

the kindling of their faith in the divine power, by means of the visible symbol, they found life and healing. *Must*; because the holy purpose of God required it—Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13 : 8), and because in no other way could men be saved. To fulfil the purpose of His Father and to save men, Jesus could not but give even His life. *Son of man be lifted up*; that is, on the cross where He was to be set up before the whole world as the great Sin-bearer. The cross is Jesus' throne from which, by revealing the wonderful love of God, He attracts the observation and the homage of mankind. (Compare ch. 12 : 32, 33.)

II. A Universal Offer, 15-17.

V. 15. *Whosoever believeth.* To believe in Jesus is to surrender one's whole being to Him, in the firm confidence that He is all He professes to be, to cast the burden of our sins on the Crucified, with the assurance that He is able to save us from them, so that we shall escape the doom that is their due, and the sore yoke of that tyrant whose wages is death (Rom. 6 : 23). *May in him have eternal life* (Rev. Ver.). "Life", in this Gospel, always means eternal life. The life which Christ gives can never be anything else than eternal, for it is the very life which God lives, the kind of life which is lived in heaven. In it there is the fulness of goodness, spiritual energy, joy, peace, love. Endless it must be, of course, because it belongs to God, but John has in view mainly the quality of the life.

V. 16. Many scholars believe that from this point we have a sort of commentary by John on the words of Jesus. *God so loved.* Christ's coming sets forth the crowning truth of revelation, "God is love", 1 John 4 : 8. That is a glimpse into the very heart of God. No human language can describe or measure His love : it is boundless and fathomless, Eph. 3 : 18, 19. *The world*; all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, and this divine love is all the more wonderful because the world was full of red rebellion against its Lord. *He gave.* Here lies the profoundest depth of the atonement. The sacrifice of Christ was torn from God's own heart. *His only begotten Son*; the Son of God in a

sense true of no other, ch. 1 : 14. All others derive their right to become sons of God from Him. Because He was God's one Son, the Gift was all the more marvelous in its generosity. *Should not perish*; suffer the ruin of body and soul, which is the natural effect of sin (see Rom. 6 : 23; James 1 : 15). The doom of the sinner must be terrible beyond description, else God had not paid so great a price to free men from it.

V. 17. *For God sent not the Son . . . to judge* (Rev. Ver.). This differs from the Jews' expectation that the Messiah would declare them to be righteous and condemn all others. Even the Baptist laid stress on the winnowing fan with which the Messiah should separate the wheat from the chaff, Matt. 3 : 12. If Jesus were to judge men, only one sentence would be possible : all are guilty before God, Rom. 3 : 10. *But . . . the world . . . be saved.* God's purpose of salvation is as wide as the race.

III. A Universal Requirement, 18-21.

V. 18. *Believeth . . . not judged* (Rev. Ver.). For every one who trusts in Jesus, the judgment is over and done with, because Jesus, by dying on the cross, has borne for the believer the penalty of his sin (1 Pet. 2 : 24) and forever freed him from it. *Believeth not . . . judged already* (Rev. Ver.). The curse brought upon him by sin still remains. The unbeliever condemns himself by not accepting the Gift of God's love and by refusing to trust in the God-sent Saviour.

Vs. 19-21. *This is the judgement, etc.* (Rev. Ver.). The light of holiness shines in Christ. Those who deliberately turn away from having anything to do with that holiness, pronounce judgment on themselves, giving plain proof that they prefer evil to good. *Doeth truth cometh to the light.* Those who act up to the moral light they have, are always ready to welcome more. The good man does not shrink from the light, not because he has nothing to be ashamed of, but because his heart is in the right place. Up to his light, his deeds have been *wrought in God*, the Source of all strength for holy living.

Light from the East

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SERPENT—Nearly all ancient nations worshipped the serpent. In Egypt it was the