

## There's a Wideness In God's Mercy

Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863

There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in Heaven;  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgment given.

Thee is welcome for the sinner,  
And more graces for the good;  
There is mercy with the Savior;  
There is healing in His blood.

There is grace enough for thousands  
Of new worlds as great as this;  
There is room for fresh creations  
In that upper home of bliss.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of our mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

There is plentiful redemption  
In the blood that has been shed;  
There is joy for all the members  
In the sorrows of the Head.

'Tis not all we owe to Jesus;  
It is something more than all;  
Greater good because of evil,  
Larger mercy through the fall.

If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at His word;  
And our lives would all be sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord.

Souls of men! Why will ye scat  
Like a crowd of frightened sheep?  
Foolish hearts! Why will ye wander  
From a love so true and deep?

It is God: His love looks mighty,  
But is mightier than it seems;  
'Tis our Father; and His fondness  
Goes far out beyond our dreams.

But we make His love too narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own.

Was there ever kinder shepherd  
Half so gentle, half so sweet,  
As the Savior who would have us  
Come and gather at His feet?

Frederick Faber had an unusual spiritual journey. Raised as a strict Calvinist, he strongly opposed the Roman Catholic Church. After education at Oxford, he became an ordained Anglican minister. Gradually, however, he was influenced by the Oxford Movement, which stressed that Anglican churches had become too evangelical – with too little emphasis on formal and liturgical worship. Eventually Faber renounced the Anglican State Church, became a Catholic priest, and spent his remaining years as Superior of the Catholic Brompton Oratory in London. He had always realized the great influence that hymn singing had in Protestant evangelical churches. He was determined to find materials for the Catholics to use in the same way. He worked tirelessly in writing hymns and publishing numerous collections of them. In 1854, the Pope honored Frederick Faber with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.