

cannot possibly let down its integrity, its holiness, and its strictness. If these are infringed, punishment must ensue, either in the person of the offender, or in that of another. Either punishment in the transgressor, or satisfaction by a surety—bearing the penalty which the sinner incurred—must be had. And if the latter is obtained, it must be at the instance of God's mercy. If a surety is provided for the sinner, it must be owing to the exercise of mercy on the part of him whose law has been broken—whose wrath has been incurred—and who might therefore justly execute punishment upon the transgressor. It is mercy even although a surety is provided. It is justice that demands the surety—it is mercy that provides that surety. That surety would not be needed were the law not righteous and holy—and were God not righteous and holy. Were he only merciful then he might pardon without a surety. But this is impossible, if all God's attributes are to be maintained. It is mercy although there is a surety. And when we consider who that surety was—when we consider that it was the son of God—when we remember that he gave his life for sinners—when we reflect that no other surety was adequate—no other surety could be found—oh, then, is not the mercy of God enhanced, when rather than it should not be exercised—when that it might have scope—God gave up his son unto the death? He made him our oblation—he made him the sacrifice for our sins—he exacted of him the punishment of our transgression—he laid upon him our iniquities. It is through Christ that mercy flows to the sinner. It is not an arbitrary exercise of it—it is not mercy without justice—it is mercy in the way of justice. It is God pardoning the sinner for the sake of his son. Now, we must find that mercy at the day of judgment, or we must be condemned. We must obtain mercy of God in Christ. Salvation cannot be claimed, or it can be claimed only when we have believed in Christ—on the ground of his, not our, righteousness. Christ's work becomes available to us when we believe in him. We find mercy when we seek it on the footing of Christ's merit—of his satisfaction. He completely satisfied the law of God. He bore its penalty: he fulfilled its demands. He became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Faith in Christ obtains an interest in his righteousness, so that we become, as it were

the very "Righteousness of God in him." The very Righteousness of God is imputed to us, and we are justified in God's sight. It is to the mercy of God, however, that we owe that the righteousness of Christ is available to us. It was the mercy of God that sought out this provision for the sinner's salvation. The sinner would otherwise have perished without mercy. His sins would forever have condemned him. In this way, however, mercy may now be found. God now waits to be gracious. God is dispensing mercy even from the throne of his holiness. The Lord is very faithful. He is longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy. Mercy is an attribute of God. He could not exercise it inconsistently with his justice—but it is one of his attributes notwithstanding. We have but to seek his mercy in the way he himself has appointed. We need it. We are guilty. We are the transgressors of God's law. We are offenders against his majesty. Our sins have provoked his anger: we are lying under his curse; and unless we obtain the mercy of God we must lie under his curse: we must be the objects of God's anger: throughout all eternity. And what must that be? To be under the wrath and curse of God forever! His wrath must be misery to the uttermost. Is the anger of an earthly judge much?—is the frown of an earthly sovereign much?—is the displeasure of an earthly parent much? But what must the anger, the frown, the displeasure of God be? Inconceivably more awful, more dreadful. We can form no adequate conception of the wrath of God. It is not so much the extent of that wrath, as its being the wrath of God. It will be this that will form the endurance of misery to the sinner throughout an endless eternity. God's wrath! The displeasure of any of our fellows may be intolerable—it may be misery—but oh! not the misery that the displeasure of God must be—that displeasure sensibly felt and openly manifested. Hence the prayer of the Apostle, as the most valuable that he could offer for Onesiphorus, "the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." The Apostle knew that if he did not find mercy, he would suffer the displeasure of God, and that he knew was the most awful calamity that could fall upon him. The apostle has no better prayer for Onesiphorus than this—even that he might be delivered from the wrath to come—that he might find mercy of the