

eration; not as it is seen in the mere communications of temporal good, but as it appears to the interests of the immortal soul—shielding it from its danger and saving it from its ruin. Here it accomplished its grand end through the Mediatorial work of the Son of God, who, in accordance with the Divine purpose has offered a propitiatory sacrifice, applied through faith to the sinner's state and heart, secures the blessing. The ceremonies and sacrifices and priesthood of the law of Moses were all formed with a reference to *this*, and all derived their forgiving power from the fact that they were types of His death, who, "once in the end of the world put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Thus under that ancient economy penitent believers could lay claim, "Thou Lord, art good and ready to forgive." There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." And to my dear readers, how fully the delightful fact is ratified! Looking back to Calvary, and gazing and musing on the victim of the cross, we hear the voice in its utmost clearness, and we repeat its sweet accents as possessing a charm which opens for us the portals of immortality—"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

The Divine mercy is presented to us also in its *plenitude*—"He is abundant in His goodness—keeping mercy for thousands." And when we speak of the plenitude of mercy, we may consider it as to its *power*: that there is no guilt too heinous for it to cancel; no stain too deep for it to expunge; no dungeon too barred for it to open; no danger too imminent and too portentous for it to chase away. He through whom it is bestowed, saves to the *utmost*; His blood cleaveth from all sin;—it is identified with the energy of Omnipotence, the same resistless power that moves planets in their orbits, and wings seraphs in their spheres.

When we speak of the plenitude of mercy, we may consider it as to its extent. There is its extent as to *space*, for, though apparently contracted, it is associated with a system which, as arranged in the fulness of time, is adapted for universal diffusion, and according to the sure word of prophecy, it is intended to proceed and advance, till it shall have given salvation to every kindred, and tribe, and people, and nation. There is also its extent as to *duration*. It is permanent and imperishable, "from everlasting

to everlasting"—pledged before the foundation of the world; stretching through all the generations of time, without the possibility of exhaustion and decay; certain and unfailing in its efficacy until the consummation of all things, and then, mercy shall reign immortally triumphant amid the rejoicings and hallelujahs of the skies!

Jehovah proclaims His *justice*; "and that will by no means clear the guilty." Never must it be imagined that the mercy of God can be proclaimed but in consistency with His Justice. God would not let the tribes of Israel forget His justice, as He now announced Himself to His servant on the Mount. He now unfolded the equality and harmony of His perfections. Had they heard of His mercy only, they would have heard but a part of the truth, and would have been untaught in that momentous judicial sanction which so powerfully assists the regulation of human conduct, and apart from which mercy herself could not achieve her victories. They were told, therefore that if they would indulge in sin—the tendency to which had already been displayed—He would visit that sin upon them, both personally and nationally, by the infliction of His sore displeasure. *In them*, He would vindicate His Justice. (See XX: 5, and Jer. XXXII 18, 19).

But without further referring to the special bearing of the expressions on the Jewish people, let us look, for a moment at the *general principle* which the proclamation involves. For men, anywhere, to dishonour God by the impenitent resistance of His authority and violation of His law, and by refusing to apply for His grace according to the methods by which He has promised to bestow it, this is, for them, to put away the prospect of forgiveness, and to live in inevitable exposure to condemnation and final punishment. The great plan of mercy and forgiveness is one in which Justice forms an essential element and in which the rights of justice are inviolably preserved:—"God is just, while he is the Justifier of the ungodly." Apart from that plan, Justice, (the claims of which, in it were satisfied in the *sacrifice*), exacts those claims from the *sinner*; and the sinner having nothing, wherewith to expiate guilt, must endure its penal consequences in himself and endure the righteous sentence which overwhelms in destruction. The punishment is proportioned to the amount of privilege and opportunity abused; and because in the