

# GOD and the WORLD

AS SEEN IN

JOHN THREE SIXTEEN

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”

BY

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## Foreword

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ONE of the most valuable things that the British School of Archæology in Egypt ever found in all their explorations in that ancient land was a roll of papyrus leaves hidden in a jar. On examination this turned out to be an eighty-six paged Gospel of John in the Coptic language. Where it was found were the remains of what was most certainly an early church, and from the size of the pages, the explorers concluded that this copy of this wonderful Gospel had been kept in the church for public reading, more than sixteen centuries ago. It is now the most precious possession in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in London.

But I am of the opinion that another piece of papyrus, found on a rubbish heap, and possessed by an Italian Society, is of equal, if not greater, interest, because of the personal element in it. It is a small document, a few inches square, upon which is written our great text, JOHN THREE SIXTEEN. By whom was it written? Nobody knows. But it must have been some one who valued the words, and who wished to have them constantly with him; or, it may be, to send them to a friend with their message of love and life from God. If the latter, how

was it received?—was it believed and treasured, or cast upon the rubbish heap with other useless documents to reappear after more than seventeen hundred years, for it is older than the copy of the entire Gospel of John!

We cannot answer these questions, but it is certain that it was a living word, and valued by some then, as it is a living word and valued now; and will be as long as the Gospel is preached to men. It has been called, "The Bible in Miniature," and it shines with a brilliance that is unsurpassed by any other word in all Scripture. It is a joyful word, and a delight to those who have believed it: a peace-giving word to anxious, burdened sinners, and it should arrest the attention of even the most careless, for it is a message from God even to them. I invite my readers to spend an hour with me, in considering it, and may God bless it to us all.

J. T. M.

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## The Text and How Received

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"I DON'T WANT IT."—ON BOARD THE  
*Mauretania*.—"IT'S THE BEST TEXT IN  
THE BIBLE."—ETERNAL LIFE.



# GOD AND THE WORLD

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## CHAPTER I

### The Text and How Received

I DO not know what it was that made the old Yorkshire woman say, "There's naught so queer as folk," but I have often said the same thing myself, when I have seen the way in which people have treated the story of God's great Love. Quite recently I was giving away Gospel booklets in a South London suburb, and I handed one to the proprietor of a prosperous-looking tobacco and sweets store. He greeted me with a smile, but when he read "God so loved the world" on the cover of the tract, he pushed it back into my hand and shouted, "I don't want it." "But," I said, "it's a message of love and friendliness." "I don't want it, take it out," he raged, and he literally danced as though I had dropped a seven-pound weight on his toes. I was sorry I had annoyed him, but very sad that he felt like that at the sight of my text, and I had to say to myself, "Some folk are queer."

I had another experience. It was on board the fine old *Mauretania* in mid-Atlantic. The western sky was ablaze with the glory of the

setting sun, and shafts of crimson beauty were shot from the horizon across the waves. By my side stood a gentleman, delighted as I was with the splendid picture, and he talked of it as only an artist and an admirer of great sights could talk. I said to him, "Do you know, sir, that the God whose hand painted that glowing sky, loves you and me?" He drew back and looked at me for a moment with a look of anything but pleasure in his eyes, and then without a word, turned on his heel, and went to the other side of the ship, and for the rest of the week he avoided me as though I had the plague. It is a marvellous thing—it is queer, yes, queer is the word for it—that the mention of God's love should affect a man in that way, and yet we need not be surprised, for it is explained in one sentence in the Bible, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Yet John 3. 16 remains upon the page of His Word, and is as true to-day as ever, and what a wonderful declaration of His feelings towards men it is. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." And there is no person, man or woman, rich or poor that may not find room in that "whosoever."

But the great text is not always rejected, to thousands it has been a savour of life unto life. "It's the best text in the Bible," a happy old man said once to me, and I was not surprised that that was what he thought about it, when

he went on to tell me that fifty years before it had changed everything for him. It had been used by God's Holy Spirit to turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and had made his life worth living when it had promised to be a big failure. He had not heard any words in his long life in which there was so much blessing and sweetness, and it was with reverence and affection that he went over them. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." But, good as it was to hear him repeat these words, and to feel the hearty grip of his hand, which showed that, while he was old in years, he was still young in spirit, they did not affect me so much as when I heard them in very different circumstances.

I had spent the afternoon in the large ward of an Infirmary in a northern city. Every bed in that ward was occupied by a suffering man. I had sat and talked for a few minutes with each of these, and had left them all some books to read, when I came to the last bed in the ward. On it was lying a young fellow, not yet twenty. He looked very wan and ill, and as his eyes were closed, I thought he was sleeping. So I sat down by his side, hoping he might awake before I had to go. Soon he opened his eyes, and looked at me with an inquiring look as much as to say, "Who are you?" I said, "I have been giving the men

some Gospel books, but I'm afraid you are too ill to read." "Yes," he said, "I am, and the doctor says there is no hope for me, but *I am in the Lord's hands.*" Those last words came out so unexpectedly, and with so much feeling that the lump came into my throat, and I could not immediately command my voice. When I managed this, I said, "And in the very best hands you are, my dear, for He has said of all who trust in Him, 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, *neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand.*'" "Yes," he answered, "He did say that, and He also said, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'" And then, exhausted by the effort, he closed his eyes and lay still, and I sat silent and thrilled. Then he began to speak again, as though oblivious of my presence; slowly but with an indescribable sweetness he repeated "Everlasting life, everlasting life." I listened for a while to that sacred communion between his ransomed soul and his God; then, giving his hand a gentle squeeze, I withdrew from his side, and the last sound from his lips that I heard was "Everlasting life." That happened on Friday afternoon, and on the following Tuesday he entered the Glory.

That dying lad had found in John 3. 16 what all the gold in the bank of England could not have gained him. Could I have carried to him the highest honours that the King could bestow,

or poured out at his side the choicest treasures of the world, and this earthly life, they would have been worse than useless in the Infirmary ward; but John 3. 16 had enriched him, and God's love had put a peace into his heart that the approach of death could not disturb. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," and "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," and thanks be unto God for everlasting life.



## “Behold the Light”

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THE PRINCE AND THE UNTOUCHABLES.  
—THE OLD STORY.—THE GLORY IN  
THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.—OLD  
MR. HONEST.



## CHAPTER II

## “Behold the Light”

**A**N incident during the Prince of Wales' visit to India, which was a great event in the history of the pitiful “untouchables” in that land, has been well told by Katherine Mayo in her famous book “Mother India.” The fact of the Prince's kindness of heart had reached the ears of these poor outcasts and, says the author of that remarkable book :

“When he turned back from his transit of the Great North Gate—the Khyber Pass itself—a strange thing awaited him. A swarm of Untouchables, emboldened by news that had reached them, clustered at the roadside to do him reverence.

“‘Government ki jai!’ ‘Hail to the Government!’ they shouted with cheers that echoed from the barren hills. And when the Prince slowed down his car to return their greetings, they leaped and danced in their excitement.

“For nowhere in all their store of memory or of legend had they any history of any Indian Magnate who had noticed an Untouchable, except to scorn him. And here was a greater

than all India contained—the son of the Supreme Power—to them almost divine, who deigned not only to receive, but even to thank them for their homage. Small wonder that their spirits soared, that their eyes saw visions, that their tongues laid hold on mystic words.

“‘Look, look!’ they cried to one another; ‘behold, the Light! the Light!’

“And such was their exaltation, that many of them somehow worked through to Delhi, to add themselves to the 25,000 of their kind, who there awaited the Prince’s coming. The village people from round about flocked in to join them—the simple people of the soil, who know nothing of politics, but much of friendship as shown in works. And all together haunted the roadside, waiting, and hoping, for a glimpse of his face.

“At last he came, down the Grand Trunk Road, toward the Delhi Gate; and in the centre of the hosts of Untouchables, one, standing higher than the rest, unfurled a flag.

“‘Yuvaraj Maharaj ki jai! Raja ke Bete ki jai!’ ‘Hail to the Prince! Hail to the King’s son!’ they all shouted together, as if to burst their throats. And the Prince, while the high-caste Indian spectators wondered, and revolted within themselves, at his lack of princely pride, ordered his car to be stopped.

“Then a spokesman ventured forward to offer, in a humble little speech, the love and fealty of the 60,000,000 of the Unclean, and to beg the heir to the throne to intercede for them

with his father, the King Emperor, never to abandon them into the hands of those who despised them and would keep them slaves.

"The Prince heard him through. Then, whether he realised the magnitude of what he did, or whether he acted merely in the impulse of his natural friendly courtesy toward all the world, he did an unheard-of thing. He stood up—stood up for them, the 'worse than dogs'!—spoke a few words of kindness, looked them all over, slowly, and so with a radiant smile, gave them his salute.

"No sun that had risen on India had witnessed such a sight. As the car started on, moving slowly, not to crush them, they went almost mad. And again their Eastern tongues clothed their thought. 'Brother—that word was truth that our brothers brought us—behold, the light is there indeed! The light, the glory, on his face!'"

It was not much that the Prince could do for those almost hopeless people; he did what he could, and won their hearts by what he did. But I would seize upon the incident to illustrate what I want to tell in this book. God-so-loved-the-world. It is an old story that I am telling, and these are familiar words that I am repeating, but I ask you to consider them afresh; you know them well, but look at them again. The heart of God is behind what He has done, and it is more than sinful to ignore that fact. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He sent Him into the

world, not to condemn it, but with the light of His love shining in His face.

To the angels in heaven, this world must have seemed an unlikely place for their Creator and Lord to visit; and they must have marvelled as they saw His sacred, sinless feet treading the filthy streets of those Eastern cities; and when He touched the lepers, and looked kindly upon the outcasts, and spoke in tones of mercy even to the vilest, they must have wondered as to what the end would be. It is recorded that "He was seen of angels." But most men were unmoved by His presence among them. Proud Jerusalem asked scornfully, "Who is this?" But some beheld the glory in His face, and they bore witness and said, "He dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." God's love smiled upon sinners through the eyes of Jesus. In Him was the light. He is the Light, and those that follow Him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

His progress in this world was not through admiring multitudes to a glorious throne, it ought to have been, but it wasn't. Instead, He was despised and rejected of men, and God knew that He would be when He sent Him, and every step that He trod, took Him nearer to the Cross.

"That path uncheered by earthly smiles  
Led only to the Cross."

And the wonder of all ages is that that Cross

is the supreme witness of God’s love to men. I must repeat that it is an old story that I am telling, but to those who have believed it, its charm endures, and it will live to be rehearsed when the exploits of the greatest and kindest of men are forgotten. It is the story of a love that is eternal and unmeasurable.

“You might count all the days of the ages,  
 All the snowflakes come down from above,  
 All the flowers of summers departed—  
 But you cannot measure this love.”

And it shines still in the face of Jesus, for, though He died, He lives again—risen from the dead, and exalted to the throne in Heaven there still shines from His face the glory of the love and grace of God to men; and I take up the words that those astonished and enraptured Untouchables spoke of the kindly Prince. I say to you, “Brother—that word was truth that our brothers brought us—behold the light is there indeed! The light, the glory, on His face!” And I can give you more reliable authority than that of any man, or of any brother of ours who has spoken to us, though tens of thousands would willingly bear their witness to you, and their witness would be true; but I turn to the Bible, the infallible Word of God, and tell you that it tells us that, “The light of the knowledge of God is in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4. 6).

And if that light shines into a heart, what is the result? Have you read the story of old Mr. Honest in John Bunyan’s wonderful book?

He wanted to join the Pilgrim band that was travelling to the Celestial City, and Greatheart, the leader of the band, asked him to give an account of himself. "I come," said he, "from the town of Stupidity, it lieth about four degrees beyond the City of Destruction."

"I have often wondered," said Greatheart, "that any should come from your place; for your town is worse than the City of Destruction."

"Yes," said old Honest, "we lie more off the sun, and seem more cold and senseless. *But were a man in a mountain of ice, yet if the Sun of Righteousness will rise upon him, his frozen heart shall feel a thaw.* THUS IT HATH BEEN WITH ME."

"I believe it, Father Honest, I believe it," cried Greatheart, "for I know the thing is true."

Yes, it is true, if but one ray of light shines from the face of Jesus into a man's heart, it melts and warms and changes it, and he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, a lover of God and a possessor of eternal life.

# The Source of the Blessing

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ABOVE THE CLOUDS.—TRACK IT FROM  
ITS SOURCE.—FROM THE GLORY TO  
THE CROSS.

1875



## CHAPTER III

## The Source of the Blessing

I HAD to cross a high mountain range in a distant land. It was early morning, and the rising sun had not yet dispersed the snow-white clouds that rolled beneath me, and which were pierced here and there by giant peaks that reared upward to the tropical sky. It was a most wonderful prospect, and a new and thrilling experience for me, but what moved me most, and left the deepest impression on my mind was a fountain of water, cool as the night and clear as crystal, that sprang up from the rock, thousands of feet above the sea, and went flowing down to the sun-parched plains beneath. As I stood in those glorious surroundings, the music of that fountain got into my soul, and I felt that I must sing, and so, raising my voice, I sang to the accompanying of the flowing waters, part of William Cowper's hymn of praise to our great Saviour :

“E'er God had built the mountains  
Or raised the fruitful hills,  
Before He filled the fountains  
That feed the running rills,

In Thee, from everlasting,  
 The wonderful I AM  
 Found pleasures never wasting,  
 And WISDOM is Thy Name.

“And could’st Thou be delighted  
 With creatures such as we?  
 Who, when we saw Thee, slighted  
 And nailed Thee to a tree!

*Unfathomable wonder!*  
*And mystery divine!*  
*The voice that speaks in thunder*  
*Says, ‘Sinner, I am thine!’”*

As I finished my song by that fountain above the clouds, I was moved to deeper praise for I thought of that greater fountain of blessing and life that is springing up and flowing forth to unhappy, sinful, thirsty, dying men. Where will you find it? If you would discover it, you must arise and travel in your search by Calvary and Bethlehem, you must pass upward above the clouds, you must go from earth to heaven and away into the heights of eternal glory—to the heart of the blessed God. Then, and not till then, will you reach the fountain, the source of blessing. It springs up in the very heart of God, for *God is love*. In those three words we are told what God is in the absolute perfection of His eternal Being. But what is that to us, unless His love can reach us in blessing? And how can it do that? We are sinners, which is only another name for rebels; we were guilty and dead towards God; no pulse of love stirred in our souls towards Him; we had turned every one to his

own way, and gone so far from Him that we needed only to take one more step and our souls had been plunged into hopeless and everlasting perdition. What could God's love do for us, and how could He show it to us? The answer comes as clear as human words, divinely chosen, can state it. "In this is manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." But can God love sinful men, who never loved Him, and yet maintain His holiness?

And if He does love them and shows it, what of His eternal justice, upon which the pillars of His moral universe are founded? Again there comes the answer, sure and sufficient, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 8, 9, 10).

Burdened and weary sinner, unsatisfied and thirsting, be glad and rejoice, that, though you have not loved God, He has loved you; and though you have not sought Him, He has sought you. He has anticipated your deep need, and has taken the only way by which you could be saved, to save you. Ponder my text again. For, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Begin at the source of it, and track the way that the love of God has taken to reach you; see Him who was in the form of God descending from His high

glory to earth; pause for a moment at the manger in Bethlehem, and join your adoration there with the worship of the shepherds from the hills, for the Babe before whom they bow is Emmanuel, the only begotten Son of God—given for the world. Travel further, for *Jesus* must go further if we were to be saved from perishing; keep His company as He moves amid the miseries of men, rising up day by day before the sun, to be ready to heal their sicknesses and assuage their sorrows; travel with Him through Gethsemane; it is a rough way for His feet to go, but He does not refuse to tread it, see Him move onward with steadfast face, despised and rejected of men, spit upon, scourged and crowned with thorns; follow Him through the gates of David's city as He bears His cross to Calvary. Do not stand with the mocking multitude lest you partake of their spirit, but with the mother of Jesus, and His mother's sister, and Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, and the disciple whom Jesus loved; you will be in good company if you stand with them to "Behold the Lamb of God" crucified for a world of sinners.

You have yet to learn the meaning of it, you have yet to learn why the giving of God's only begotten Son should have meant sorrow and sacrifice and death for Him, and salvation and life for you; but it was only on this road that the love of God could reach you. He had loved the world in vain apart from this.

# The Gospel Begins with God

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SIR JAMES JEANS AND THE STARS.—GOD IS GREAT AND I AM SMALL, CAN HE THINK OF ME?—HOW WE MAY KNOW THAT HE CARES.—THE SOULS OF MEN ARE OF MORE VALUE THAN THE STARS.



## CHAPTER IV

**The Gospel Begins with God**

**O**UR text begins with God, and God is great; it tells us that He loved the world, and the world is small. Even to us it appears to be small in comparison with what we used to feel about it, now that men can fly round it in a few days; but how small it is in comparison with the universe.

Sir James Jeans commences one of his books with a staggering paragraph. He says, "A few stars are known, which are hardly bigger than the earth, but the majority are so large that hundreds of thousands of earths could be packed inside each and leave room to spare; here and there we come upon a giant star large enough to contain millions and millions of earths. And the total number of stars in the universe is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the sea shores of the world. Such is the littleness of our home in space, when measured up against the total substance of the universe."

Those who believe the Bible, and they are wise men who believe it, know that God, and not accident, is the Maker of those mighty

stars, for the Bible begins with, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and as to the stars and their number and their names, it also tells us that "He calleth them all by their names" (Psa. 147. 4). And the question may well arise in the mind, "How can God, who is so great, care for a world that is so small?" and, further, and more puzzling still, how can He have a personal interest in any one of the two thousand millions of people who live on it? It was this that puzzled a man with whom I talked. He had imbibed more learning at Continental Universities than comes within reach of most English-speaking men, and he was not an atheist. He had a reverent and humble mind, and believed in the existence of God, but he could only conceive a God who was great and distant. He was impressed with the greatness of God, for he had studied astronomy, and he owned that only an omnipotent God could be the Maker of those countless worlds that bear their silent testimony to His eternal power and divinity; but he said, "How can God, who is so great, take any notice of such an insignificant and useless man as I am?"

How shall we answer his question? There is only one way, we must believe God's Word as to it. We receive the witness of men, but the witness of God is greater. If a man brings us tidings that we are glad to hear, we believe him; why should we not believe God when He speaks? Or do we imagine, as some do, that God, having made us, is unable to communicate

His thoughts to us? The notion is absurd. He that made the mouth, can He not speak? He has spoken, and His words tell of a love that exceeds all our comprehension. We may not understand it, but we may believe it, and "he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." And what is the record? It is that to all that believe, "God hath given eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

There is no other way of knowing this great fact; we cannot arrive at it by studying the stars or by digging into the secrets of nature. The philosophies of men do not reach to this. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" No, here the best intellects are baffled, and the wisest men are fools, for the things of God knoweth no man, until they are revealed to him, but God has revealed them, and they are very real to the man who believes. God has revealed His love, and that revelation is contained in the words of John 3. 16. And they stand out, even amongst the words of Holy Scripture in an unsurpassed glory. The man whose mind is blinded by the god of this world will refuse the revelation, but the heart in which faith has awakened will receive it, and sing:

"How Thou canst think so well of us  
Yet be the God Thou art,  
Is darkness to my intellect,  
But sunshine to my heart."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the poet, spent a night behind a telescope at the Greenwich Observatory, and afterwards remarked, "That's the sort of thing that makes one think little of county families." And indeed it is as well to be impressed with the littleness and futility of men, who strut and pose in their pride, yet we must not judge of things by their size. We are impressed with the vastness of the stars, as astronomers descant upon them, but when we come to the Bible, they are treated in a mere incidental way. The creation chapter tells us, "He made the stars also."

And we may be sure that they were all made for a great purpose, the fact that God calls them all by name means that, and that purpose will be revealed when "the mystery of God is finished." But the souls of men are evidently of more value to God than the stars, for, for their salvation He gave His only begotten Son. It is to man that He has revealed His love in JESUS, and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

We are, indeed, small and insignificant, one blast of God's indignation against us for our sins would have been our utter extinction, yet of such value were we in His sight that He gave His only begotten Son for us, yes, for ungrateful rebellious men He gave His Son!

For men, both vile and guilty, the living stream of blessing flows! It is a wonderful story, but is it true? "If only what you have

been telling us were true," said one of my hearers to me, at the close of a Gospel service. "Yes," I said, "wouldn't it be good?" He admitted that nothing would equal it in goodness. "Well," I said, "you may stake your immortal soul upon it, it is as true as it is good, and it is as good as it is true; for it is 'the *Gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*'"



# The Gospel and the Law

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THE GOSPEL BEGINS WITH GOD, THE  
LAW BEGINS WITH YOU.—THE ONE  
WHO SPOKE AT SINAI CAME INTO THE  
WORLD TO TELL US OF GOD'S LOVE.—  
THE LAWFUL USE OF THE LAW.—HOW  
AIDAN WON THE NORTHUMBRIANS.



## CHAPTER V

## The Gospel and the Law

**A** GAIN I want you to notice that our text begins with God, and in this it is unlike the law, which God gave at Sinai. The law began with you. The Lord Himself summed up its ten commandments in two marvellous sentences, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We need not trouble just now about the second part of the law, important as it is, for no man can be right as to that, who is wrong as to the first part of it, and alas, all men have been wrong there. The first part of the law is the crux and test; and it begins with you and ends with God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." It was like a golden ladder set up on the earth, and reaching up to the throne of God, but never did sinful feet mount one rung of that ladder; every man has turned away from it, for every man has loved himself more than he has loved his God.

If God's dealings with men had ended with the law, our case would have been hopeless, for

its just condemnation would have been our doom; but thank God, the law was not the end. The law was given for a wise and just purpose. God had a right to say how His creatures should live, and what He expected them to be, and to refrain from doing. And every right-thinking man owns that the law is good and just and perfect. A life lived according to its standard would be a good life, even though its commandments are, with perhaps two exceptions, only prohibitive. But every man has failed, if not in every point of the law, at least in one, and having failed in one, he is guilty of all.

Now the law is like a plumb-line that exposes the crooked wall, but does not put it straight; it is like the mirror that shows a man that his face is dirty but does not wash it; it can do nothing more for a man than expose and condemn him, for "whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God." It is good for a man to face the law; to stand in those awe-inspiring chapters, Exodus 19 and 20, and to behold the Mount Sinai wrapt in a cloud of darkness, out of which the lightnings flashed, and the thunders spoke; and to hear the voice of God there, so majestic and terrible, that even Moses did exceedingly fear and quake. It is well to consider the law, and bow before its just demands upon sinful men, for nothing could be so well calculated to make us fly from its curse

to God for refuge as He is revealed to us in John 3. 16.

Could it be the same Lord who spoke in the thunders of Sinai, who, in tender accents, told Nicodemus, the Pharisee, that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"? Yes, it was the same, for Jesus is Jehovah. And the man who denies it does not know God, but his mind is blinded by his great foe, the devil, lest he should believe and be saved.

Our text is not like the law, it begins with God and comes down to you; it does not set you climbing up to God, but shows you how He has come down to you, to save you, and what it has cost Him to do it.

Do I then despise the law? Most certainly not. I take up Paul's words, "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," and a lawful use of it would be to bring its lash upon the consciences of the ungodly, to show them their sins, and how far they have come short of its righteous requirements, then they might realise and learn that, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight," for so Romans 3. 20 declares. But the man who preaches the law as a means of gaining God's favour, and as a way of salvation and life opposes the Gospel, and casts a slight upon God's great gift of His Son; he despises the great love of God, or is grossly ignorant of it and what it has done. And the man who puts himself under law in the hope of getting blessing by it, brings upon himself a curse instead, as

Galatians 3. 10, 11 distinctly tells us. We have yet to meet a man whose heart was won for God by the preaching of the law; and we have never heard of a multitude of people singing, "We've found our way to God by the law. Hallelujah!"

It is the Gospel, and not the law, that puts joy into the heart, and the new song on the lips. It is the revelation of God's love that wins men from their sins as ten thousand voices from the past can tell us. I give an instance. After the death of Edwin, the first Christian king of Northumbria, the country was overrun by pagans, and the people sank down into the grossest superstitions. A well-meaning, but austere Irish missionary was sent by the Christian colony in Iona to win them from their darkness to the Christian faith; but he was so appalled by the vileness of their lives and their unashamed debauchery, that he thundered the law at them and denounced their sins. They listened to him with a certain amount of curiosity, but were unmoved by his fierce words. After a while, he abandoned his mission and returned to his brethren, a disappointed man. Amongst those to whom he told the tale of his failure was a Christian brother named Aidan, who was a shining example of one who knew the Lord. He said, "Ah, Lord Jesus, if he had told them of the love of God, and of Thy Cross, they would have hearkened," and constrained by that love, he decided to go and tell the Northumbrians what

he knew. He did not speak the tongue of the people, but Oswald, who was Edwin's nephew and successor, had spent some years in Ireland, and knew the language that Aidan spoke, and, his heart being first won by the matchless story of the love of God, he became the interpreter of the message to the people. Aidan's mission was not a failure as had been that of his predecessor, for the story he told enthralled the people, and what the preaching of the law failed to do, God's great love did, for multitudes "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven;" and Aidan spent the rest of his life in that kingdom gathering those heathen hosts to the feet of the Saviour, and exhorting them to keep themselves in the love of God.



# What Sort of Love is God's Love?

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IS IT A PALLID, PALLIATING, POLITE  
SORT OF THING?—A GREAT SACRIFICE  
WAS CALLED FOR.—DAVID'S LAMENT  
FOR ABSALOM.



## CHAPTER VI

**What Sort of Love is God's Love?**

**W**HAT sort of a love is this love of God? I knew a mother who said one day to her wilful daughter, "Go to your bedroom and tell God all about your naughtiness, and don't come down again until He has forgiven you." I need not say that she was not a wise mother. After a few minutes' silence, the little lady, in very pert fashion, returned to the drawing-room. "Well," said the mother, "did you tell God what a naughty girl you have been?" "Yes, I did," came the reply, "and He said, 'O, Miss E——, don't mention it.'" Does the child's fancy provoke a smile? It saddened me, for behind it, I saw that a false impression had been made upon her mind as to God and His character. To her, as to thousands of people who are grown up, and consider themselves intelligent, God is an indulgent easy-going Being, to whom sin is a minor affair, that nobody should trouble about at all, unless, of course, it becomes a menace to society—then give the sinner short shrift. God's love in their view is a pallid, palliating, polite sort of thing, as vague and invertebrate as they suppose His

justice to be, so that it does not matter whether they please Him or not, He does not care, and if He does it does not matter; it will be all the same in the end.

The love of God is not like that; it is not the love of a weak and indulgent parent; it is a holy love, there is a force and energy and vigour about it that can only be found in God. His love transcends our highest thoughts, it baffles all illustration, but it reaches out to all men, and the meanest and most unintelligent may receive it, and the blessing of it. It is a love that hates sin, and yet has set itself to rescue men from its power and its penalty, and to do this righteously, in the only way in which it can be done, and at its own cost.

God must be against sin, for sin is rebellion against Himself; it would climb up to His throne, and cast Him from it if it could and crown the devil in His place; it has ruined God's fair creature man, for it has blinded his eyes to His goodness, and poisoned the very springs of his being; it has carried the multitudes who have died into death and the grave; it has forged the chains that bind souls in everlasting darkness; out of its foul womb have come forth sorrow, and crying, and pain, and death; it is the mother of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. How could God tolerate sin as though it did not matter? And men are sinners, and willingly so, for all have sinned, and in this there is no difference.

God has come forth in Christ to woo the sinner

and win him, and yet He must deal with his sins in uncompromising justice, and so we find that our great text is inseparably bound to the words that precede it, and those words are about **THE CROSS OF CHRIST**. There would have been no Cross if God had not loved the world, and His love could not have been effective for the world without the Cross.

Let us have, then, the words that precede our text, for they are essential to its meaning: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." A great sacrifice was called for, and it must be holy and of infinite value. A Son of Man must stand up as the Substitute and Representative of men; but He must be sinless. He must be one who did no sin, in whom was no sin, and who knew no sin. He must be holy, harmless and undefiled, or death and inexorable justice would claim Him as they had claimed all others. He must be one over whom death had no rights, and yet able to give His life a ransom for others, and He must be "lifted up," that upon Him the righteous condemnation of sinners might fall. He must make expiation for sins to deliver men from sin's penalty, from Satan's bondage, the fear of death and everlasting perdition; and that God's eternal justice might remain unchallenged, and His throne retain its inflexible integrity. Where could this Son of Man be found? God has

found Him, and given Him for the salvation of men, for the Son of Man who was lifted up at Calvary is God's only begotten Son.

There never was a more tragic and more poignant story penned than that of David and Absalom. That wayward son of an indulgent father had slain his brother, and fled the country, for he knew well that if his father acted in justice, as a king should act, he must die for his crime, even though in his case there were extenuating circumstances. And David's heart yearned for his son, and at last he sanctioned his return and kissed him. The father and the king were in conflict in the one person, and the king was beaten; a weak love triumphed over stern justice, and brought disaster on a kingdom. That son was soon in open revolt against the father from whose nerveless hand the sceptre had fallen, and nothing would satisfy him but his father's life, and his father's throne; rebellion would be king. He failed, as sin must also finally fail in its revolt against God and His throne, but when the news was brought to the aged father that that godless son of his hung dead from the branches of an oak tree in the wood, the sorrow of it broke his heart, and to his chamber over the gate he went, sorely weeping, and saying, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Ah, yes, now he realised the only way; if he could himself have borne the penalty of his son's crime! If only he could

have done that, but he could not, for he himself was a murderer, his own life was forfeited, and that by his own sentence; he could not have paid the price for his guilty son. But what David could not do for Absalom, God has done for us, and He commends His love to us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And this was the only way in which we could be righteously free from sin's penalty.

"Inscribed upon the Cross we see  
In shining letters, 'God is love.'"

At that Cross of Christ mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other; through the Cross God can be a just God and a Saviour. The Cross of Christ is the measure and the pledge of God's love, and at the same time it is the revelation of His holiness. God is love and God is light. How great is the splendour of the Cross, the light of it drives out the darkness from every heart that believes. And nothing else can do that.

"O the Cross of Christ is wondrous;  
There I learn God's heart to me,  
'Mid the silent deepening darkness  
God is light, I also see.  
Holy claims of justice finding  
Full expression in the scene.  
Light and love alike are telling  
What yon woes and sufferings mean."



# God's Love our Only Hope

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SALVATION HAS COME FROM HEAVEN.—  
"HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT."—WHAT IT  
COST.—THE EFFECT OF IT.



## CHAPTER VII

## God's Love our Only Hope

**W**HO would have thought that our salvation would come from heaven? Naturally that would have been the last place from which we should have expected it, for it was against heaven that we had sinned. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight," cried the penitent prodigal, and that is true of us all. Our sins were a slur upon God's majesty, a challenge to His supremacy, and a proof that we hated Him. We might have expected judgment from heaven, and wrath, and fire, and brimstone, but not love and salvation. But the unexpected has happened, and the truth must be told to all the world, that God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son. It is more than wonderful, and it cannot be explained by any standard of human conduct; it is what God is; it is the revelation of His very heart.

And yet, to whom could we have looked for salvation if not to God? Certainly no man could give a ransom for his brother; and all have sinned, hence all were under condemnation, and no one could save another. There

could have been no hope for any man apart from God. If He had not intervened for our salvation, we must all have perished. He has intervened, and we who believe, wonder and worship. He "gave His only begotten Son." This was the greatest and the best He could do, and nothing less than this would have availed.

It is by words that things are explained and understood by us, yet we feel that even the richest and fullest human words that we can command are altogether feeble and cold when this great love has to be told out. Even the Holy Spirit of God, who with divine wisdom selected and gave the best words that could be given to convey to us great truths, declared the inadequacy of all human language to express the greatness of this love gift, when He inspired Paul to exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for *His unspeakable gift!*"

Paul knew how to use acceptable words, wise preacher that he was, and when occasion demanded, he could pile superlative upon superlative, as when he wrote of "the exceeding greatness of God's power," and "the exceeding riches of His grace," and His ability "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and of "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But when he wrote of this gift of God, there were no words that could describe it. If there had been any in human language that could have conveyed to human intelligence the fullness and immensity of it, the Holy Spirit would have known them and

given them to him, but there were none. We try to encompass this great gift with words, and we call it "great," "ineffable," "wonderful," "incomparable," "boundless," and "perfect," but they all fail. All these, or their equivalents in the languages of Paul's day were duly considered and found wanting by the divinely-inspired writer. Overwhelmed by the character of the gift, he tells us in one brief sentence that it defies definition and baffles all description, that it is inexpressible, unspeakable. "Thanks be unto God," he says, "for HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT."

The gift is the proof and measure of God's love. We may consider it, but never fully comprehend it; we may know it, yet it surpasses knowledge; we may speak of it, yet it is unspeakable; we may search the breadth, length, depth, and height of it; yet it is unsearchable; its dimensions and magnitude are for ever beyond the creature's range! The incarnation and the Cross, the rough way that Jesus trod, His sighs and sorrows, His suffering in Gethsemane, and the shame of Golgotha, the darkness, the woe, His death and blood-shedding, were all God's voice to men, speaking with a growing intensity; they were God's utterance of unutterable love; His love declared by His unspeakable gift. Whether we think of the love that gave the gift, or the gift that the love gave, or the flood of blessing that flows to men, and will yet flow to them as a result of it, there is only one thing we can do,

unless we are hardened and blinded by the devil, and that is to give thanks unto God for His unspeakable gift.

“Unto me, the vile, the guilty,  
Flows the living flood;  
I, an enemy, am ransomed  
By the precious blood.  
Prostrate at Thy feet I lie,  
Lost in Love’s immensity.”

Who can tell what it cost God to give this great gift? Mark well how language labours and strains to express the preciousness of God’s Son to Him. He is spoken of as “His only begotten Son.” His only one, the object of His full and undivided love, and He was this eternally. “Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” are the words of JESUS to His Father. There never was, and never shall be a moment in Eternity or in Time when He did not dwell in the bosom of His Father, “the only begotten Son that is in (or exists in) the bosom of the Father,” is the way He is described. The Father’s bosom was, and is, His dwelling place. It is by such language that we are told how dear, infinitely dear He is to the Father, and worthy of that Father’s love. But He came forth from the Father to be the Saviour of sinners! And again, I ask, who can tell what it cost the Father to send Him forth? And having come into the world, how inexpressible is the love that flowed between the Father and the Son. The Father loveth the Son so well that He holds back nothing from Him,

He gives Him all things (John 3. 35), and He shares all His thoughts with Him; the flow of communion was not diminished or interrupted when He came, a Man to earth (chap. 5. 20). And as He lived His life, fresh causes were continually emerging that called forth fresh expressions of that love, and most of all when He laid down His life, for the Lord Himself said, "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life" (chap. 10. 17). And on the part of "the Son of His love," there ever rose up a perfect responsive love to His Father. "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; I do always the things that please Him", He said. And again, "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." "God is angry with the wicked every day," but in Jesus He found unceasing, never-failing delight, and Him He has given to save us and have us for Himself; so great is His love!

If there had been any other way by which sinners could have been saved, would He have done this? We are sure that He would not. If they could have saved themselves, would God have given His Son to save them? If they could have done it, He being the just God that He is, would have encouraged them to do it, and when they had accomplished the great feat, He would have put the crown upon their heads and said, "Well done"; but it was because we were without strength that Christ

died for us; and "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There was no other way by which we could be rescued from darkness and destruction. Only the only begotten Son could save us, the work was too great for man, angel, or archangel; and God gave Him that that work might be done, and that we might not perish, but have everlasting life.

This unspeakable gift produces an unspeakable joy in all those that believe. Appreciate the gift and let it be kept by the Spirit's power before the heart, and an answering joy will be there; a joy that the heart knows for itself, deep, silent and unspeakable. It is the joy of faith, the joy of love, the joy of eternal life, the joy of the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ, His sent One.

# What the Giving of the Son meant

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NICHOLAS I AND THE REBELLION.—  
“THEY WILL REVERENCE MY SON.”—IF  
THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS PREDETER-  
MINED, WHY SHOULD MEN BE CHARGED  
WITH THE GUILT OF IT?—THE DEATH  
OF CHRIST WAS AN ATONING DEATH.



## CHAPTER VIII

## What the Giving of the Son Meant

**L**ONG before the power in Russia was seized by apostate Jews, and the last of the Romanoffs, and his family were butchered in a cellar, the people were restless, and often on the verge of a revolt; for, though the Tsars were styled "the little father," they were tyrants with few exceptions, and some of them well deserved the title "terrible." Nicholas I was one who ruled the people with an iron hand, and early in his reign they rebelled against him. A roaring mob surrounded the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, threatening death to the Tsar and his consort, who were watching them from within. It looked as though their last hour had come, when suddenly Nicholas took up his six months-old child, the heir to the throne, and stepping out upon the balcony, he faced the multitudes that surged like an angry sea in the vast palace square. He was a young man, handsome, tall and splendid in his strength. He did not speak, he just stood there with the babe in his arms. A silence fell on the mob, which seemed more awful than

its rage. Then came sobs, and then a tempest of cheers. An emotional people were moved by the sight of the solitary Tsar and his mute babe, by this confidence that he showed in them, and they sensed that the babe in his arms most surely meant peace and not war, that it was an ambassador and pledge of good-will, and not oppression. The people were won, and the dynasty was saved, and it was the showing by the Tsar of his only son to the people that saved it.

The world that God loved was in rebellion against Him, and it had no cause for its rebellion, for He is no tyrant, but the faithful Creator, and He had never left men without a witness as to His kind thoughts towards them. Paul told this to the worshippers of the idol Jupiter in the city of Lystra. Said he, "He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." And again, he told the great philosophers at Athens that "He giveth to all, life and breath and all things." But men were not thankful for His gifts, they did not acknowledge Him as the Giver of them, they hated Him and would not hear His word. Then He said, "I have one Son, I will send Him. They will reverence My Son." It was as though God said, "I will show them My very heart, I will prove to them that I am not against them. My Son shall be the pledge and proof of My love to them. I cannot do more; this is My last and My best."

And Jesus came—He came as a Babe in the manger, the great sign that God would be at peace with men. The Babe was God's love gift to the world; His only begotten Son. He came full of grace and truth; He came preaching peace; He came not to condemn the world, but to save it. He stood before the world showing forth the heart of God who sent Him; He was not silent, but spoke of love that passes all bounds of human thought. But men had no ears to listen to His message. When they saw Him, they hated Him and His Father who sent Him, and they had no pity, but cried, "Let us kill Him," "Away with Him," "Crucify Him." The world's rebellion was not quelled by the sight of God's only begotten Son, nor was its heart changed by it; instead, His coming brought that rebellion to its culmination and they murdered Him. But the murder of the Son of God did not turn back the tide of blessing that sprang up in the heart of God; instead, it opened wide the flood-gates, that the living waters might flow forth in everlasting blessing. God turned the evil and hatred of men to His own ends, so that now, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That blessing is flowing still, and though millions have been supplied, it flows as fresh as ever, for it is as inexhaustible as it is blessed.

There is a question that is sometimes raised, and it is an important one, as to why, if the crucifixion of the Son of God at Calvary only

fulfilled what God intended, and was the great evidence of His love to the world, why should that act be looked upon as the greatest crime of the world? Why, for instance, since "the Son of Man must be lifted up," should Jesus Himself charge the Jews with being guilty of the act, when He said to them, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He"? Could man be held responsible for that which God had predetermined?

God knew beforehand, of course, that the revelation of His best would only provoke the worst that was in men, for He knew all that was in man from the beginning, though it required the supreme test to bring it out. But it had to come out, for the truth as to all things must be manifested; the truth as to God, the truth as to men, and the truth as to the devil. And all did come out at the cross, there the thoughts of many hearts were revealed. God was not responsible for the evil that was in the hearts of men, but He showed His supremacy over all by restraining that evil for a while, and then when the hour came, and it gushed forth in unrestrained and determined hatred against Him, by turning it into the channel by which it became the means of glorifying Him, and more wonderful still, the way of blessing for men. He knew what men would do, and predetermined that their act should thus turn to a triumph of His love.

But let no one suppose that what the Lord

Jesus suffered at the hands of men secured redemption for us. When it says that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, we must think deeper than of His flesh torn and bruised by the nails and thorns, and if we can say, "by His stripes we are healed," we must think of something other than the scourging to which Pilate so unjustly condemned Him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," *i.e.* instead of the unsparing judgment of God coming with its crushing weight upon us, God chose that it should fall upon Him and He gave Him to be our Substitute and to bear it in our stead. He was lifted up by men, the object of their hatred and derision, but when they had done their worst, the sixth hour came, tolling in the darkness that was denser than that that enshrouded Egypt, and such as creation had never seen before; then there took place what no creature mind will ever fully understand, *His soul* was made an offering for sin, and God made Him, our sinless Substitute, to be sin for us, and He bore our sins in His own body on the Tree. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God." It is this that explains—what is, indeed, beyond all our comprehension—that cry that will never be forgotten, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which being interpreted is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The more we consider that, and the more its meaning enters our souls, the greater will be our wondering appreciation

of our great text and the love of God which it reveals to us.

The death of Jesus was an atoning death; there never was, there never will be another like it. He suffered, the Just One, for us the unjust, to bring us to God, and that is why we shall sing to Him, "Thou art worthy, for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation." For the efficacy of His atoning blood extends to the whole world, and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

# God's Kiss of Love

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THE DEATH OF PRINCESS ALICE.—  
WHAT HELD THE SAVIOUR TO THE  
CROSS.—THE KISS OF FORGIVENESS.—  
THE DEVIL'S LIE EXPOSED.



## CHAPTER IX

## God's Kiss of Love

**P**RINCESS ALICE, the greatly beloved daughter of Queen Victoria, was married to the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. She had nursed her husband and daughters, the youngest of which, just a babe, had died, through the then greatly dreaded diptheria, when her only son was sorely stricken. Though worn out by nursing, she insisted upon taking full charge of her suffering boy. One day, when the fever was at its height, he stretched his hands out to her and said, "Kiss me, mother," and she, breaking through the restraints of prudence, pressed upon his parched lips a mother's love-kiss. That kiss cost her her life. God has stooped down to put the kiss of His love upon the world, but it cost Him the life of His Son; He knew that it would when He gave Him. "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." He sent Him into the world, not with flaming fire to judge it, but in lowly grace to put His kiss upon it to save it. The Son of God came forth from His Father with a commandment, and that commandment was to lay down His

life and take it again. It was the only way. I will quote the very words of the Lord Jesus, for the Gospel story would be incomplete without them. He said, "I lay down My life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10. 15-18).

Let no one think that it was an easy thing for the Father to give that commandment, or for the Son to carry it out. Nothing but infinite and divine love, the love of God, could have done it. In His agony in the Garden, Jesus cried, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." It was not possible, the commandment must be carried out. It was the measure of God's love to men; He so loved the world.

But see what these words of JESUS mean. "No man taketh My life from Me." It was impossible for men to slay Him. In intent they did it, on their part no effort was wanting to bring Him down into death; their malice and cruelty knew no pity; they were indeed from that point of view His murderers, they slew the Holy One and the Just; and yet, when they had done their worst, He voluntarily laid down His life, a sacrifice for sin. He anticipated that spear thrust that ripped His side, and offered up Himself without spot to God.

In their mocking of Him, they cried, "Come down from the cross and we will believe on you." He could have come down from the cross. It was not the nails that were driven through His hands and His feet that held Him there. I could not admit that, unless I am allowed to spell out one word upon them. Then the nail in His right hand shall be L, and the nail in His left hand shall be O, and the nail in the right foot shall be V, and the nail in the left foot shall be E. It was LOVE that held Him there, the love of a Saviour-God. He did not die by the violence of men, though they could not have been more violent; nor did He die from any natural cause. He cried, "It is finished," with a loud voice and yielded up His own life. So that, when the soldiers came to finish the work of that brutal day, they marvelled that He was dead already. One act on their part remained to be done, that the ancient word might be fulfilled, and that the sacrifice might be complete. One of them stepped back a pace and thrust his spear into the side of the dead body of the Saviour, and forthwith came there out blood and water. "*And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE*" (John 19. 35).

He carried out His Father's commandment by yielding up His life, He had the power to do it because of who He was; but He had also received commandment to take it again, and this He has done. And if He had not done

this, God's love would have been an impotent love, it could not have saved us. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." If Christ be not raised, God has lost His Son for ever, and we have no Saviour. But His resurrection is an integral part of the Gospel, for "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and was buried, and rose again from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4).

Death has met its Master, the power of the grave has been broken, and Jesus lives. He has carried out His Father's commandment and finished the work that He gave Him to do, and God has glorified Him with the glory that He had with Him before the world began. And all this is involved in our text; if that commandment had not been carried out, and if that work had not been finished, sinners never could have felt the kiss of God's love, and it never could have been said, "Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Prince Ernest Louis would never forget that kiss of love that cost his mother her life, he would have been an unnatural, unfeeling son if he had; but the world cared nothing at the time for the love of God that made Him give His Son, and it cares nothing for it now. It is indifferent to the kiss of God's love. Yet if any will hear and believe the story, to them flows the rich blessing that is the result of it. And multitudes have heard and believed it,

and every one of them has been kissed by the kiss of forgiveness and love. Let no one suppose that when God gave His Son His love to the world ceased. The gift did not exhaust the love; it fills His heart now as ever it did, and when a sinner, weary of his sins turns towards Him, God sees him when he is yet a great way off—for the eyes of love are very keen; and He has compassion on him—for the heart of love is very tender; and He runs—for the feet of love are swift, and He falls on his neck and kisses him. Each sinner is kissed for himself and can say, as the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, that is given to him, "God who knows all, has forgiven all, and He loves me, yes, even me."

And what has the devil to give in comparison with that? He lied to Adam and Eve in the garden. He told them that God did not love them, that He was withholding something from them that would exalt them and do them good, and if they would but listen to him he would make them happier and higher than God had made them; he would make them as gods, knowing good and evil. They listened to his lying words, and turned their backs upon God who did love them, and followed the devil who hated them, to their ruin! John 3. 16 is the answer to the devil's lie, and the truth of it dispels the darkness that lies as a black pall upon the souls of men. For when a man believes the Gospel, he is saved and set free, the Son makes him free, for the Son came to

undo the works of the devil, and set his captives free. It is the kiss of God's love that awakens dead souls to life, and that dissolves the shackles that bind them; they are no longer the dupes of the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, but they know that God is rich in mercy, and they know His great love wherewith He has loved them, and they know that He has quickened them together with Christ (Eph. 2.), and they know that they are united to the One who has died for them, and they know that they can never be separated from Him for ever.

# It is the World that God Loves

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THE WORLD AND NOT A PART OF IT.—  
THE LADY WHO THOUGHT SHE HAD  
SINNED AWAY HER DAY OF GRACE.  
—WHAT SORT OF A WORLD IS IT?



## CHAPTER X

**It is the World that God Loves**

**I**T is *the world* that God so loved; not a part of it, nor any class or race or colour in it.

There is a notion abroad, and we fear what is called "organised religion" must bear some of the blame of it, that God loves the cultured, and the rich and the religious, and merely tolerates the rest; but our text sweeps away such a false conception of God and tells us that He loved the world. He is no respecter of persons. His love reaches out to all men, even to the uttermost part of the earth.

But a man may accept that as a fact because he has heard it since he was a child, and yet be unaffected in any way by it, because he does not see that he personally is involved in it; or he may refuse to believe anything about it at all because any thought of God disturbs his complacency, or he may pose as an infidel; yet it is certain that no man was born an infidel. Many a man has argued himself into infidelity simply because he "did not like to retain God in his knowledge," as Romans 1 tells us. But whether indifferent, or infidel, or whatever else he may be, there is no man in the world to whom these words cannot be spoken, and they will come home in their

life-giving, saving power to all who feel their need of them.

I remember meeting a young lady who thought she was an exception to this wonderful fact. She was obsessed with the idea that she had sinned away her day of grace, and that there was no hope for her. She did not doubt that others might be saved, but she, so she thought, had had her opportunity and missed it. Naturally she became very depressed, so much so that the family doctor diagnosed the case as religious mania, when it was actually deep soul trouble. He advised that she should not be allowed to attend any religious service or read the Bible. I was preaching the Gospel in the town, and a happy Christian friend obtained permission to bring her to one of the meetings. I was told about her and introduced to her. I said, "I am glad that you have come to the meeting to-night, for I have found a text in the Bible that should suit you exactly." Her face brightened for a moment at the suggestion that after all there might be a text that she had not seen, which might yield her some comfort; but when I read John 3. 16 to her, she showed great disappointment, and said rather impatiently, "I've read that text many times." "I know that." I said, "but listen to it once more. 'God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' What is it that God has loved?" I asked. "The world," she ans-

wered. "Are you in the world?" I asked. "Of course I am," she replied, and her manner showed that she thought it a very silly question. "You ought to be very glad for that," I said, "for, being in the world, this great love of God is for you, and the blessing of this wonderful verse is for you, and if you want to get out of the reach of it, you must fly to the moon, or take lodgings in one of the planets, or drop down into hell; then you will be able to say, 'There's no hope for me, I cannot be saved.' But as long as you are in the world God's love reaches even to you." "Let me look at it," she said, and taking my Bible, she eagerly read over the familiar words, and as she did so, the cloud departed from her face; she was transformed; for the light that shone into her heart dispelled the darkness of unbelief, and showed itself in a happy and grateful smile. She begged the loan of my Bible for the night, and returned it to me the next day, a happy woman. Eleven years after I received a message from her through a friend in Scotland, She wondered if I remembered the woman who borrowed my Bible to read over John 3. 16. I certainly did remember it, and she will never forget it.

But what a world it is that God has loved! It reeks with moral putrefaction, and prefers its sins and miseries to His great love and eternal life. When His Son came into it, though He was its Maker, it did not know Him, and the leaders of it crucified Him. Clearly is their

guilt recorded in the Word of God; it says, "The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory." It was not the rabble that took the lead in that great crime, but the princes, the best the world had ever produced. The rabble joined in it, for the universal cry was, "Away with Him." But the great men first raised that cry. That was what the world thought about the only begotten Son of God, but it did not change God's love to hatred, nor the purpose of His beloved Son to save men. They laid the cross upon His shoulders, but *He went forth* bearing it. There was no resistance on His part, for He had come to do His Father's will, and that will was that He should die for sinners. And in this was manifested the great victory of God's love over man's hatred. And now the word is going forth to all the world, to men of every colour and race, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their transgressions unto them, nor is He imputing their transgressions unto them now, if He did, it would mean for them unsparing judgment and everlasting banishment from His presence; but He is sending the word of reconciliation unto the world, and its message is of forgiveness and eternal life, but it must be heard and received, it is the whosoever believes that do not perish, and to them alone the blessing comes, all others grope onward in the darkness to death and judgment and the lake of fire.

# How the Love of God Changes Men

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THE MAN WHO RAN AWAY.—THE  
TEXT ON THE WALL.—COULD A MAN  
WHO KILLED ANOTHER BE SAVED?—  
HOW GOD'S LOVE CHANGED J——.



## CHAPTER XI

## How the Love of God Changes Men

I REMEMBER a Gospel meeting in my native town. We had been inviting the people in the neighbourhood of the Hall to come in and hear the word of God, and among some who responded was a man who sat like a surprised listener until the preaching was over; when, waiting for nothing else, he got up and ran, and did not stop until he had reached his house. When asked why he had run away from the Gospel like that, he said, "God is in that place." But would he have run away if he had believed John 3. 16? I can understand a man running away from Sinai, but if he had realised the meaning of the words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," would he have fled?

And yet this fear of God must precede the knowledge of this great love. I know that from my own experience. When I was a boy, there hung in our home a Scripture text. There were only four words in it, but those four words fastened themselves on my mind and made me tremble with fear at the most unexpected times.

They were, "THOU GOD SEEST ME." I was afraid as I thought of them, and wished sometimes that there was no God. I am sure that I could have repeated John 3. 16 correctly in those days, and yet I was afraid of God. Why should any boy or man, girl or woman be afraid of God and of His eyes of love? Ah, that's the question, for it is certain that the man who ran away from the Gospel preaching and I who trembled when I thought of God and His all-seeing eye, were not alone in this. Why? It is a searching question, and the answer was, I knew that I was a sinner and that God was holy, and that man knew and felt this too; and the heart of the sinner "which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" is enmity against God and has no desire to meet Him in any way; and in this all are alike, there is no difference.

But do I tremble now as I think of God's all-seeing eye? No, I do not, for now I know that He loved me and gave His Son for my salvation. He who saw all has forgiven all, and thus He has won my heart and I love Him because He first loved me. His perfect love to me has cast out all fear from my heart.

The Bible that tells us of God's love to men also tells us, and that just as plainly, of men's hatred of God and of His Son, whom He sent to be their Saviour. The Lord Jesus said, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," and, "They hated Me without a cause." These are the two facts that stand out

above all others in the Bible. God loves men and men hate God, and these two facts show what a unique place man has in God's creation.

I have met men who believed they were nothing more than beasts—cleverer, of course, than the rest of the animal kingdom through the kindly efforts of a mysterious force which they call Evolution, but still beasts to live and die and be forgotten; but one thing is certain, the beasts are not enmity against God, they do not hate Him; and another thing is certain, there has been no revelation of God's love to them, though He feeds the young lions and cares for the sparrows. It is men that God has loved,

"For man, O miracle of grace!  
For man the Saviour bled."

When this great fact gets into a man's heart, it revolutionises his whole life. It changes his thoughts and feelings towards God, first of all. The hatred is cast out of his heart, and he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Instead of running from God, it makes him run to Him; for what could be so attractive as the love of God as seen in Jesus? If God so loved us, why should we hide with fear from Him? It is this wonderful love which makes us trust Him wholly.

I knew an old man in the North of England who was not overburdened with this world's goods, indeed he was a poor man, an old age pensioner, but a happy one. We were holding an open-air meeting, and he stepped into the

ring to speak. What had he to tell us? "Friends," he said, "it's just fifty years since I came out of gaol first time. The W——s got hold of me, and I'm not going to say anything against them, they were very kind to me, but they never told me that Jesus died for me, and I was very ignorant. They told me to be a good lad, but I could not manage it; it was too big a job for me; and it was seventeen years before I found out that God loved me. Seventeen years! I've come here to tell you what it took me seventeen years to find out. God loves you, my friends, God loves you. It was this that changed things for me, and it will do the same for you."

When eighteen years old, that man, then a poor pit lad, unable to read or write, was condemned to five years penal servitude for manslaughter. In defending a friend in a drunken row, he had killed a man. In his northern prison, the prisoners talked about their chances of heaven, and they were unanimous in declaring that Geordie had no chance at all; he had killed a man; his case was hopeless. And he, poor fellow, believed them, and thought that there was nothing but a life of sin for him and hell at the end of it. Until, during his last term in gaol, the truth reached him, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What a revelation that was to that poor ignorant pitman! It changed his life and filled him with

## HOW THE LOVE OF GOD CHANGES MEN 91

an enthusiasm for the Gospel that burned in his soul to the end of his days. I know of no one in the North of England who preached it more persistently than he, and there will be many in heaven as a result of the testimony of rough old Geordie M——.

And hear the story of another man in the same northern district, whose life was transformed by the same wonderful love. He cursed the Gospel preachers who came into his street to tell the glad tidings to the people. He sat at his window and cursed them while they preached. "J——, my man," said one of them, "God loves you." Those words went home to his miserable heart and the next night that hardened sinner turned in to the service in the nearby Gospel hall and there was saved. I met him after three years of Christian life. He had been away from home for the week-end preaching the Gospel that had saved him. It was the first week-end that he had been away from home since his conversion. He was telling me this and he said, "Before I was saved, my wife used to pray that I might break my neck, I was such a drunken brute, but when I came home this morning after being away since Saturday, she said, "J——, you'll never have to go away again, this has been the most miserable week-end I've ever spent." Yes, that is what the Gospel of God's great love can do for a man, it changes him, and it changes his home as well.



# “His Only Begotten Son”

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THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.—BUDDHA  
AND CHRIST.—THE UNIQUE GLORY OF  
THE SAVIOUR.



## CHAPTER XII

## “ His Only Begotten Son ”

I SHALL take it for granted that my readers are thoroughly interested in our great text, and that they will wish to consider further the One who is spoken of in it as God's "only begotten Son"—the One whom God has given, and in whom they are to believe. The title is of the highest glory, there does not seem to be any higher. It is used five times, in John 1. 14, 18; 3. 16, 18; and 1 John 4. 9. I should like to quote a paragraph from an old writer that has impressed me. He points out that John, the beloved disciple who leaned on the Lord's breast at the Supper, is the only one of the New Testament writers that speaks thus of the Lord; and the reason for that may be that he being the last of the New Testament writers, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give special emphasis to the full Deity-glory of Jesus, and of His eternal relationship with the Father in God-head, which even then was being challenged. He says:

“When he would impress the minds of his readers with a deep sense at once of the inscrutableness of the divine nature, and the certainty

and perfection of the manifestations of God in Christ, he declares, 'No man'—no being of created mould—'hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, *who exists in the bosom of the Father*, He hath declared Him.' " When, again, he would exalt to the utmost glory of the Word in flesh, he styles it, "the glory as of the ONLY BEGOTTEN from the Father." When he would illustrate the benevolence of God with the highest splendour, he says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him." With a similar purpose is the epithet used by Christ Himself, "God so loved the world, that He gave His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And, finally, when our Lord would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, and as anticipating the judgment of a future world, He finds no stronger argument than that conveyed in this appellation, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD." And this is He whom God hath given and in whom we are to believe unto eternal life.

There have been and will still be many anti-christs in the world. Men who will challenge the unique place that the only begotten Son of God fills. The devil will see to that, for the one thing that he hates above all others is that

the Son of God, the One who has stormed his stronghold of death and mastered him, should be magnified and praised. And the devil's work is clearly manifested in the fact that in these last days there are those who call themselves Christians, who put Confucius, and Mahomet, and Buddha, and other historical figures, on the same platform as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our ship put in to Colombo for a day for coal and supplies, and we all were glad to go ashore after three weeks of ship board life. When we returned at night everybody was full of the day's adventures. One lady told me that she had been to a Buddhist temple, on the walls of which were paintings depicting scenes in the life of Buddha—they had all been explained by the priest in charge, "And," said the lady, "they were so much like what we read about Christ, that I have come to the conclusion that there was no difference between Buddha and Christ, and if these people believe in Buddha that is all that is required." "And what about your believing in Buddha, too, if there is no difference between him and Christ?" I asked. "Well, of course, I belong to the West, and so I believe in Christ, but I do not see any difference between them," she replied. "In those pictures depicting incidents in the life of Buddha," I asked, "did you see one of Buddha dying on a cross for sinners?" "No," she said; "there wasn't one like that." "Then, of course, there would not be one of Buddha, having died, rising again from the dead." "No," she said,

"there was not." "Then," I said, "Buddha cannot be like Christ, for the two great facts of Christ are that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." I was glad that the lady finally agreed that Buddha was not like Christ.

I proclaim the unique glory of the only begotten Son of God. In Time and Eternity He has no rival. "There is none other Name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved," for He only could die for sinners, and rise up again from the dead. O that men would understand this and turn to Him wholly!

It is 6,000 years since Adam opened the door for sin to enter into the world and death came in with sin (Rom. 5. 12). At his surrender to Satan in the Garden he became a sinner by nature and practice, and he has transmitted that nature to his posterity, and death has passed upon them all, "for all have sinned." Great men have arisen in the world's history, who have dominated other men, like Nimrod, and Buddha, and Mahomet, but they have all died, because, like Adam, they were all sinners. Not one of them, even if he had desired to, could stand up as the substitute for others, and bear sin's penalty so as to take from death its dominion. The dark tide of death has rolled on and risen up against every man, sweeping away the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the wise and the fool. There was no hope

or help for men in any of Adam's children. Then it was that God intervened by giving His only begotten Son.

His coming was predicted of old. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel." This was the sign. It was the sign of man's utter impotence for his own redemption, and that God would undertake his cause, and that this should proceed from Himself and be entirely apart from any aid that men could give. "A virgin shall conceive." "It is impossible," cries the infidel. Yes, it is impossible with men; that is the very lesson that God would teach us by the manner of His intervention. It is impossible that men should devise or evolve any scheme or system of redemption, or deliver and uplift themselves from the damning effect of sin; they cannot set themselves free from the law of sin and death, with men it is impossible, but not with God. He stepped into the scene of man's utter ruin, and said, "Stand still, stand aside, and see the salvation of God," and so, in due time, Mary brought forth her firstborn Son, "And His Name was called JESUS." He was Immanuel—the only begotten Son—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The Son of the Father's love by whom all things were made (Col. 1). "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." "How do you know that Jesus Christ is God?" asked a scoffer of a man who had confessed the Saviour's Name. "How do I know that Jesus Christ is God? Why, He

saved me," was his simple, yet conclusive, answer.

It is He, the Son in the God-head, who came forth from the Father in whom we are asked to believe. The epithet "the only begotten Son of God" tells us how eternally near and dear He is to the Father who sent Him, and He sent Him to be the Saviour, and being who He is, His mission cannot fail.

Of every other child born into the world there was a doubt as to his career and destiny. What will he become? was the question that sprang to the mind in respect to every one of them.

One might have been born a king; but who could tell whether he would ever be enthroned, or that accomplished, whether he would not be dethroned again by a more powerful rival. But Jesus came into the world to fulfil a great purpose, He came to die and rise again, and to become by His death and resurrection the Saviour of men. He has accomplished the work that God gave Him to do: It is finished; and He has gone back again to heaven, that from thence He might give everlasting life to all who believe in Him. "Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Of which of the great names in human history could that be said? Buddha means the Enlightened, but those who follow

him grope in impenetrable darkness. Jesus is the Light of the world, and He appeared once in the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and to dispel the darkness, and reveal what God is in the fullness of His love. He is the eternally worthy object of the Father's love, He is the worthy object of every sinner's trust.



# **“That Whosoever Believeth in Him”**

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WHAT “WHOSOEVER” MEANS.—DUNCAN  
MATHIESON’S STORY.—THE MISTAKES  
THAT PEOPLE MAKE.—THE SELF-  
RIGHTEOUS OLD YORKSHIRE MAN.



## CHAPTER XIII

“That Whosoever Believeth in  
Him”

THE first half of the verse is God's side of it, the second half is yours. God's love is for the world, but it is the “whosoever that believeth” that receives the blessing of it. You had no hand in moving God to love and to give, but everything depends for you whether you do or do not believe. That “whosoever” is a great word and wonderful; it stretches out its long arms of welcome to all men and would enfold them all in its embrace of love. It makes its appeal to the reader of this book, as it made its appeal once to the writer of it, in his case not in vain. It tells us that God is no respecter of persons, “but that the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him”; for there is no difference now, Jew and Gentile, bad and good, poor and rich, old and young may all come and believe and be saved, but every man must do it for himself.

The happy and believing “whosoever” are being gathered out of all nations, for in these days the word of the Gospel is running with swift feet; it is travelling north, south, east, and west; and multitudes who have been bred

in heathen darkness are hearing it with amazement and joy, and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It would be well if the men and women of these "Christian" lands awoke to the solemn fact that they are in danger of being shut out of the blessing for ever because of their indifference and unbelief. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

It was by this "whosoever" of John 3. 16 that light dawned upon the heart of Duncan Mathieson, the Scottish evangelist, who carried the Gospel to the suffering Britishers in the Crimean war, and did for their souls what Florence Nightingale did for their bodies. For many weary days he had searched for faith, which he thought was some mysterious thing that he would have to possess if ever he was to be saved from perdition and have peace with God. He often told the story of how the blessing came to him, and I will give it here in his own words:

"I was standing at the end of my father's house," he said, "and meditating on that precious word that has brought peace to countless ones: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I saw that God loved me, for I was one of the world. I saw the proof of His love in

the giving of His Son. *I saw that 'whosoever' meant anybody and everybody, and, therefore, me, even me.* I saw the result of believing, that I would not perish, but have everlasting life. *I was enabled to take God at His word.* I saw no one but Jesus only—all in all in redemption. My burden fell from my soul, and I was saved. Yes, saved! That hour angels rejoiced over one more sinner brought to the Saviour, and new songs rang through the courts of that city to which I had now got a title, and of which I had now become an heir. Bunyan describes his pilgrim as giving three leaps of joy as his burden rolled into the open sepulchre of Christ. I could not contain myself for joy. I sang the new song, 'Salvation through the blood of the Lamb.' The very heavens appeared as if covered with glory. I felt the calm of a pardoned sinner; yet I had no thought of my safety. I saw only the person of Jesus. I wept for my sins that had nailed Him to the Cross; but now it came freely as the tear that faith wept. I had passed from death unto life; old things had passed away, and all things had become new.

"I wondered that I had stumbled at the simplicity of the way. I saw everything so plain that I longed to go and tell all the world. I felt that if I had met a thousand Manassehs I could say, 'Yet there is room.' I went everywhere telling the glad story. Some even of the saints looked incredulous. Others, like the elder brother of the parable, did not like

the music and the dancing. They had never left their Father's dwelling; they had never been sin-sick, and knew not what it is to be healed; no fatted calf had been killed for *them*. These warned me against enthusiasm and exhorted me to be sober-minded. One old man told me that I was on the mount, but that I would soon be down again. Another said I needed great humility. But I went on singing my song. Prayer had given place to praise, and night and day I continued to thank God for 'His unspeakable gift.' "

But though the words are so plain, thousands miss the meaning of them, or are so blinded by their own opinions, or it may be by the devil, that they treat them as of no value; they prefer their own way to God's. They are acting as though the word was "whosoever worketh," when it is "not of works"; or "whosoever does his best," when "there is none that doeth good;" or "whosoever prayeth, or payeth, or does penance," but it is none of these things but, "whosoever believeth." It does not say whosoever loves God, it is God who has done the loving; or, whosoever giveth, it is God who has done the giving: but, whosoever believeth. But it is not whosoever believeth a text, even this greatest of all texts, or whosoever believeth in the Bible, or in the Christian faith, it is *whosoever believeth in HIM*; a living Person, the Son of God!

The text tells us about Him, the Bible tells

us about Him. We should not, and could not, know anything about Him at all if we had not the text and the Bible; we who have believed, thank God for the Bible; it is a priceless treasure. We do not wonder that men who loved it in former days preferred to burn in the fires of Smithfield rather than give it up. It is God's own Word to us and we value it as such. But you may have the Bible and remain unsaved; you may say that it is a good Book, and yet perish. It is JESUS alone that saves. The Bible holds Him up to us as the object of faith; it says, “Whosoever believeth *in Him* shall not perish”; in Him alone can you find everlasting life; “neither is there salvation in any other,” so the Bible tells us, and the Bible is true; it is the infallible Word of God.

That self-righteous old sinner in Yorkshire who told a friend of mine that he would go boldly up to the gates of Heaven, and show himself there, and expect to be welcomed, because he had done no harm to anybody, was as silly as he was proud, he was duped by the devil; but so also are all who hope to reach Heaven by any other way than this. The “whosoever that believe” are those who have abandoned self-trust; they have thrown away their own self-righteousnesses as filthy rags. They have come to the Saviour as perishing sinners with:

“Naught to plead  
But God's great love  
And their exceeding need.”

And they have got Christ instead of self; and through Him they have everlasting life, and shall not perish. Is not this what the Word of God tells us? It is, and happy is he who believes that sure Word. "Blessed is she that believed," said the saintly Elizabeth of her young cousin Mary; "for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her of the Lord."

# What is it to Believe?

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BELIEVING A HISTORICAL FACT.—THE  
PLAGUE IN THE CITY AND YOUR NEED.  
—A NORTHUMBRIAN FARMER AND HOW  
HE BELIEVED.



## CHAPTER XIV

**What is it to Believe?**

I HAVE met people who have said, "You talk about believing; I believe; but it has made no difference to me, what does it all mean?" And their belief has turned out to be something *about* Jesus and not faith *in* Him at all. This sort of belief is the same as they have in regard to some outstanding character in history. I, for instance, have read of Charles I and Oliver Cromwell; that period of English history always interested me more than any other, and I often debated in my mind as to whether Cromwell was a regicide and traitor or a benefactor and liberator: it was an exhilarating mental exercise, but, of course, nothing more, and that is how it is with these "believers" in the Bible facts about the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of them are orthodox, religious and estimable, they are not infidels; they believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again and ascended into heaven, these are all items in the Creed, and they do not question them. They will tell you that these are very interesting facts that have had a decided effect upon the history of the world, but they

are unmoved and unchanged by them: they have yielded them a mental assent, but not the faith of their hearts that saves; and if *thou shalt believe in thine heart*, is an important word. Their idea is that since they have lived what they call a moral life, and do not altogether neglect religion, nothing more can be expected. The Son of God is not to them a vital reality; they do not believe that without Him they must perish, that He is indispensable to their eternal salvation.

But what is this living faith in Him that is so necessary; the faith that appropriates the blessing, and without which it is impossible to please God? Let me illustrate it. The plague is raging in your city, and the people are dying by scores and hundreds, and all the efforts of the doctors to check its ravages are in vain, for they have discovered neither the cause of it nor the remedy. One day you awaken to the fact that you are stricken; there can be no doubt about it, the symptoms are unmistakable. You are surely doomed, and are on the verge of despair, for this fell disease has rarely, if ever, been known to release its grip upon any of its victims. But just when you have abandoned all hope there steps into your room a man of whom you have often heard; he is a great physician, and as kind as he is great. He tells you that after long research he has discovered the virulent germ, and has conquered it, and that if you will submit your case to him he can and will cure you. Do you

hesitate? Not for a moment. How eagerly you watch him as he measures out the dose of the precious fluid that is to heal you. And when he hands it to you and says, "Now drink that," do you say, "All right, doctor, I believe all that ever I heard about you, and I believe what you say about this medicine, put it down there, I'll take it sometime, but I want a little while to think about it"? No, you don't! That dose, and that only, as far as you know, can save your life, and you waste no time in vain talk, but with your heart beating at more than its usual rate, you stretch out your hand and take the life-giving draught and drink it down, and as all the doctor has said is proved to be true, how sincerely you thank him. You are a very grateful man, and never tire of telling others of the doctor's skill and of his infallible remedy.

Do you understand the illustration? Sin, like a plague, has stricken you: your only hope is the great Physician, who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Have you awakened to the fact that your soul is in danger of perishing, and that it must perish unless God's only begotten Son saves it? If so, you will want Him; your soul will cry out for Him; you will not rest until you find Him; you may even take up the cry of the disciples in the storm, "Lord, carest Thou not that we perish?" Of course He cares, and you will realise that He cares for you, if you will put your case in His hands and trust Him

wholly to save you. That is what believing in Him means, and nothing less than that. And He has never failed one who has believed in Him like that.

An old friend of mine proved this, when he discovered that he was a sinful man and in danger of perishing. It was Christmas Eve, and he had been invited to join in the festivities of the season. There was to be dancing and drink and music and singing, and though very miserable, he started out for the great house at which the night was to be spent, but he hesitated at the gate. One of his mates took him by the arm and said, "What's the matter with you? Come on." And that did it. He told me that it seemed to him as though the very devil was in that tug at his arm, and that that "Come on" was the devil's invitation to him to forget that he was a sinner and that his soul needed saving, and to reject the Saviour. He pulled away from the temptation, and leaving his friends he ran home to his bedroom. He was alone in the house, and falling on his knees he cried out, "Lord, I'm in danger of perishing for ever, and I deserve to perish because of my sins, but if I have to perish, I'll perish at Thy feet." Did he perish? No, how could he when he cast himself like that into the Saviour's hands? Does not our text say, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish"? He did not perish, but became one of the brightest, happiest farmers in the county of Northumberland. He is now with

His Saviour whom he trusted, but his happy Christian life was spent in pressing on others the claims of the Lord, and telling them of the joys of everlasting life that He gives to those who believe.

And how does a man acquire this faith that saves? It comes by hearing, for the Scripture says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" and Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Believing in Him is a vital thing. It is living faith in a living Saviour. Simon Peter had it, when speaking on behalf of his friends, he said to the Lord, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."



# What does it Mean to Perish?

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"I'LL NEVER BELIEVE IN HELL."—  
THE WORDS OF THE SON OF GOD.—THE  
"WHOSOEVER" OF REVELATION 20.



## CHAPTER XV

## What does it Mean to Perish?

**G**OD has done a great thing that men might be saved from perishing. He could not have done a greater. He has given His only begotten Son. And after such a proof of His love, who would dare to question what Peter tells us in his second Epistle, chapter 3. 9, that He is "not willing that any should perish." Yet our text and many another show plainly enough that men are in danger of perishing; and if this is so, it is surely an end to be escaped if that is possible, and since it is possible, no man ought to be indifferent about it.

But what is it to perish? I heard a preacher spell out the word like this P-E-R-I-S-H—to **Pass Eternally Ruined Into a Sinner's Hell.** What a terrible doom that must be! And almost too solemn a matter to be turned into an acrostic. Yet that is exactly what it is to perish. Let me hasten to say that hell was not prepared for man, the paradise of God in Eden was his prepared dwelling place; I am quoting the Lord's own words as to hell: He spoke of "everlasting fire prepared for the Devil

and his angels" (Matt. 25. 41). Then why should men be condemned to such a doom? Because they will follow the devil in his revolt against God. The turnover from God to the devil was deliberate on Adam's part, for he does not seem to have been deceived as Eve was, and by him sin entered into the world and death by sin, and death has passed upon all men for that all have sinned. There has been no difference in this, we have every one turned to his own way. The devil was the first to take that self-willed rebellious road, and Adam was the first man to follow the devil's lead, and, like sheep, we have all gone the same way; and the end of that road is hell.

I own that this is not a subject upon which I can write with pleasure; it is a solemn and awesome subject. Men do not like it, and I do not wonder; and many modern preachers, in order to be popular, and please men, have cast it out of their theology; but can they stamp the fear of it out of the consciences and souls of men? Some years ago, I was introduced to a man in a Yorkshire town, who wanted a talk with me. He was a working man with more than ordinary intelligence, and instead of backing horses and handing his weekly surplus over to the bookmaker, he spent it in books and possessed a library of which he was proud. But most of his books were on Eastern philosophy, for he had become a Theosophist. I pressed upon him the great fact that God had highly exalted JESUS, and given Him a

Name above every name, and that every knee must one day bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is the Lord. He, on his part, was quite willing to own that He must have been a good man—His teaching and works he thought proved that, but he would admit nothing more than that. As I had not spoken of hell, it seemed strange to me that he should declare several times during our conversation, "I'll never believe in hell," and as often as he did so I replied, "I am not asking you to believe in hell, but to confess Jesus Christ as your Lord."

We parted late that night, and it was a long time before he was able to sleep, his confidence in the "wisdom" that he thought he had acquired had been shaken, and he was perturbed and restless. He dozed off at last, but was suddenly awakened in the early morning to find his bedroom alight with a lurid glow, and his first thought and exclamation was, "I'm in hell." It was a great factory on the opposite side of the road that was ablaze, and it was the flames that were pouring out of the windows of it that lighted up his room. But why should his first thought have been of hell, when but five hours before he had asserted at least half a dozen times that he would never believe in such a place? Ah, it was his conscience that spoke out before he had time to marshal his arguments. Deep down in his soul he knew that there was a hell and judgment to come, and the Eastern philosophy that he had

imbibed had been unable to stamp that knowledge out of him. I am glad to say that within a week, he had thrown to the winds his false theories, and had bowed down before the great Saviour; he had become one of the "whoso-ers" that believe; and he made a bonfire of the books that had deceived him, for, said he, "Now I have found the solution of all my difficulties in Christ."

It is out of the lips of the Son of God, who came from heaven to tell us of God's great love, that the most solemn warnings as to hell have come. He said to His followers, "In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, *I would have told you.*" If there had been no heaven to win, He would have told us, and if there had been no hell to shun, would He not have told us? But it was He who said to the self-righteous, hypocritical Pharisees, "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" He it was who warned men of "Gehenna, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." He told His hearers of one rich man who, after death, lifted up his eyes being in torment. You see, I am not giving you my opinions on so solemn a subject as this, I would not do that, for my opinions would be of no more value than yours. I am giving you the words of the Son of God, and His words are truth. He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Mark 13. 31). Have you believed them? His words are spirit and life, those

that warn of judgment to come equally with those that tell of the love that saves.

Why did He who was the gift of God's love to men utter these solemn warnings? Why does a mother warn her child of the dangers of the road, or command him not to play with matches? It is her love for him that makes her do it, and it is the same love that made God give His only begotten Son that men might have a way of escape from perishing, that warns them of the irrevocable and everlasting consequences to them of neglecting His great salvation.

This "whosoever" of John 3. 16 is not the only whosoever in the Bible. It is the whosoever of blessing and salvation and eternal life; but there is another. It occurs in the account of the last Judgment, at the great white throne; it is the whosoever of damnation and the second death. We read "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . and *whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life* was cast into the lake of fire." And again, "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." AND THAT IS WHAT IT IS TO PERISH.



## Everlasting Life

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WHAT IS EVERLASTING LIFE?—"SANC-  
TIFYING DOUBTS."—"HE SAID IT."—  
A SAVED JEWESS.—A PLACE IN GOD'S  
FAMILY.—GLORY.



## CHAPTER XVI

## Everlasting Life

**E**VERLASTING life is everlasting. It is a life that no one can ever lose who has received it as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Think of the Giver of it—God; think of the One through whom it comes—Jesus Christ our Lord, and then say whether it can be forfeited or withdrawn. If it were something that was granted to us in return for some merit or faithfulness, then we might fear that if the merit ceased, the blessing would be forfeited, but since it is the sovereign gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, it is ours for ever, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. And further, this life has not been deposited in us for us to keep it, with the danger of losing it always near. See what the word of God says about it, “And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son*” (1 John 5. 11). Can I lose that which is treasured up for me in the Son of God? There is no “Safe Deposit” nor strong room on earth, but what thieves may succeed in breaking in, but what thief can take from Christ what He

holds for me? He has met every foe and overthrown every adversary. His hand has smashed the power of death itself, and it is that hand which holds the believer in everlasting security; and to every one of them, He gives eternal life and they shall never perish. We have this life, if we have it at all, by having Him, for "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5. 12).

But again, *He Himself is the life*, and *He is our life*. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14. 16). "Christ who is our life" (Col. 3. 4). "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). We may not understand what all that means, but if we have believed in Him, we shall delight to consider it and meditate upon it, and the Spirit of God will unfold its meaning to us.

Now God wants every believer to *know* that this life is his. There are thousands who are believing and doubting; they have an uncertain sort of hope that all will be well in the end, but they cannot go further than that. One old lady in the North of Scotland, who was a sincere and devout believer, declared to a friend of mine that "she would never give up her sanctifying doubts." But hear what the Word of God says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John 5. 13). Not "hope" or "doubt," nor even "feel," but "know." Who amongst all

who have cast the burden of their sins at the feet of the great Saviour, and who have looked up to Him in simple, unquestioning faith can doubt His Word? It was He who said of His sheep, of all those who have believed on Him, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Is not that enough? I remember a woman in Canada, who seemed as miserable as a sinner could be out of hell. And her misery arose from the fact that she knew that she was a sinner, but had not turned wholly to JESUS. One day I met her and saw at once that there was a change in her, and she told me how it happened. It was *His Word* that had done it. "He said it," she said. He said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," and that was enough for her, and she was astonished at the wonder and simplicity of it.

But everlasting life is more than a new life that can never be lost; it brings its possessor into new relationships, and herein lies the joy of it. A baby when born into a family does not at first know its father, yet it is a member of the family, and its father's child. And every one that is born into God's family is one of His children. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." In God's family the babes know their Father from the very beginning. They can look up to the great God and address Him with the happy freedom with

which a child addresses its father, and they may know, not only that God loved them, when they were far from Him, and gave His Son for their Salvation, but now He loves them with a Father's love, they are His children and infinitely and eternally dear to Him.

I met a Jewess. The light of the Gospel had shone into her heart, and she had become a happy believer in JESUS. She had learnt that the Nazarene, whom the leaders of her nation had rejected and crucified was the only Saviour, and that God had made Him both Lord and Christ. I asked her what verse in the Bible she loved most, and she quickly answered, "John 3. 16." And she explained to me that she had been reared in the belief that God was great and terrible, and that her nation was suffering under His stern hand, and she had feared Him greatly, and John 3. 16 had shown her how great His love was, and had changed her view of Him entirely, and so she treasured it and loved to repeat it. I said to her, I have another verse for you, which, perhaps, you have not seen, and I read John 16. 27, "*The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.*" It was a few minutes before she began to realise what it meant, but when she did understand it, tears rolled down her cheeks, tears of joy they were, for *she saw that she was loved as a child.* She was cast off by her relatives, but she was not an orphan, God was her Father. No longer did she stand

afar off in fear and trembling, but she could draw nigh, indeed she had been made nigh by the Blood of the Cross, she was a child in God's family, loved with a Father's love.

“So dear, so very dear to God  
She could not nearer be.  
The love wherewith He loves His Son,  
Such is His love to me.”

I must quote here the words of the Lord Jesus on the great resurrection day; said He to Mary, “Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.” It is this that He spoke of, when He said to His Father, “This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

Eternal life is a most blessed present possession, but it has to say to the future also. Those that believe in the only begotten Son of God shall not perish, death cannot rob them of eternal life. Their destiny is eternal glory with Christ. “When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3. 3). “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3. 2, 3). He said, “In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am,

ye may be also" (John 14.). When these glorious words are fulfilled, all the ransomed hosts shall have everlasting life in its full and unhindered power, and will be in the home and sphere of it.

But while the believer waits for the full glory of eternal life, he has it now as a life that triumphs over the power of death, if he is called to die. The body of the Christian is still subject to death, but not his spirit, for eternal life is an overcoming life. Death is the king of terrors to them that believe not, but it is not that to those who are God's children through faith in Christ, for death has met its Master; it is a defeated, throneless, crownless king; wrenched from its grasp are the keys of its stronghold; annulled is its power; and delivered from the fear of it are those who were once in bondage to it. The believer shares in the triumphs of Christ, who is his life, and can say, even in view of death, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

An old Christian, and a valued friend of mine in Adelaide, Australia, was stricken with paralysis, and it was clear that his service for Christ was done and his life on earth was drawing to its close. The last hour had come, and his family, Christians every member of it, were gathered in his chamber. The paralysis had robbed the dying man of the power of speech, but not of his joy in the Lord; his family could see that, and had no misgivings

for him. Yet they longed for some final word, some cheer and comfort that would abide with them when he was gone, and it was quite right and natural that they should. In the hope that, at the very last his speech might be restored to him, they asked if he had anything to say to them. But he could say nothing with his mouth; articulate he could not, yet they were not to be disappointed, for his last word was to be given to them in a more deliberate and thrilling way than by mere speech. He had learned to spell out the deaf and dumb alphabet upon his fingers in order to preach the Gospel to some deaf mutes who lived near his home, and now this knowledge came into blessed use, for upon his fingers he spelt out one word, slowly and with emphasis, and his family, as they eagerly watched the dying fingers, read all they desired, for the word spelt upon them was G-L-O-R-Y.



# An Appeal

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A PERSONAL MATTER.—“I NEVER KNEW  
BEFORE THAT GOD LOVED ME.”—THE  
DEVIL’S LURE.—TOO LATE.—THE LAST  
JUDGMENT.—LONGSUFFERING LOVE.



## CHAPTER XVII

## An Appeal

**N**OW I come to the end of my little book, and in this last chapter I must make an appeal to you, my reader. I have not done so before, for I wanted you to read on, and I know that when some readers come to a personal appeal in a book of this sort they will read no further. Yet the matter is intensely personal, for it is certain that no man can be saved by proxy, every man will be saved or lost for himself. It is strange how differently people are affected by this Gospel of God's love, some are entirely unmoved by it; I am reminded when I think of them of the words of an old preacher. He said, "When Jesus died, the rocks were rent and broken, and if a man is unmoved by that death, then his heart must be harder than the rocks," and that is most surely true. How is it with you, my reader? Has your heart been moved by it? If not, you may judge for yourself how hard it must be. Others are profoundly moved and saved by it the very first time they hear it.

I had this story from the lips of a great friend of mine, a retired army officer. It was

his own experience. He was a young lieutenant at the time, and as wild as any of his brother officers, when God saved his soul and changed his life. Not only he, but several others were affected in the same way, but his conversion was the greatest surprise because it was the least expected.

These young officers felt they would like to tell others of the love that had blessed them, and preach the Gospel that they had believed. So, they rented a hall in the South of England town in which their regiment was stationed and started their preaching, and my friend's turn came to tell the story. He decided to take John 3. 16 for his text, and I give it for the last time in this book. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He could not have chosen a better text. But when he had read it and looked up from his Bible to the crowd before him, he could not think of anything to say about it. Anyhow he would repeat the text if he could remember it, and so he began, "God—God—God—loved the world—God, God so loved the world—yes, God so loved the world that—that——" and that was as far as he got, for, catching sight of an open door at the back of the platform, he made a dash for it and disappeared through it to the astonishment of his audience.

He paced up and down the ante-room, abusing himself for his folly in attempting to preach a

sermon, and vowing that he would never do it again, when a knock came to the door and a young woman was brought in. The tears were running down her cheeks, and she could not speak for sobs. "What's the matter with you?" said the would-be preacher, "is your father dead?" "No," came the answer that astonished him, "but Captain, I never knew before that God loved me." It was an astonishing result from what he had thought was a great failure. The stumbling words had gone home and done their work, and there knelt together in that ante-room two astonished people—she that God loved her, he that God should have used his blundering to show her this.

Why should she have believed it so readily while others treat it with such indifference? Certainly her tears of joy and grateful thanksgiving proved that she was wise, and if so, then those who are indifferent to it are fools, for how shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation? Do they hope for another chance, something better than the Gospel? God has nothing better to offer to any man.

This Gospel is God's best and His last. If men have no ear for it, it is because they are listening to the devil. Sin within them answers to his temptations without, and they are lured farther and farther from God by his false words. They go with him one mile, intending then to stop and be saved, but the way seems pleasant and they cannot stop; so he leads them on mile after mile, until the end of

the downward road is reached, and the end of it is hell. They cannot see the end as they travel to it, for there are many turns and twists in it, and they come upon it suddenly and un-awares, and when it is too late to turn back—  
TOO LATE.

In the Art Gallery of my native town there used to hang a picture that told a sad tale. The background was a rose-covered cottage. The door of the cottage stood open and within could be seen the form of an aged woman lying dead in her coffin. A young woman stood at the door, the daughter of the dead woman, and approaching the gate was a young man, evidently a wanderer, and a dissipated one, a prodigal son. The young woman pointed with one hand to the dead mother, and the other was stretched out accusingly at her brother, and on her face there was a mingled look of sorrow and reproach. Every figure in the picture cried, "Too late"; but the lines upon it added to its pathos and told of a disappointed love.

"She waited long for you  
But now you are too late."

In his case, love had watched, and waited, and died. In your case, my unsaved reader, love is watching and waiting for you. It is not yet too late.

"Longsuffering love waits, wanderer, for thee,  
Oh! hear the sound of Heaven's sweet melody.  
Come Home, oh! come,  
The love of God believe."

But you may soon pass beyond the reach of that love. It offers you forgiveness, life, and heaven now, but to-morrow may be too late. You are here to-day, and God's Word says, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." To-morrow you may be in eternity. To die is a solemn thing for anyone, but for the one who has despised and rejected the Gospel, it is terrible beyond words. It means to perish, to drop into hell, to be lost without hope, to be for ever without God and without Christ. To-day is the day of mercy; to-morrow may be the day of doom.

And what will you do in the great judgment day when you stand, raised up from the dead, before God, the Judge of all, before whose face the heavens and earth will have fled away; and when the books are opened, and your life's record is unfolded there, for the dead are to be judged out of the things that are written in the books; and when it is plainly shown that your name is not written in the book of life, when it might have been, and would have been if you had believed the Gospel; and when with all those who shared in your rejection of Christ you are cast into the lake of fire? Remember it is the same love that has provided salvation for you that warns you, and as you remember that, face this question.

I was asked, "Why don't you compromise with modern thought on this question?" But how can I, or any one else who believes the Bible, compromise upon it? If it were a

theory spun out by a certain school of thought we would abandon it with alacrity, if it were our own opinion, it would be of no more value than any other man's; but since it is the word of God, we cannot compromise. We are only stewards of that faithful Word, and we must pass it on as we receive it, for it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Once more God commends His love to you. He wants you to know the greatness of His interest in you. He could not have saved you at the expense of His righteousness, He must be just; a sacrifice for sin was a necessity, and this called forth the full energy of His love, He gave His Son for your salvation.

God's love led the Saviour to Calvary. God's love finds its delight in blessing the worst and cleansing the vilest. God's love has filled millions with joy and it will be their theme for ever. God's love lingers over you, it yearns for you, yes, even for you. "And there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."