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**DEVONSHIRE ROAD PULPIT,
GREENWICH, S.E.**

**Divine Philanthropy; or, the Bible
in Miniature.**

A SERMON

DELIVERED BY

JOSEPH JARVIS,

In the Baptist Chapel, Brockley, Suffolk,

On Lord's Day Evening, July 25th, 1909.

“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.”—JOHN iii. 16.

THERE are some people who, referring to the sacred Scriptures, speak of Arminianistic texts and Calvinistic texts, and they will tell you that the Apostle Paul held certain theories of his own, and that the Apostle James held and taught something quite the reverse. Now I am perfectly ignorant, and intend ever to remain perfectly ignorant, of such fancied and God-dishonouring distinctions. To me the Word of the living God is not the word of Arminius nor the word of Calvin, nor even the word of the Apostles, nor of any other inspired writer employed by the Holy Ghost. These highly-favoured men were but the writers; their God was the Author, for “Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

With regard to our text, and others of a similar character, it would almost appear that the Arminians claim the monopoly, but if such claim be made by them it is evidently without right, for the Lord Himself says, “No scripture is of any private interpretation;” therefore, no text of this Holy Book, without wresting and distortion, can be made to teach the peculiar dogmas of any particular party. The truth of God is one glorious unity, and this unity is absolutely indivisible. The blessed covenant of grace embraces all the heirs of promise. The salvation revealed in this immutable covenant is styled by the Apostle, “The common salvation,” by which of course we are to understand that this glorious salvation is common to all believers; we all share it, we all eat the same heavenly manna, we all drink of the same spiritual Rock; and this heavenly manna, this Bread of Life, and this living water is Christ—the one Christ of the one Church, for “There is one body, and one Spirit,” even as we are called in one hope of our calling; “One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,” who are the called of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, seek to realise our interest in this precious text, our God-given right to this tree of gospel life which stands in the midst of the Paradise of the New Testament. In this wonderful text we have an epitome of the entire plan of salvation; a condensation of the whole Gospel, and the very heart of God revealed; it is, as I think Martin Luther styled it, “A little Bible.” Let us, by the help of the Holy Spirit, so “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” it, that the blessing derived may be eternal. This

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precious text has proved the power of God unto salvation to many thousands of ruined sinners; God grant that it may be a message of salvation to many law-condemned sinners to-night. It is a text most glorious in the universality of its saving declarations and revelations, and yet most solemn in its inexorable limitations of mercy to special character. Listen, "God so loved the world," the whole world, the world composed of both Jews and Gentiles, every part of the world, east, west, north and south. Surely this declaration is sufficiently universal; is it not? But then, listen to the solemn limitations of the text, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You see, beloved friends, that salvation is promised only to whosoever believeth in Him. May the Holy Ghost make every one of us true believers, for remember that last solemn declaration of our Lord before His ascension from Olivet, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!"

I was greatly impressed, some time since, in reading a dissertation upon this text by a very learned and loyal minister of Christ. I could by no means follow the good man in all his doctrinal explications, but I certainly consider that the Lord unfolded to him in a wonderful manner many of the precious truths contained in our text. He said, "I suppose I had read that verse thousands of times, and yet a little while ago, as I was led to preach upon it, I sought of the Lord a clearer view of it, that I might glorify Him by bringing forth from His treasure things new and old. After reading the text over, perhaps a hundred times, prayerfully asking for new light and insight, there suddenly came to me this absolutely new discovery. It was just as though one, looking up into the heavens, should see a cloud swept away from before the stars, and a new constellation revealed. It flashed on my thought that there are ten very prominent words in the text, such as 'God,' 'loved,' 'world,' 'whosoever,' and so on." Then a closer investigation revealed to this prayerful Biblical student that these great leading words of the text stood in mutual relationship; the first pair of words relating directly to two Persons of the ever-glorious Godhead—*God the Father, and God the Son*—for it reads, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The second pair of words expresses the Divine attitude towards this world, *God's love and its fruit*, "God loved" and "gave." The third pair has reference to the *objects of the Divine love*, the "world" and "whosoever." The fourth pair of words refer to *man's attitude towards God* when awakened to a sense of need, "believe" and "have." "The last pair of words points us to the extremes of human destiny: the result of rejection, and the result of saving faith." Here we see that the unbeliever must "perish" eternally, but the believer shall possess "everlasting life," 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." Now, brethren, I intend, by the help of the Most High, to treat upon this subject following the order of that remarkable discovery of relationship between the leading words to which I have alluded. The discovery, as I have told you, was not my own, and I am not using them as my own. I would not dare to plagiarize, but I trust the Lord has given me grace to appreciate the revelations of His will through the Spirit, to whomsoever made.

I. First of all then, I call your attention to the first of these most

important pairs of words, and these, as already mentioned, relate to two of the adorable Persons of the glorious Trinity, *THE FATHER AND THE SON*. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." But how can a sinful, dying creature speak of his transcendently glorious and eternal Creator, that august, holy and gracious Being who lived in old eternity when nothing lived or existed besides? for "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." God, whose omnipresence penetrates and fills the whole of the vast creation, and yet is comprehended by none of His creatures. The ancient heathen philosopher uttered a striking truth concerning Deity, who said, "God is a Being whose centre is *everywhere*, and whose circumference is *nowhere*." Glorious, awful, and gracious omnipresence! Well might the Apostle exclaim, "God is not far from any one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being!" God is likewise omniscient, "His eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good." He is all-seeing, yet unseen of mortal vision. Before those holy and piercing eyes, neither nature, nor providence, nor sinners' hearts can for one moment conceive or veil a single secret, for "all things are naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." God is also omnipotent. What His perfect wisdom ordains that He executes by His almighty power, and "none can stay His hand, nor say unto Him, What doest Thou?" God is essentially and intrinsically holy, infinitely gracious, and necessarily Almighty, eternal, incomprehensible and self-existent.

"He from primeval nothingness did call
First chaos, then existence. Lord, on Thee
Eternity had its foundations; all
Spring forth from Thee, all light, joy, harmony.
Sole Origin—all life, all beauty Thine;
Thy Word created all, and doth create;
Thy splendour fills all space with rays divine;
Thou art, and wert, and shalt be, glorious! great!
Life-giving, life-sustaining Potentate!
O Thou Eternal One! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy—all motion guide;
Unchanged through time's all-*everlasting* flight,
THOU ONLY GOD; THERE IS NO GOD BESIDE;
Being above all beings! Mighty One!
Whom none can comprehend and none explore;
Embracing all—supporting—ruling o'er;
BEING WHOM WE CALL GOD—AND KNOW NO MORE."

Derzhavin.

Having spoken briefly of God the Father, whose glory, majesty and power are infinitely above all creature description and praise, allow me now to remind you, in the language of the old Athanasian creed, that, "Such as the Father is, such is the Son," and of course such is the Holy Ghost; but our text leads us to speak just now of the Father and the Son only. "The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before all words; and man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood." Thus you see, brethren, that I believe in the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ. With John Bunyan I have had shewn me at the "House Beautiful" the "pedigree of the Lord of the hill; how that He is the Son of the Ancient of Days, and came of that eternal genera-

tion." I worship the glorious Christ of God both as the eternal Son and the eternal Word, for "His name is likewise called the WORD OF GOD" (Rev. xix. 14) in the Holy Scriptures, just as distinctly as He is called the Son of God. In the very opening sentence of John's gospel we read, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." The Lord Jesus is here unmistakably called "the WORD," that is the uttered and incarnated thought of God, and this eternal and ever-blessed WORD is most emphatically declared to be God, "The WORD was God." The scriptural proof is just as plain concerning His eternal Sonship, as long since proved by a number of godly men, and more recently by that powerful preacher and scholar, the late lamented J. C. Philpot, M.A. I will give but two quotations from Holy Scripture, as these to my mind are absolutely conclusive. The first shall be from the prophecy of Isaiah ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." Observe particularly that God's only and eternally begotten Son was *given*, but the child of the highly favoured Mary was *born*. The second scripture I will give, you will find in the first chapter of John's gospel and the 18th verse, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now it appears to me that were this the only portion of God's Holy Word which asserts the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, every gracious and intelligent believer of unbiassed mind would be forced at once gladly to embrace it, for observe the importance of this marvellous and unequivocal declaration. The Lord Jesus, at the time this declaration was made, was with reference to His human body walking this earth, "going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;" yet the Word declares that at this very moment He was as the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. This sentence, therefore, must have had respect to His *divine and eternal Sonship*. Now, let a man, or a number of men for that matter, disparage the essential divinity or the true and proper humanity of our adorable Redeemer, or let them rail at or distrust His precious atoning blood, and we will fight them with the two-edged sword of the Spirit till the last gasp of mortal life; and besides this, in all honesty we will tell them in the name of the great Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, that living and dying in their deadly heresies, there is as much hope of salvation for Satan himself as for them. But on the other hand, when we meet with brethren who, just like ourselves, *love and worship* the Lord Jesus, as God from everlasting, co-equal and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Ghost, receiving Him likewise as God manifest in the flesh in the fulness of time, and depending on Him alone for salvation, we will not fall at loggerheads with them because, for lack of clearer light, they fail to perceive the full application of one of His sacred titles. Brethren, let us spend what little spiritual strength we have, not in bitter disputations one with another, but in weeping over the declining state of Zion, fighting our common foes, and praying for the peace and prosperity of our Jerusalem. Oh that God would pour upon us more abundantly His Holy Spirit! then our views of doctrine, our heart experience, and our practice, would all be purer, and therefore God-glorifying.

II. Secondly, I have to speak of THE DIVINE ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS WORLD, God's love and its precious fruit—for says the text, "God so loved the world that He gave," yea, "gave His only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I want you, first of all, particularly to notice that the love of God here revealed is clearly the *love of the Father*. I mention this, because many, even of the Lord's people, have a very wrong conception of the Father's love; it was once thus with me. Oh! how I feared the majesty and awful justice of the Father! I used in spirit to hide myself behind the Saviour from His all-searching and holy gaze,—and truly God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire; no man may dare to approach the Father but by Him who is the sinner's only Advocate with God; but in those days I failed to perceive the wondrous expression of the Father's love in the gift of His Son to Adam's lost race. I had never, in those days of weak faith and strong fears, pondered such precious texts as these: "But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" And again, those comforting words of the Lord Jesus, "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the *Father Himself loveth you*, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." Truly the most astounding evidence of the Father's love to ruined sinners appears in sending from His blissful bosom to agony and death the Son of His love, that we might be saved from wrath through Him! Well might Dr. Hawker sing:

"O what love the Father bare us!	Abba's love first gave us being,
O how precious in His sight!	When in Christ in that vast plan
When He gave the Church to Jesus,	Abba gave the Church to Jesus,
Jesus, His supreme delight!	Long ere time its race began."

Observe next the *ineexpressible* nature of the Father's love. For says the text, "God SO loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The love of our God is a sovereign, free, eternal, and undeserved love; it is a boundless, bottomless, quenchless, immutable, inconceivable, inexpressible and everlasting love! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" Truly, God alone knows the limits of this divine, astonishing, and infinite love. "God only knows the love of God, O that it now were shed abroad in each poor stony heart!" Then we might comprehend, so far as saints can comprehend; the height, depth, breadth, and length, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge! We may behold more of the *greatness* of the love of God as we gaze upon the unworthy *objects of that love*. In fallen creatures like ourselves there was nothing that could possibly merit God's love, nothing in which He could possibly delight, for we were all by nature rebels, traitors, and inexorable enemies to God and all spiritual goodness. We said unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy name." Besides all this, we were enemies to our own souls' salvation, Satan's blind slaves sporting with death, yet God loved us; yea, so loved us as to give His only begotten Son that we might "be saved from wrath through Him." The Lord so loved us as to give His only begotten Son to become in His holy incarnation the Son of a creature, that as Man He might become our Representative, Prophet, Teacher, and Exemplar. Marvellous condescension this! But all this grace seemed little to Him, and certainly quite insufficient for us. We might have learned much about

heavenly things, and the Son of God might have furnished us in Himself, as indeed He did, with a perfect pattern of holiness, and yet none of us could have attained to a billionth part of the perfection required by God's holy, fiery law; we must, therefore, every one of us have sunk to hell, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." But the infinite love of God would not allow Him to leave His eternally beloved ones to reap the just but awful fruit of their sins, and so He gave His only begotten Son to poverty, sorrow, and grief unspeakable, to rejection, persecution, and temptation unutterable; to unknown pains and agonies, to all the horrors and inflictions of divine wrath on behalf of hell-deserving sinners in Gethsemane; inflictions of pain and horrors so terrible and inconceivable as to cause the mighty God-man to sweat that awful sweat of blood; and yet all this amazing woe could not procure our redemption, therefore the Father's great love to a world of ruined sinners moved Him on behalf of His chosen to deliver His beloved Son to death and the curse. "It pleased the Father to bruise Him, to put Him to grief;" yea, to make His holy body and soul an offering for sin, and for the sake of transgressors to number Him with transgressors, laying upon Him the "iniquities of us all."

"Jehovah bade His sword awake; Thy heart its sheath must be,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee; All for my sake, my peace to make,
Thy blood its flaming blade must slake, Thy death is life to me."

My brethren, even thus it was that God gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. O wonderful, wonderful gift of God! Let us take up the apostolic exclamation of holy gratitude, and praise, exclaiming, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!"

"O glorious Gift of love divine, Jesus, in Thee what glories shine!
Dear Source of all that's good; How rich Thy flowing blood!"

Jesus the sunshine and glory of heaven; Jesus the supreme delight of the Father's heart, yet by Him devoted to a death of shame for enemies and rebels; Jesus the Creator and upholder of all things; Jesus the Almighty God and the only sinless Man given up to the curse for the ungodly! What divine benignity! What heavenly benevolence! What unspeakable and transcendent grace!

III. Now in the third place I have to speak of the OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE LOVE AND CHOICE, thus dealing with the third pair of words,— "world" and "whosoever." What a marvellous universality of divine affection is implied by these words. I suppose that these are the most universal terms in our language, yet the Lord employs them in setting forth the greatness of His love and grace. Now I am not ashamed to confess that my doctrinal convictions are what men would call strongly Calvinistic; I love with all my heart the truths of God which that great and good man was raised up to preach; doctrines unflinchingly proclaimed by all the great reformers and martyrs; doctrines to which Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, gave particular emphasis centuries before Calvin was born; but above all, the doctrines everywhere prominent in the Bible. Yet I would not dare to say that the word "world" here must be taken in a limited sense. To interpret it as representing the elect world would be preposterous beyond expression, for then we should make the text teach the absurdity that only some of the elect believe, while others are left to perish, for the sentence reads, "God so loved the world that He gave

His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," plainly inferring that all unbelievers must perish; and if the word "world" here means a world within a world, then these unbelievers must perish from the elect world. But the term "world," as used in the text, is manifestly geographically and collectively universal. God so loved the whole world *in extenso*, so loved every quarter of the globe, and every "tongue, and kindred, and nation, and people, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Father gave Christ to the world, and the world to Christ. The entire mass of ruined humanity was handed over to Christ, and He has absolute "power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him." (John xvii. 2.) He is, therefore, the Saviour of all who believe, and the eternal Judge who will pronounce the everlasting doom of all who "reject the counsel of God" against themselves. The word "whosoever," as one remarks, is *distributively* universal. It means, so the universalists say, quoting the answer of a certain Sunday school lad, "you, me, and everybody else," but these men forget the qualifying word which stands in closest association with it, I mean the important word "believeth," which at once reduces the universality of this wonderful pair of words—the "world" and "whosoever"—to the area of faith, for says the text, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." So then, brethren, we must always take this universal term in conjunction with God-given faith, and say that "whosoever" means "you and me, and everybody else who *through grace believes*." A wider interpretation is both untrue and illogical. Our Lord's commission to the apostles was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Here we get the widest universality possible; the gospel must be preached to every creature in the whole world, not to every new creature, mark you, for this interpretation would involve the shocking error of final apostacy from grace, and also infer that some new creatures believe and are saved, and that other new creatures believe not, and are therefore damned, an error so shocking that from it every Spirit-taught man must shrink with horror. No; the Lord mentions every creature in the commission, and means every creature, and solemnly adds, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus the gospel being preached to all gathers out a "people for Jehovah's name," for "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Blessed "whosoever!" John Newton once remarked that he rejoiced much more in this precious word "whosoever" than he could have done even had his own name been substituted for it, for said he, "had the text read, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,' that when John Newton believeth in Him he should have everlasting life, I should have thought the Lord meant some other John Newton, and I should have despaired of mercy, but 'whosoever' means this John Newton and the other John Newton, and everyone else who believeth on the name of the Son of God."

IV. The fourth pair of words now claims our attention, "Believe" and "have." This part of the text suggests the ATTITUDE OF THE AWAKENED SOUL TOWARDS GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE. These words respecting *faith and possession* are of immense importance. God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son to poor sinners, but the only

possible way of receiving Him and sharing His great salvation is by faith, there is no such thing as "having" Christ or life but by believing; works cannot help us, tears cannot avail us, to trust to creature goodness is to trust our souls to a rope of sand; God-inspired faith alone can save us from death and hell. Poor sinner, in danger of the judgment, cast thy guilty soul upon Jesus and live; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," but remain in unbelief and thou shalt be condemned. O ye careless sinners! I feel in my very soul to-night that I must and shall see some of you brought to repentance by the power of the Holy Ghost. I believe that this is the very hour when some of you shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live; "when the deaf shall hear the words of the Book, and the poor among men shall seek the Holy One of Israel." O ye careless souls, tremble at your perilous position! O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord and live! Oh that even now you may, by the faith of God's elect, pass from death unto life. In the name of Him who *raiseth up the dead*, and quickeneth whom He will, I charge you to consider your ways; remember, the bottomless pit lies just at the end of your sinful journey. Listen to God's solemn warning by John Newton:

<p>"Stop, poor sinner! stop and think, Before you further go! Will you sport upon the brink Of everlasting woe? Once again, I charge you, stop! For, unless you warning take, Ere you are aware, you drop Into the burning lake. Say, have you an arm like God, That you His will oppose? Fear you not that iron rod With which He breaks His foes? Can you stand in that dread day, When He judgment shall proclaim, And the earth shall melt away Like wax before the flame? Pale-faced Death will quickly come To drag you to his bar; Then to hear your awful doom Will fill you with despair:</p>	<p>All your sins will round you crowd, Sins of a blood-crimson dye; Each for vengeance crying loud, And what can you reply? Though your heart be made of steel, Your forehead lined with brass, God at length will make you feel, He will not let you pass: Sinners then in vain will call (Though they now despise His grace), 'Rocks and mountains on us fall, And hide us from His face! But as yet there is a hope You may His mercy know; Though His arm is lifted up, He still forbears the blow: 'Twas for sinners Jesus died, SINNERS HE INVITES TO COME None who come shall be denied, HE SAYS, 'THERE STILL IS ROOM.'</p>
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What is "believing and having"? The answer is plain, and is found in the context. The Saviour Himself gives an infallible illustration by referring to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. Therefore to believe so as to receive the gift of eternal life is to feel that sin's poison is rankling in our veins, and to look with implicit faith to Jesus, the great Sacrifice for sin. There gazing by precious faith on the bleeding Lamb we look our guilt and fears away.

In conclusion, I can only ask you to remember prayerfully the last pair of words, and these reveal the EXTREMES OF HUMAN DESTINY. "Perish" and "life." I have this day set life and death, heaven and hell, before you; oh that by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost you may each choose with Mary the "better part"! Amen.

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