

MERCY,

AND

How God bestows it.

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MERCY is one of God's attributes and He delights in bestowing it. Men are in need of it, having departed from Him through sin. Sin has affected us both in our souls and in our bodies. God shows mercy towards us in relation to both. Many are now enjoying His mercy in their souls for eternity, whilst He also shows His mercy to us in the midst of the circumstances of everyday life. In it we discover His compassion, His goodness, and His loving-kindness.

Now when God bestows mercy on sinners it is on the ground of righteousness. There is much light and flippant talk amongst many of the mercy of God, without their having a true sense of what is due to Him ; consequently true self-judgment is lacking. Men talk of God being merciful, with the vain thought that

He will pass over their sins and shortcomings in the day of judgment. He is merciful, most merciful. But He is God, and He is holy, and can never bestow mercy at the expense of His holiness. That is utterly impossible. Hence it is the height of folly and presumption to neglect or despise His mercy in this day, and yet to hope for it in the day to come. God is showing mercy, through righteousness, to-day to all who bow in repentance before Him, and believe His testimony concerning His Son. Whoever lives for self, the world, and the flesh, may prate about mercy from year's end to year's end, but he will be utterly disappointed at the last. If any sinner of Adam's fallen race desires to be the recipient of the mercy of God, most surely it must be in God's own way. There is none other. All human devices are more than vain.

What is God's way of showing mercy to sinners? It is set forth

in *the gospel*. Many turn to the law, and hope for mercy through endeavouring to keep its precepts. But there is no mercy to be found there. The law sets forth what God claims *from* man. But its claim is too high for man to meet. No sinner ever did keep it, or ever could. And it is written, "Whosoever offends in one point is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10).

But what the law could not do, *God has done in Christ*. He has set Him forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood (Rom. iii. 25). The word "propitiation" here used signifies in the original "mercy-seat." God has set forth Christ Jesus as a "mercy-seat." In the Old Testament, when Israel was under law, the high-priest went into the holiest in the tabernacle once every year, with the blood of the sacrifice for sin appointed by God, and he sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat, which was upon the ark of the

covenant. On that ground only could God exercise mercy towards His people, and maintain them in the enjoyment of relationship with Himself. And He is acting on the same principle in this day of His grace towards all.

Man, on the one hand, has filled his cup of iniquity to the brim in crucifying the Lord of glory. God, on the other, delivered Christ in His determinate counsel and foreknowledge, who offered Himself as the holy sin bearer. Made sin upon the cross, He bore its judgment. There was no mercy for Him in those awful hours. Forsaken of God, He drank the bitter cup and finished the mighty work of redemption to the eternal glory of God.

The blessed, joyful news now comes forth from God Himself. He has set forth Christ "as a mercy-seat through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,

through the forbearance of God (that is, the sins of believers in Old Testament times); to declare, I say, *at this time*, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

Here, and here alone, dear reader, can you find mercy. It is flowing richly and freely from God towards man. It flows through Christ Jesus. By faith in Him it will flow to you. In His shed blood God declares His righteousness. And in righteousness He bestows mercy on every sinner that believeth. He is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The mercy of God is the fruit of His love. And the recipients of His mercy are brought to know and enjoy His love. Man, guilty of sin and of the death of Christ, deserved judgment. But mercy rejoiced against it. And mercy flows to the sinner through righteousness, upon

the ground that Christ has emptied the bitter cup of judgment and died, and God has been glorified. Every barrier between God and the sinner was removed thereby. In His love He shows us mercy, His truth sets us free, and by His Spirit He makes us to know His love.

“O render thanks to God above,
The fountain of eternal love;
Whose mercy firm through ages past
Hath stood, and doth for ever last.”

What a wonderful thing the mercy of God is! Who can fathom its depths? Who can estimate its fulness? Not only God bestows mercy upon us in our lost condition, but meeting us in our deep need, He puts our sins far away by Christ's precious blood. We enjoy this mercy in the risen Christ. The mercy-seat is Christ Jesus; He is the *risen* Christ. And God introduces the believer into all that Christ the risen Man has entered into on the other side of death.

Hence we read, " But God, who is *rich in mercy*, for his *great love* wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus " (Eph. ii. 4-7).

Are you, dear reader, in the enjoyment of the mercy of God, whose depth is unsearchable ? If not, why should you not at once become the recipient of it through faith in His blessed and glorious name ? God delights to bestow it upon everyone who bows to Him.