

translation suggests, that the time of the call is limited, and that it is therefore vital to take advantage of it while it is still available. Such a fact is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Jer. 8:20), but is probably not suggested here. The idea of this verse is that since God has made it possible for man to come to Him, by giving His own Son to die for sin, as described in Isaiah 53, man is urged to accept the gracious invitation. We could not ourselves win deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. Now that God has done it, through the redemption wrought by Christ, He is near and available so that we may freely call upon Him. The first two verses of the chapter gave the wonderful invitation to all who have heart hunger to come and be satisfied. In verse 6 we imagine a sincere and honest seeker as saying, "How can I avail myself of this wonderful offer, seeing that I am wicked and sinful and deserve nothing good at the hand of God?" The answer is, "Seek the Lord who may now be found, call upon Him, since He is near as a result of what Jesus has done on Calvary." No one need lose the opportunity of salvation because of his wickedness or sin. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Horn. 3:23), but God has freely and abundantly made provision for pardon for those who come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 7 the word "mercy" is a different word from that used in verse 3. It means "compassion" or "pity." It is used in Psalm 103:13 of the attitude of a father toward his child. The last two words of the verse are striking. Literally the Hebrew reads, "will multiply to pardon." God does not give a grudging forgiveness, but is ready most abundantly and fully to pardon all who come to Him through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 8 and 9 provide a necessary thought at this point. It is not the attitude of the natural man to forgive those who have sinned against him. The more usual impulse, as we find it on every side of us, is to demand a full recompense in order to "get even." Certainly the natural man would never think of offering himself to bear the penalty due to the law by someone who has wronged him. These two verses point out how utterly different God is. He does not think as we would think nor act as we would act. He provides a wonderful method of salvation which would never have occurred to