that he loves her for her money? For on the face of it, to say that he loves her for her money is to deny that he loves her for herself.

Intuitively, we seem to be ascribing to this young man (i) a value-system oriented, so to speak, around the girl in question, *and* (ii) a value-system in which the girl appears, if she does appear, only as the appendage of the money, and in which it is the money that plays the central role.

We can imagine the irritation with which Dante would have received such a man's observation that Beatrice was, after all, connected with very wealthy and influential families, and likely to bring with her a considerable dowry.

Now nobody, and certainly not Kierkegaard, wants to deny that it is possible

to fall in love with a girl who also happens to be a heiress to a large fortune. That the girl who is the object of your love is wealthy may well be true, but her being wealthy, in this kind of case, is quite external to your love for her.

We might say: although it is true that the girl you love is wealthy, it does not necessarily follow that the object of your love is a wealthy girl. The point can be made by supposing that her father is suddenly bankrupt. If her being an heiress is external to your love for her, then this will not affect your love in the least. Conversely, if it does affect your love, then *pro tanto* her being an heiress was not external to your love, and your love was *for* a wealthy girl.

If the young man who loves the girl for her money discovers one day that she has no money, then this discovery must of necessity affect his love for her. If her wealth is the only motive for his love – or 'love' – then, I suppose, he will stop loving her, or pretending to love her.

This helps to show the conflict latent in Kierkegaard's description. For insofar as he loves her for herself, such an event cannot affect his love: while insofar as he loves her for her money, it must affect his love. And his love cannot both be affected and not affected!

Let's consider the notion of a 'reward for one's love'.

If a young man falls in love with a girl who happens to be a wealthy heiress, then presumably he may marry her and thus find himself wealthy with her fortune. Now it is not impossible to describe him as 'rewarded for his love'. I say 'not impossible', but I do think there is something strange in this description. What is strange is the point of view, the value-system, it implies.

One naturally wants to object – and this is the strength of Kierkegaard's example – that whether or not the girl you love is wealthy, beautiful, clever, popular, etc., to win her is all the reward you need and all you could have. In comparison with this, finding her to be wealthy, etc., is – should be – as nothing.

One need not despise wealth and beauty for one's wife's wealth and beauty to be as nothing in comparison with having won her. These things may well provide a genuine pleasure of their own.

The 'as nothing' must be taken strictly in the context of one's having loved, wooed, and won the girl. For the question is, what is the good of *just this*? And it is in answering *this* question that her wealth and beauty do not – should not – begin to count.

From this view-point, nothing like wealth, beauty, popularity, etc. could possibly begin to count as a 'reward for loving'. We might put this point in the exciting-sounding claim: if by 'reward' is meant wealth or beauty or ... and so forth, then there *cannot be any reward for love*.

Putting it the other way round, if on marrying the girl you have wooed and won you discover that she is a wealthy heiress, and if you then treat this – see this – as the 'reward' for your pursuit, then, from the view-point being discussed, that is sufficient to show that it cannot be for *love* you are being rewarded. It shows either that you see yourself as rewarded for something like, say, tenacity or daring – but nothing like 'love' –, or that you are simply under an illusion about the true nature of love, if you continue to claim that her wealth is a reward for your 'love'.

Between true love and the object of your love being wealthy or beautiful there can be only a quite external, contingent, relation. Insofar as the relation is internal or necessary, your attitude must necessarily have been, whatever you thought, one of avarice, or sexual desire, etc.

That which can be rewarded, in the sense of 'true reward', by money can only be avarice. That which can be truly rewarded by beauty can only be sexual desire, or some kind of aesthetic emotion.

What can truly reward true love?

What can count as a true reward for loving? Surely, as implied above, only getting the girl – the object of your love. Now this is, I suppose, the answer most people would naturally and unreflectively give. But I do not think it is adequate.

'Getting the girl' might refer to any number of different sorts of outcome. It might mean that she became your pupil, or your client, or your slave, or your prisoner, or your mistress. And if it means 'married her', this too might refer to any number of different sorts of *modus vivendi*. And clearly we want to still to draw a distinction between 'valid' and 'invalid' ways of getting the girl. To get her as your slave and *keep her as your slave* could not, we might object, count as being rewarded for your *love*. For, of course, if you genuinely loved her, you would not want to keep her as your slave!

I suggest that a necessary minimum requirement is this: that you be able to continually express, exercise, realise, your love for the girl. Landing up in a life-situation in which you can continually express your love for the girl is, surely,

something worthy of being called the 'true reward' of love, and the only thing worthy of being called by this name.

We shall obviously have to be careful at this point about the concrete manifestations of this good fortune. For example, marrying her is neither sufficient nor necessary to fulfil the 'formal' requirement so stated. It may even be fulfilled in a way of life in which the girl herself plays no overt part. Dante never 'won' Beatrice in any ordinary sense, yet we want to be able to say that he was *rewarded* for his love for her. For there can be very many different ways of life which 'express' a man's love for someone, and renunciation and sacrifice may well be among them.

Now there is an obvious sense in which the ability (opportunity) to go on expressing one's love for someone is 'homogeneous' with one's love for that person. Where the 'reward' takes the happy form of winning the girl for a lifetime together, it is simply more of the same – more of the girl and more of one's love! And this is the simplest sort of homogeneity.

This does raise the very difficult question: *what* is homogeneous with true love? And part of the difficulty is that this, in turn, involves the question: *what* is the nature of true love? What counts as an expression, an exercise, a realisation, of true love?

Obviously it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to settle the question of love! But I think there is one point which can be indicated.

I have so far spoken as if the idea of a 'reward for love' can be only the idea of getting the girl (or whatever the object is) you love, and this in the sense of reaching a life-situation in which you have continual opportunity for expressing your love. Clearly this description contains two possibly conflicting elements: an element of *getting*, and an element of *giving*.

These two elements correspond to the two characteristics of love that many philosophers have noticed: that it is partly a kind of desire to get or have, and partly a desire to give.

It seems to follow that any 'reward' for love must contain at least elements corresponding to these two characteristics of love. It must be both the gaining of what you desired to get, and the giving of what you desired to give.

It is essential, I think, to the concept of 'true love' ("willing the Good" too) that it contain these two characteristics, and essential to the concept of its reward

that it contain the two corresponding elements. For what can be 'truly rewarded' by mere acquisition – mere possession – could not be true love, and is hardly to be distinguished from avarice or lust or the drive for power: and what can be truly rewarded by pure giving – pure sacrifice –, although certainly much closer to our concept of love than the former, seems rather to fit the concept of pity or charity or generosity.

Nevertheless the Aristotelian point that love seems much nearer to a kind of giving than a kind of getting is important for this inquiry, and is, perhaps, at the back of Kierkegaard's mind too. Certainly charity – agape – has traditionally been seen as a kind of giving, and there is no doubt that Kierkegaard uses this concept as his paradigm for 'love' in general. (*See Works of Love, passim*).

This is important, too, for its bearing on the notion of a 'reward'. For its immediate bearing is this: that the notion of a 'reward for love' is *not* the notion of something by *gaining* which the lover is rewarded, at least not in any ordinary sense of 'gain'. It is much closer to the idea of something by *giving* which the lover is rewarded. The idea of something by giving which to the object of his love he is rewarded.

And what might this 'something' be? I have suggested that it might, in effect, be his love for the loved object: or rather, since 'love' itself can't be given, the expression, the realisations, the embodiments, of his love.

Of course, the getting-element and the giving-element can hardly be held apart. For somebody who *wants to give* cannot help seeing the opportunity to give, and the giving itself, as *gains!* For certainly, he *gets what he wants*.

Someone whose mind is just on getting things – silver cups, money – for himself, cannot obviously appreciate this kind of situation as a 'reward'. More exactly: someone for whom silver cups are a paradigm of 'rewards' cannot appreciate the opportunity for sacrifice as a 'reward'. I shall return to this.

Kierkegaard's example of the young man who 'loves the girl for the sake of her money' bears on the idea of an ethical reward in another way I want to bring out.

In bringing this out I shall be contrasting what we might call the 'self-centred' and the 'object-centred' attitudes. And this bears, again, on the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic goods.

The difference between running for the sake of running and running to win

a silver cup is commonly expressed by saying that in the former case you are running 'for its own sake' – or 'running for the sake of running' –, whereas in the latter you are running for the sake of the reward. I shall say that the man who runs for the sake of running has an 'object-centred' attitude to his running, the man who runs to win the cup has a 'self-centred' attitude to his running. (I don't mean a 'selfish' attitude necessarily!)

The man who studies counterpoint simply to become a famous and wealthy conductor differs from the man who studies counterpoint because he loves music (or want to come to appreciate something he didn't previously): the latter studies music for the music's sake, the former does not.

The young man who loves a girl for her money differs from a young man who just likes a girl without considering whether she has money or not, and so on, in that the latter's attitude is entirely centred on the girl herself, the former's is centred on the girl's money – and (moreover) on getting the money for himself.

The point of these contrasts can be brought out, perhaps, if we ask in each case, *whose good* does such a man have in mind? in *whose good* is he interested?

Certainly we shall want to say that the man who runs to win silver cups, like the man who studies counterpoint to become rich, has his own good in mind. And he appears to have a particular conception of 'good'. It is slightly strange to say that the man who runs for the running, or the man who studies music for the music's sake, have the 'good' of the running or the music in mind: but at least we may say that they conceive of the running or the music as (intrinsic) goods in themselves.

The young man who 'loves a girl for her money' obviously has his own good in mind, and moreover conceives it as in some way related to gaining the girl's money.

On the other hand, true love, as I have sketched it out above, must involve the idea of the good of the loved one, rather than one's own good. I do not say exclusively. For I want to say that here the two goods are seen as coinciding. And what 'one's own goods' comes to is seen as depending on what is the loved one's good.

I said that 'gaining', in true love, may appear from the outside in the guise of giving. It may even appear in the guise of a sacrifice. For if what you desire is the good of the person you love, and if this can be achieved only through your sacri-

ficing your immediate interest in her (him), then such a sacrifice will appear as a gain.

This should not be expressed by saying that a mark of true love is the lover's willingness to sacrifice his own good for the good of the loved person. For that way of expressing the point implies, and relies on, just that conception of 'one's own good' which I have described as self-centred. There must be room for a conception of 'one's own good' which is not self-centred, but object-centred.

This is the conception which is implied if we put the point thus: a mark of true love is that the lover conceives the good of the loved person *as his own good*. For this implies not that he has *no* conception of 'his own good', but that his conception of his own good is an object-centred conception.

Now the ideas of 'reward' and 'good' are clearly very closely connected.

What I give to somebody *as* a reward for something, e. g. winning a race, must be conceived by me as (in some sense) a good thing for that person to get. For instance, I must suppose that the silver cup is a good thing for the winner to get.

Although the reward must be conceived as a good for the rewardee by the rewarder, it does not follow that the rewardee must see it as good himself. On the contrary, he may think it's quite useless, or disgustingly hideous, or trivial and uninteresting. He may not *feel* rewarded – although, of course, normally he will understand that he has *been* rewarded, in the conventional sense of receiving something given as a reward.

The same goes where there is no rewarder, e. g. in cases like the case where I suddenly come to appreciate a whole area of music I had previously found meaningless.

Importantly, the converse too must be able to occur. It must be possible, for example, for the bystander to observe that I feel myself truly rewarded for my efforts, but himself to disagree – to believe that I have not, in fact, been truly rewarded: that what I have received is not a genuine 'reward' for what I have done.

The young man who loves a girl, without the least concern whether she is wealthy or not, and finds after marrying her that she is actually heiress to a large fortune may not see *this* sudden extra as a 'reward' or, indeed, as a 'good', in

comparison with his having won the girl. But a third party might see the young man as 'rewarded' by the girl's wealth. Or the other way round: the young man might conceive the girl's money as his reward, but the third party think of this as a misconception – or a low conception.

As a man's conception of 'his own good', so his conception of what may reward him. As a man's conception of someone else's good, so his conception of what may reward that person.

In particular, if his conception of his own good is someone else's good – or the 'good' of some other thing (running, music) –, then he must conceive of the good of the other as *his own reward*.

This distinction bears on, but does not coincide with, the distinction between the notions of 'true' and 'apparent' reward introduced earlier. For someone with an 'other-centred' conception of reward may have a conception which is effectively either 'true' or merely 'apparent': The girl's good may be a 'reward' for the young man who loves her ('other-centred'), but he may understand her good either in terms of money, or in some other terms.

Put in another way: one's conception of the reward does not determine one's conception of the nature of the reward, i. e. of the good. Being other-centred is not enough to guarantee possessing an exalted conception of the good.

This is why it would be a mistake, I believe, to try to infer from the foregoing arguments that love is a desire for the moral and spiritual good of the loved person. It certainly follows that love is a desire for the good of the loved person, but not, in addition, that this 'good' has to be identified with virtue or blessedness.

The whole example concerning the young man who is alleged to love a girl for her money is intended by Kierkegaard to, and does, throw light on the notion of 'willing the Good for the sake of the reward'. And it is the nature of this illumination that I now want to explore.

'Willing the Good' is, I said earlier, clearly an ethical conception, and possibly – for Kierkegaard almost certainly – a religious conception, and I shall therefore approach it by means of two probably related conceptions: (1) the idea of *loving God*, and (2) the idea of *doing one's duty*. (Although I say merely 'probably related', I am sure that what Kierkegaard means by 'willing the Good' is in fact identical with what would normally be meant by both of these two ideas).

About the idea of loving God I shall not say much, and no doubt what I do say will be both banal and inaccurate. We are, presumably, to entertain the idea of a man's purporting to love God for the sake of the rewards to be expected. – Now these rewards may be of two kinds: earthly or heavenly.

The idea of a man's purporting to love God for the sake of the earthly rewards to be expected, the natural goods – riches, fame, honour, a long life, health, power, and so forth – to be expected, is clearly strange. For one obvious reason, if earthly rewards are what this man is after, he has adopted an extremely doubtful way of getting them: that is, *if* what is counted as 'loving God' is what is normally so counted.

Worse: in such a man's mind there must be operative *both* the idea of the spiritual good that is God *and* the idea of the natural goods in question. And this raises acutely the problem of 'homogeneity'. As ordinarily understood, natural goods are heterogeneous from spiritual goods. So anyone who shows that for him natural goods might count as 'the reward for loving God' shows thereby that he counts God, or loving God, as some sort of 'natural' activity too – if, indeed, he has any coherent concept of what a true reward means.

The same objection, in a slightly modified form, faces the idea of a man's purporting to love God for the heavenly rewards to be expected, e. g. for the sake of the expected joys of Paradise.

This does not mean there is nothing in connecting the idea of 'loving God' with the idea of a reward for loving God, and with the further idea that this reward has something to do with 'joys', i. e. with happiness, – in some sense of that word.

It is perfectly intelligible to claim that there are rewards for loving God – true rewards –, and to name these 'the joys of Paradise', *if* the idea of the joys of Paradise is related to the idea of loving God analogously as the idea of (say) the joys of marriage is related to the idea of loving a girl. This should be expanded, too, to allow for the idea that self-sacrifice may be seen as the reward for such love, i. e. that self-sacrifice is to be credited with 'joys', a 'happiness', of its own.

That is to say: if one's idea of 'winning the joys of Paradise' is the idea of a condition in which one has the ability and opportunity to continually express and realise one's love for God.

This will have to be complicated by adding that it is also the idea of a condition in which one *truly* loves God, since theology normally claims that as human beings we do not, here on earth, love God truly – but only, as it were, approximately, partially, and by God's own grace.

Lets turn briefly to the second idea, the idea of doing one's duty: the idea expressed in Luther's "I can do no other". We are, for the example's parallel, to entertain the idea of man's purportedly doing his duty for the sake of the reward.

What is odd about this idea is that such a man appears to have two grounds for doing his duty: (1) that it is his duty, and (2) that if he does it, he will (probably) be rewarded for doing. And we sense a conflict implicit.

It is odd if he himself puts his case in the words 'doing my duty for the sake of the reward'. For, one wants to ask, if he really believes the thing is his duty, what has being rewarded got to do with its performance? Surely if he really believes it is his duty, he must believe he has to do it whether or not he will be rewarded – whether or not there *is* a 'reward' in the offing. And surely if he is right in implying that his *reason* for doing whatever it is is just that there is a 'reward' in the offing, he cannot see the action under the heading of 'my duty'?

From a familiar point of view, of course, there is nothing odd in supposing that a man might be induced to do what is in fact his duty, though he does not know this, by the promise of some kind of reward.

Again, there is nothing odd in the idea that a man might be given a reward by someone else for having – in the latter's eyes – done his duty: or even, perhaps, for having done what seemed to him his duty.

But with this example the question of distinguishing 'true' from 'apparent' reward, the question of 'homogeneity', comes to the fore again.

Suppose I do what you believe to have been my duty. You want to reward me, and so you give me, say, a sum of money, or a promotion, or a public address of congratulations. And your giving me this 'good' is backed by the idea in your mind that you are 'rewarding' me for having done my duty: that the good you give me is a 'reward' for my having done my duty.

Now of course I may well be grateful for your gift. And I may see that you intended it as a 'reward' for my having (in your eyes) done my duty.

But it does not follow that I have to regard your 'reward' *as* a reward for

having done my duty. I may simply think you are mistaken, or influenced by a false conception of values, or a false conception of 'duty', in believing that anything like (say) money could possibly be an appropriate reward for a man's doing his duty.

From my point of view, your gift is of course very pleasant, and it is nice to know that you believe I have done my duty: the only trouble is that it appears that you don't understand what is involved in the concept of a 'duty'. For you obviously think that your 'reward' can and should be taken by me *in the spirit in which it was given*, i. e. as a reward.

All this is not to argue that I am correct about the nature of a duty and you are in error. It is simply to argue that our conceptions of duty may well – and sometimes do – differ, in such a way that we may have quite different, and perhaps even mutually contradictory, conceptions of what doing one's duty implies.

If the man's idea, in claiming that he does his duty for the sake of the reward, is that a life of virtue is likely to be accompanied by increasing wealth, fame, honour, and so on, then clearly he does not know much about the world. Virtue can of course go with getting on in the world, and it is also possible that this 'getting on' is offered up by the world as a 'reward' to the virtuous man. But, as before, if your heart is set on riches and fame, there are likely to be easier and surer ways of getting these goods than leading a life of virtue.

Someone who thinks of virtue – doing one's duty habitually – in these terms clearly has a particular conception of 'duty' or 'virtue'. Clearly he does not see it as of intrinsic worth.

'Rewards of virtue' need not refer to earthly goods, like money and fame and happiness – as ordinarily understood. Here we think of something like the joys of Paradise once more. And the point I made about the relation of that idea to the idea of loving God goes also for the relation of this idea of 'rewards of virtue' to the idea of 'virtue' – of 'doing one's duty'.

The ordinary idea of duty (or virtue) is obviously an ethical idea. So nothing can be 'homogeneous' with duty, in the sense discussed earlier, which is not itself defined by an *ethical* concept. This is the fundamental reason why *natural* goods are, just for the reason of their naturalness, heterogeneous from virtue.

But it does not, of course, follow that any and every ethical good is homogeneous, in the required sense, with 'doing one's duty'. For what is peculiar about

the latter concept is its containing the idea of moral obligatoriness – necessity (cf. the idea of a categorical imperative).

This is why there is a temptation to think that the very idea of a 'reward for doing one's duty' must necessarily be self-contradictory. But I do not think we have to succumb to this temptation: rather, I think there is a way of looking at these notions for which the idea of a 'reward for doing one's duty' is consistent – though admittedly strange.

Following out the analogy with the case of false and true love, I shall try saying that the idea of a 'reward' for doing one's duty – for virtue – is the idea of a condition in which one has the continual ability and opportunity for doing one's duty.

Of course from a familiar enough viewpoint this does not sound anything like a 'reward'. And from a familiar viewpoint it sounds like nothing which could be understood as a reward for doing one's duty, since it just is, as it were, more of the same – more doing one's duty. And from this point of view a 'reward' has at least necessarily to be distinct from that which is being rewarded.

But I have been arguing, throughout this paper, that there may be a point of view – a system of values – from which these familiar beliefs appear inadequate. And Kierkegaard's position seems to be an instance of such a point of view.

One further point should be raised here, though no more than raised. It concerns the idea of *freedom* in its connection with the idea of morality: i. e. with the ideas of doing one's duty, virtue, and 'willing the Good'.

There is an oddity in the very idea of a 'reward for love', in the idea of the young man's loving the girl for the sake of her money. And the oddity comes from an implicit contradiction in this idea.

The contradiction is roughly as follows. The idea of 'doing something for the sake of something else' implies the idea of doing that thing intentionally. But the ordinary idea of 'loving somebody' is the idea of something done or incurred *not* intentionally. Or rather: the very joining of these two concepts seems to produce an absurdity, viz. the absurd notion of 'intentionally loving'. It is such an absurd notion that is implied in the idea of loving a girl *for the sake of* her money – or anything else.

In general, the idea 'for the sake of ...' fails to produce absurdity *only* when

joined with the idea of something which we can think of as being done 'intentionally'.

The reason why its conjunction with the idea of love, as ordinarily understood, produces absurdity is that this is the idea of something *spontaneous*. For we ordinarily think of love as being some kind of emotional state or condition, and the emotions are certainly conceived as states or conditions which come upon one 'spontaneously'. One's will and intentions aren't and can't be involved in the bringing about of such conditions.

There is something else. Although the idea of the girl's money cannot be understood as a reason for (or as a cause of) the young man's love for her, there are certain other conditions and activities it can be so understood for. The idea of her money can quite well be understood as the *cause* of the young man's desire to get hold of this money. And also as the *reason* for his attempts to get hold of it, e. g. by wooing and marrying her. (I don't wish to imply any particular doctrine about the relations between the concepts 'cause' and 'reason').

This is probably why, when faced by the purported claim that the young man *loves* the girl for the sake of her money, we are apt to construe this as a misleading way of expressing the claim that he is acting as if he loved the girl – whether consciously or under the illusion that he really does love her – with the aim of getting hold of her money – this aim, too, being conscious or 'unconscious'.

Now this feature of the ordinary idea of love is analogous to a certain feature of the conception of 'doing one's duty' with which I am dealing. 'Analogous' only in a particular, though important, respect. The analogy is that this conception of doing one's duty is also the conception of something which cannot be *caused*.

The analogy has to be worked out rather carefully. It is not that love cannot be caused: if thought of as something like an emotional condition, it most probably will be thought of *ipso facto* as something which can be caused – though the causes of a man's falling in love will be obscure.

But at least some kinds of agency are fairly definitely excluded from the range of possible *causes* for *love*. And among these will be, for example, the belief that the girl in question is wealthy. Whatever emotional condition this belief may induce, we are not ordinarily prepared to consider that it might be genuine *love*, although it may bear quite a number of the external marks of love.

Generalising, we might say that no belief that there is a 'reward' in the offering could, as ordinarily conceived, count as a possible cause for a man's genuinely *loving* someone. (Remember that we have already excluded the possibility of their being anything that could count as a *reason* for the man's love).

Again, there is a lack of similarity between being in love and doing one's duty in another important respect: namely that, whereas the former is conceived as something which it is absurd to suppose 'intentional', the latter is ordinarily conceived as something which must necessarily be supposed to be intentional.

Still, the same feature goes for a man's intentions in (reasons for) doing his duty as goes for the causes of a man's love: namely that in neither case can the idea of the 'reward' count.

There is another way of bringing out this analogy. In the cases both of love and of the will to do one's duty, a man must be supposed to have some idea of, some beliefs about, the object of his love or his will. It is these that constitute what philosophers often call the 'intentional object' of his mind. Or rather, and this is important, it is a certain selection from these beliefs.

The point, briefly, is that neither in the case of love nor in the case of the will to do one's duty can the idea of the object of one's love or will figure under the aspect of 'likely to bring a reward with it'.

It is partly to this idea that I was referring earlier, when I discussed the application of the instrumental-intrinsic distinction to our problem.

Postscript. I shouldn't like to be thought that the views I have been airing are Kierkegaard's own. They are a non-religious analogue of the basically *religious* ethics of *Purity of Heart*. Further, I do not believe the ethics of this book to be Kierkegaard's own final and complete ethics. For that, we must look also at *Works of Love* (and some of the *Edifying Discourses* and *Christian Discourses*). And the ethics of *Works of Love* is very different, in some important ways, from the kind of picture painted in *Purity of Heart*.

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