

so the soul, conscious of His mercy, forbears with ignorance, wrong, and obstinacy and, "as God for Christ's sake has forgiven," so freely forgives.

THE FIELD OF MERCY'S OPERATION

Is wide, wide as the range of human ignorance, error, and suffering. The priests of old were required to be "merciful men, having compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way." In ignorance is rooted much of man's misery. Above all, ignorance of God begets, and ever will beget, evil. The Christianly merciful man, as a priest unto God, will manifest his compassion by efforts to spread spiritual knowledge, that men may "know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, whom to know is life eternal—acting with intelligence and wisdom he will not only weep over misery, but will labour to remove its cause. Mere sentimentalism may lead men to say "How fearful the amount of misery and wretchedness, that might be at once removed, did the miserable and wretched know the gospel!" but true compassion will lead to effort—will guide the hand to earnest labour, to bring men to the knowledge of Christ—will not exhaust itself in mere well wishing, but bestow its strength on well acting.

ABUNDANCE OF WORK

For the merciful there will be, where *the erring* are so numerous. As they judge and speak of their fellow men, how many seem, to imagine that continual progress in the straight road of right action is the rule and not the exception among men. Their thoughts skim the surface of society, nor have they honestly examined themselves—narrowly looked to their own thoughts and actions, else they had understood their own errors and formed a juster estimate of poor fallen humanity, with all its proneness to go wrong. Many who have not so glaringly erred, had they been

surrounded by the same temptations would have fallen as others have—had not their way been hedged up by parental care or other favorable circumstances, they had also entered into those evil courses which have marred men's lives and brought misery upon themselves and others. Beware of Pharisaic pride, and instead of coldly uttering "Stand by for I am holier than thou," deal gently with the erring. In the spirit of love, of mercy, labour to correct their errors. So did He who came "to seek that which was lost." Withhold not the helping hand because the sufferer does not deserve relief. A fellow mortal suffers—you may know the cause—his misery is the fruit of sin—you know it, what then? If yours is the ministry of the merciful, remembering that it is God's to pardon or to punish—you will feel that you have to do with the misery, and seeking to act "as the children of the Highest," who is kind unto the unthankful and the evil you will be "merciful." To wait until we are satisfied that the needy one is an innocent or guilty sufferer ere we show kindness, is to act on the false notion that we are here the ministers of justice and not of mercy. Men may act thus from the absence of deep conviction of their own sinfulness and their need of the mercy of God. Self-righteousness sets aside mercy—petrifies the feelings—makes a man harsh, cruel, unforgiving; hence the contrast between the life and action of many professors of religion, and the gentleness, meekness, and compassion of Christ. Would that men would weigh well their own deserts and ponder the solemn utterance of Messiah, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again!"

MERCY GOES CHEERFULLY TO WORK.

It wears no traits of a mean and grudging spirit. The merciful man gives,—God smiles. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Paul writes to the Romans, "He