

that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness," that is, let him do it with cheerfulness.— Probably he refers to official duty in connection with the Church; but surely the rule may apply to all "shewing of mercy." This manner alone befits the spirit of mercy. Selfishness may prompt the act of seeming mercy, to have done with the trouble, or to sustain a sham profession.— True, God-like mercy wears no seeming goodness. Much of worldly goods the merciful man may not have, but yet his unfeigned compassion is as a healing balm to the woe-stricken and the needy. The rich man's dollar tossed to the urgent beggar has a power, but not for the higher good; it heals no heart-wound, makes no sweet impress of goodness on the soul, uproots no bitterness. Let the merciful *try* to meet the want, earnestly, gently.— The very manifestation of will has power to wake new life in withered humanity as it falls like spring showers on the soul.

MIGHTY IS THE INFLUENCE OF MERCY.

Its outgoings are with power. Not the storm-power that makes the habitations of men tremble, tears the forest, and spreads out its scenes of ruin; but the spring power that melts the snow, loosens the earth and clothes nature with its lovely summer garb of green. Divine mercy subdues the stubborn, takes away the heart of stone, and leads men to sweet friendship with God and submission to his will. Like power has the mercy of the christian, the soul in harmony with God, in fellowship with the suffering of, Christ, softens, subdues, and reconciles. Many a sinner who has hardened himself under the denunciations of stern law, and kicked hard against the convictions of right, has surrendered at the approach of mercy.— "Mercy with gentleness," has entered by the chinks of the sin-armour, touched the heart and melted its enmity. Mercy, with its beseeching voice and helping hands,

restores the wanderer, guides the erring, inspires hope, elevates and purifies the heart. The toils of the merciful have been seen in all lands blessed with the gospel,— in the perils of those who have shrunk from no hardship, persecution, or even from death itself, whilst labouring, if by any means they might save some." There too are seen their triumphs in Sabbath gatherings of glad worshippers, and the peace, order, and unity, that have supplanted strife, envy, and enmity. Their toils are written in self-denied efforts to supply the wants of the poor, comfort the mourning, and reclaim the outcast. Their triumphs are seen in the sheltered orphan,— the widow whose heart sings for joy,— the mourning consoled with blessed hope —and the lost and wretched prodigal once more at home, resting in peace beneath his father's roof.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN IS MERCIFUL.

Through every dispensation, His mercy has been displayed. In the ears of ancient Israel he was proclaimed as, "The LORD, the Lord God, merciful and gracious."— His mercy is seen in providence, as "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It is seen in his "long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish." It is seen in the plan of human redemption, in setting forth his Son Jesus, the propitiation for our sins and in the welcome of the sinful to the provisions of his grace. Mercy marked the steps of the Son of God on his mission to our earth. It urged him on his weary journeys, and led him away down among the publicans and sinners. It shone out amid the varied scenes of his wondrous life. On the multitudes who gathered around the Great Teacher, he looked with compassion. In mercy he had toiled, preaching repentance; and he weeps, in mercy, over the impenitent. How his compassionate soul is wrung as he laments,