The Mercy of God Preeminent.

Ps. 108: 4.

There is an erroneous view adopted by many in regard to the mercy of God, which confounds it with His Goodness. Now it is true that there is no such thing as mercy conceivable aside from Goodness: the very idea of mercy implies Goodness. But there must certainly may be such a thing as goodness without mercy. The error arises from the inaccuracy with which we make used words to express our views and thoughts.

To clear the subject then of all vagueness and indefiniteness, let it be remembered that mercy always presupposes in the object toward which it is exercised, the idea of guilt. Hence it would be wholly
inappropriate to speak of God showing mercy to the Good and Innocent. He is good to all; He is good to Angels; He was good to Adam in Eden; but He does not regard Angels as objects of mercy. He did not regard Adam as an object of mercy.

There are two classes of individuals only
by the great God who are regarded with mercy; they are his own children, who, with their renewal of nature, and partial Sanctification, are still full of imperfections, and in whom that is in whose flesh "Dwelleth no good thing." They need the constant application of God's mercy, and no class is more ready to acknowledge their need than they; and accordingly their prayer is: "Let thy mercy be upon us according as we hope in thee!"
or when overtaken, and overwhelmed by the power of temptation, they have been forced to cry out from the depths of their spirit in the agony of bitter spiritual sorrow. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions!"

2. The other class to whom mercy can be extended, is that of the impenitent, guilty, undeserving sinner. The "Divine Mercy, therefore, is not mere Divine Goodness." There is then, good reason why the distinction should be drawn, between those who are living in their sins, and are secretly indulging a kind of vague hope that God is so good that He will not condemn them, although they
are guilty. Let men learn that Mercy is only exercised towards the guilty, and that in a way that is not founded upon any principle that they can control, that it is free and not to be bought, that it is an act of sovereignty, dependent only upon God's Will, and they can then see that it is a condition full of penitence for them to hope in God's goodness which they confounded with his mercy. The goodness of God pervades all the Universe save one spot: He would make all His creatures happy except one Class; that place is Hell; that Class consists of Devils; in that deep dark dungeon of Despair His goodness does not will not go; to that lost Class.
it is not never will be displayed; there hope that visits all the living never comes; there, mercy that is bestowed upon the living, erring children of men, never ceases. But the mercy of God will be readily understood when it is known to be "the exercise of God's benevolence, good will, toward those who do not deserve it, in especial manner toward those who have merited anger and punishment." So that, there are requisites on both sides; "there must be unworthiness, and criminality in the recipient, and goodness in the bestower. Three consequences follow from this representation of mercy: 1. Had mercy never been exercised toward man, none of God's attributes would have been dishonored.
3. No cry of complaint could have come up from the fathomless depths of his misery, through the perpetual duration of his despairing Eternity. There is however another misconception in regard to Mercy against which it were well to guard ourselves. While we hold up God’s mercy as wonderfully preeminently glorious, there is danger that we may seem to exalt this attribute at the expense of all the rest. The danger does not affect the true children of God. They are not the persons who exalt God’s mercy above His Justice, Holiness and Truth. It is the inpenitent sinner who does this, and the
direct result of such a view of God's mercy is to make it appear that sin is a small evil; that prayer is unnecessary; that God "is indifferent to his law;" that God's justice may be set aside; that He is not so terrible in His wrath against the evil doer as He is represented. All this arises from false views of mercy; making it so entirely to absorb the Divine love that He has left no room for the exercise of justice, holiness & truth; and turning His eternal moral Govt. into a scene of anarchy, and giving to mercy such a licentiousness as would convert the world into a Pandemonium, and thus instead of being mercy, it would be the height of unkindness & enmity.
Let us therefore be understood fairly in the utterance of the proposition that "God's Mercy is Preeminent." We detract not a hair's weight from the grandeur of His other Attributes. There let them stand in all their sublime and unapproachable magnificence, as the distinctive traits of the inconceivable God. His Wisdom is infinite; His Power is infinite; His Holiness is infinite; His Justice is infinite; His Truth is infinite. How then can we form any conception of Mercy higher than this? This quality of Infinity admits of no degree; one thing cannot be more Infinite than another. Each therefore is to be understood as occupying its own Infinite, eternal,
unchangeable sphere, and while each is of the other independent, yet of the same true, all combine most harmoniously to make up the Glorious xst of that al Might, Being whom we hold to be God. But for all this, we hold also that there is a peculiar grandeur and glory about God's Mercy that belongs to no other, of By way of explanation of this position we Hx attribute. For example, I., God's Omnipo
tence has one sort of eminence, but it is that which is peculiar to itself and does not hold that high range in God's xst that is possessed by Mercy and many others. So of the rest there may be no difference in point of infinity, in any of them but there is something peculiar to each and some surpass others in attractiveness. Having
prepared the way by this general statement we
add now 2d. All God’s attributes in their
application to His creatures do not
produce “the same wondrous view, and
the same elevation of sentiments” as others.
Now we have only to reflect that this
mercy is applied to us; that we are
its beneficiaries; that its results to us
are to be infinitely blissful & glorious;
and then the conclusion will be very
natural that of all God’s Attributes, His
Mercy is preeminently attractive and
that it “is Great above the Heavens.”

We are in a grand amphitheatre of natu-
ral scenery; range after range of towering
mountains rise around & stretch far
away in the dim distance.
when the circling azure banner of the sky

and as peak after peak seems to pierce the very Heavens, we are lost in admira-

tion of the grandeur of the scene, and feel the influence of its sublimity. Yet while there

may be a grandeur in the projections, and while some may lift their tall forms to great

crags and precipes of none, yet others may belch forth strange emotions as the eye rests upon one that stands in

the circle, a green flowery mound, with

a gentle ascent and crowned to the summit

with the deep dark green of the forest, it is with a silent satisfaction that the spirit

clings to that as the congenial home of thought

and hope and peace. So of mercy in the

comparison with God's other glorious attri-

butes, they may tower aloft in unapproach-
able magnificence we can stand and
in silent wonder adore them as the perfections of our adorable God, exclaiming
"O Lord my God thou art very great!" yet we turn away from Sinai with its vengeful thunderings and lightnings and even from Calvary while the palpable darkness of God's abandonment of his Son, envelops the awful mount, and we go "to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God and to the heavenly Jerusalem" as the blessed mercy seat and there fall into the sweet repose of a Father's gracious forgiveness all the perturbations of our anxious spirits. It is thus that we make it apparent that the Mercy of God is preeminently attractive to the
children of Men. But the grandeur of this most attractive interesting theme needs to be much more minutely developed so that our devotional sentiments may be fully aroused and nurtured. Accordingly we establish its preeminence from the several arguments among which we mention,

1. The testimony of God Himself, in His Word, in His dealings with men. It may be stated without any danger of doing violence to the Word of God, that He manifests a special pleasure in the exercise of Mercy. He of course delights in the exercise of all His attributes, but the statement we make in regard to His special delight in Mercy may be made plainer by a reference to
the process which is going on in the mind of every one who is rightly influenced. For example: Here is one who is a good citizen & subject to the laws of his country, and as such, he loves to do all that is required of him; to preserve the peace and security of all; to uphold the authority of law; to repress disorder and violence, by actual personal influence. You may however suppose another case which will carry this idea still further. It is that of one who instead of evermore appealing to law & authority to restrain the disorderly, & to protect the innocent, seeks to inspire into all parties with the principles of virtue, industry, and order by education. Thus order them so contented intelligent & happy that they would govern themselves without law. Now
Which of these cases is the more attractive, in which of these sets of influences would a right-thinking man take most delight? It is easy to perceive that while the first is good—the last is better. Again, there is one who does justice to all in his intercourse with all men associated with him; even justice, no complaint can be made of him; he is an upright, honest, and blameless man. But you may readily suppose a case carried a degree beyond this, when a man is not satisfied with doing justly, also loves mercy, and shows it by bestowing his goods to feed the poor, drying the orphan's tear, and causing the widow's heart to sing for joy. "In which of these cases is there most to delight and attract? Undoubtedly in the last. So now God delights in
all His attributes, but it does seem from the very nature of God Himself that He must take His chief delight in Mercy. Justice, truth, holiness are infinitely pleasing to Him, but Mercy is peculiarly His delight. What else would He have us understand by the language, “As I live, ye shall know that I will not die?” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Much is said about God’s other attributes, and much too that proves that God glories in them. But that cannot fail to strike you as you read His Word that there is a peculiarity in the manner of His speech about Mercy, proving that it is only this Mercy that you get a glimpse of the Divine heart! He never speaks of Mercy as
"Strange work!" but He does speak of justice in its execution, and judgment vengeance as His "Strange work." He has no pleasure in them. He is Love and Mercy in His very bliss. And oh, fellow sinner, you have the proof of this in His dealings with you! You refuse, reject, and even spurn His Mercy; and yet He follows you with it unto the last moment when you cross the invisible 'line, which marks the destiny of man for glory or despair,' seven then you know how Jesus acted (Who was Jesus?) when the Jews rejected Him, t he knew that they would be destroyed for their wickedness; how he stood on the brow of Olivet, swept exclaiming, "O Jerusalem!" He I establish the preeminence of Mercy, however, by reference
II. To the testimony of God's word. This indeed is the object of this Book, and strange as it may appear to you, God's saving mercy is taught nowhere else. Some combat this position by assuming that we know God to be merciful from our moral Constitution; God has made us so that we regard mercy as an excellence; if so, we are made so as to ascribe it to Him, since He could not be perfect without that which we regard as a perfection. But there is in this no instruction as to how He regards Sin. A Sinner, without God's word doubted whether He will pardon—

Some say we can learn it from our daily experience and that this proves His mercy. This view of His goodness teaches us that apart from the Bible—But this cannot teach us whether He will pardon Sin. This only
tells of outward good & this is forsaking us as we realize the affecting description 12th Ecc.
so we would be more likely to learn from this that things are grown worse worse worse
in Eternity.

Some say that God's goodness Benevolence
and teach His Mercy without the Bible. Child
so we may learn He's good by looking abroad upon the earth everywhere to but
what about Storms - Earthquakes - famines
pestilences - eruptions of Volcanic Mists the
death of infancy? All we see here teaches just as much as that He is a God of Vengeance as He is
of Mercy - The fact is that the Mercy of God in saving sinners is so grand a
development of His Benevolence that
material All worlds tell their glories can never show it.
and it is to be found no where else but here in this Book. But I establish it
3. By the manner of its display. The Plan of
salvation shows it, nothing else could. So this
attribute ever required such a plan. “The incar-
nation, life, and death of the Son of God.”

Assuming our form of flesh, “in a manner miraculous, in
liminal, eternal.” “Not ask.” “Stable Poor.

Parents flying from those who do murder him, earning
His bread by fatique, hunger was tempted, healed
the sick, preached to the poor, wept in their
sorrows—persecution—death again, distress
on Cross—Gethsemane etc.

This was God’s Son that did all this! Why? To show God’s Mercy.
Nothing like it ever was done be-
fore in this world or in any