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texts of dubious authority, but on the fundamental conception of God, on which we are agreed. And this is a message which is peculiarly fitted for the present age, which is tired of the conflicting and

material utopias presented to it. The Christian religion is incurably other-worldly, and its message for our age is that the destiny of the soul lies in the unseen.

The Words from the Cross.

VI. 'It is finished' (John xix. 30).

BY THE VERY REVEREND J. G. SIMPSON, D.D., DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH.

It is surely unfortunate that *to give up the ghost* should have become an expression bearing no further significance than the simple verb *to die*. Its use in the A.V. sufficiently accounts for this. There is only one instance, Jn 19²⁸, in which it actually represents the phrase which it professes to translate. For, though the language of Mt 27⁵⁰ bears some resemblance, we should there rather read *let go* than *yielded up the ghost*, which is the actual translation of the A.V. The idea in this case is little more than that of losing hold of life, which is practically a variant for dying. The usage in the translation of the O.T. is borrowed from that of the N.T. In this case, there is not a single instance where, as in Jn 19³⁰, the English words are an exact equivalent of the original.

That this assimilation should have taken place in the four narratives of the death of Jesus obscures the force of the phrase, when it occurs in the Fourth Gospel. If in Mark and Luke the word 'expired' had been used, while the words of Matthew had been more accurately translated 'let go his spirit,' the expression used by St. John, which is properly represented by 'gave up the ghost,' would have been invested with its full significance. It means 'he handed over (or consigned) his spirit,' as by a final act of voluntary demission into the hands of God. It is precisely the same word which the Evangelist has already employed to express the official consignment of the body of his prisoner by the procurator to those who were to carry out the capital sentence. '*He delivered him unto them to be crucified*' (Jn 19¹⁶).

St. John does not attribute to Jesus the words *In manus tuas*. But in view of the adaptation of Ps 31⁵, which Lk 23⁴⁶ places in His mouth, it is surely not unreasonable to suppose that John is not merely interpreting the death of Jesus, as he witnessed it, but is actually telling us what Luke

conveys by recording the utterance, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. If that be indeed the case, then we have here one of those instances characteristic of the Fourth Gospel when the Synoptic narrative is implied. So far from sinking into death, the Evangelist means to say, Jesus consciously and in terms delivered over His spirit to the Father, just as He had consigned His mother to the care of the disciple whom He loved. Thus the phrase 'gave up the ghost,' far from being a customary expression to indicate the simple fact of death, differentiates, and is deliberately intended to differentiate, the last act in the career of the Son from all ordinary forms of dying. There is no swoon, no lapse into coma. In the fullness of a life, which no suffering can diminish, Jesus passes into death. The impression thus created is renewed by what follows. When the soldiers, according to custom, came to hasten what in normal cases, like that of the two malefactors, would have been a long and lingering process, by breaking the legs, they found that in that of their principal victim there was no need. 'They saw that he was dead already.' And, when one of them, as though to leave no room for doubt, thrust his spear into the side, the stream of blood and water issuing from the wound was a result so unexpected, that 'he that saw it,' while attesting in consequence the reality of the Lord's death, drew therefrom the inference that this death had quickening power, and was able to invest the circumstance with mystical significance (1 Jn 3^{6, 8}). Thus, the actual phenomena of the passing of Jesus completely vindicated in the eyes of the disciple the utterance which he attributes to his Master: 'No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself' (Jn 10¹⁸).

All the Synoptists agree that just before Jesus died He cried with a loud voice. This belongs to

the common tradition. That this is not the same as the Eli cry, omitted by Luke, but given both by Mark and Matthew in Greek and Aramaic, as though it were the earliest of the seven words to grip the imagination of the Christian community as the characteristic utterance of Calvary, is clear from the fact that both the evangelists who record it say that 'Jesus uttered a loud voice and expired,' while Matthew expressly inserts the word *again* (Mk 15³⁷; cf. Mt 27⁵⁰). It was, therefore, a second voice, distinct from that of which the content is given, and it was uttered *in articulo mortis*, just before the Lord died. So far as we can see, there is no intention to point the significance of what occurred, but merely to state the fact as it was believed to be. But this fact is in itself remarkable enough. That one who for several long hours had endured the exhaustion of the Cross should then, and that at the very moment of death, have been able to utter a strong cry, similar to that which in the ears of those who heard it had shaped itself into the opening words of the twenty-second psalm, is sufficiently surprising. And if the case of Jesus had so far contradicted expectation that those who came to carry out the crurifragium found their purpose anticipated, experience would suggest that the stupor of dissolution would already have rendered such an exertion of the vital power impossible. It is no wonder that, if this shout was actually heard ringing out from the Cross, the memory of it would be fixed for ever in the minds of those who were present at the last scene.

By many a death-bed I have been
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this.

Now, if the eye-witness, upon whose report the Fourth Gospel is based, were himself among those who saw Jesus die, we may be sure that so arresting a circumstance as the last loud cry would not escape his attention. And, if he had anything to add, which would illuminate it, it would be entirely in the manner of the gospel to preserve silence with respect to the former voice, the content of which was sufficiently established in the tradition of the Church, and to report what, if known, would supply an articulate significance to the latter.

Nor are we disappointed. For this is how John fills out the story.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When

Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

To the whole of this passage the words *It is finished* are central. All the rest revolves round them and is subordinate to them. What goes before is the preface, what follows the natural and appropriate sequel.

First, there is the note of time, linking it on to what immediately precedes it in the narrative, the provision which Jesus makes for His mother—*after this*. This does not necessarily imply that no interval separated the hour of His actual death from the moment when He addressed the Virgin and the beloved disciple. It is inconceivable that this should have happened after the three hours of which the Synoptists speak, when 'there was darkness over all the land.' It is, indeed, not improbable that in the disciple's experience of the Crucifixion these episodes represent successive events. For, though, when it is said that 'from that hour that disciple took (Mary) to his own home,' the statement may be made quite generally, it seems more natural to suppose that the words of Jesus have a precise meaning, and that the disciple understood them as an injunction to lead His mother away. If that be so, the disciple may not have heard the Eli cry at all, which in consequence could not be part of his own individual witness. For him, therefore, the disposal of the mother and the last moments of Jesus may have been actually consecutive. But, be this as it may, the lonely conflict which succeeded the last contact of the Crucified with human relationships, could be known only so far as any utterance of His own gave access to His spirit. For the most part 'the rest is silence.' But at the supreme moment, when the end was almost reached, when to all intents and purposes it had actually arrived, this was revealed to be, not a fate passively though heroically met, but a goal attained, an action completed, a victory won. What had been recorded by others as 'the shout of a king,' is now announced by the disciple as an intelligible and illuminating word. *Jesus said, It is finished.*

The setting in which the artist inserts this precious jewel is so constructed as to enhance its brilliancy, and to leave no doubt as to what the witness regarded as its true meaning and significance. *Jesus, he says, knowing that all things are now finished . . . said, It is finished.* No doubt the participial clause is in form an introduction, not to the final proclamation, but to the preliminary expression of a need, which was practically a request,

I thirst. We are accustomed, and no doubt justifiably, to comment upon this utterance as possessed of an independent value in a series of equal 'words.' But it must not be forgotten that the Fourth Gospel only introduces it by way of approach to the great word on which the writer's mind is fastened, and which he is now making it his business to record. The vinegar held upon the hyssop-stalk to parched lips supplied them with the necessary physical power to sound forth the bell-like utterance which follows. Incidentally, the only comment which the writer makes upon the request is contained in the clause *that the scripture might be accomplished*, and this, as we shall endeavour to see presently, is even more important in its bearing on the central word, than on that to which it primarily refers. The word translated in R.V. *accomplished* is so closely akin to that which is twice rendered by *finished*, that the assonance of the original Greek is unmistakable.

It is quite clear, then, that in the final exclamation of Jesus—the single word He uses is, of course, rightly translated as the perfect passive of a verb, but, as in the English this involves three words, it is almost better represented by a simple participle, Latin *consummatum*, English 'done'!—the writer sees a revelation of the mind of Jesus, and through that of the true character of His death as the crowning act of the mission He had been sent to fulfil. All things were now at last accomplished. This Jesus knew, and, knowing, He gave expression to it.

To this the narrative of the Evangelist has been steadily leading up, more especially from the Feeding of the Five Thousand onward. Jesus is the Son of Man, who came down from heaven, who came forth from God. His mission is to work the works of His Father; His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to accomplish His work. As the Fourth Gospel represents Him, the Lord is always an active and dominant personality at every stage of His progress, shaping and directing the very circumstances, which from any narrower point of view seem to be weaving about His feet an entangling web and to leave Him at best a martyr's crown. But, inasmuch as the Son comes forth from God and goes to God, all that happens to Jesus, including death itself, unlike the common lot of others, falls within the field of choice. Submission with Jesus is only obedience to the Father's will, never acceptance of the inevitable. 'I lay down my life,' he insists, 'that I may take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.' For Him, death is an act, and a voluntary

act. His hour is His own. It comes, when He wills. The whole of His mortal life, completed as it is by death, is as the Son Himself wills it to be, His instrument for the accomplishment of the Father's work and the casting out of the Prince of this world. That is the issue which is being actively fought out by the Son of Man in His passage through mortality. It is this spiritual reality behind the outward form of the historical events which transforms the Passion of Jesus into an Action and shows the patient Sufferer throughout as a victorious Doer. The 'lifting up' of Jesus upon the Cross from the point of view of the achievement which it consummated is His elevation to that glory which is the reward of His finished work.

What is thus worked out as a transvaluation of all the facts of our Lord's human experience, so that death itself is changed into the victory through death of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, is, so to speak, the rationalization of those facts recorded in the Synoptic Gospels which appeared unintelligible and paradoxical to those who were the witnesses of His speech and action: His deliberate withdrawal from the field of His beneficent activities and popular teaching; His determination to go to Jerusalem where the chief priests and scribes were preparing for His arrest; His firm declaration that the Son of Man could not accomplish His mission otherwise than by a shameful death; His baffling speech about a rising from the dead. He had, He said, a baptism to be baptized with, which those who had had experience of John's baptism knew not, and was straitened, restrained from perfect liberty of action, till it was accomplished.

It is the High Priestly prayers given in Jn 17 which give full and final expression to the character of the work which the Son had discharged in obedience to the will of the Father. The hour had come—the supreme hour, which was to gather up and complete the results of all previous hours, in which the glory of the Son had been manifested. It was the hour in which the glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, was to rest upon Him in that human nature, in which by dying to it, He had overcome the world, and thus achieved the right, and by consequence the power, of conferring upon all flesh, over which as Son of Man He had received authority, that eternal life, which had been manifested in Him, and which consists in fellowship with Himself and with the Father. Anticipating that death, which could now be nothing else than a transcendent manifestation in liberating victory of eternal life, Jesus thus pro-

claims His passing: 'I have glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do . . . and now I come to thee.'

It is this declaration which the Crucified gathers into a single word of triumph—Done, *Consummatum*, 'It is finished.' 'And he bowed the head, and gave up his spirit.'

But, we must go one step farther in clearing the significance of this laconic but pregnant proclamation of the gospel. *That the Scripture might be accomplished* is the preface with which is introduced the preliminary word, *I thirst*. Here we must begin by recognizing the idiom of the New Testament. We are not to suppose that an utterance, which sufficiently explains itself, was dictated by an intention to fulfil a prediction of the Old Testament. It was the practice of those who reflected on what Jesus said or did or suffered to detect even in the most superficial resemblances a correspondence with, or fulfilment of, the Old Testament Scriptures. This might be, and no doubt was conceived as dependent on the will and purpose of God. And in that sense it might be true to say that the words mean that Jesus said *I thirst*, in order that the Scripture might be accomplished. But not, of course, in the sense that Jesus Himself preferred a natural and obvious request for the sophisticated purpose of procuring a fulfilment of Ps 69²¹, 'When I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.' What it does mean is that, when the disciple witnessed, or, at any rate, reflected upon what occurred, he perceived in it an impressive token of the Messiahship of Jesus. It was the accomplishment of Scripture, or, in other words, the consummation of a progressive process of Divine action, that was reached in the death of Him who is the Son. When, therefore, Jesus said, *It is finished*, He attested the completion in His own Person and Work of the Divine purpose.

It will be noted that at this supreme point of his testimony, the disciple seems to see the Scriptures fulfilling themselves at every turn. Not only does he find in the draught of vinegar a fulfilment of Ps 69²¹, but, in connexion with the statement that 'they brake not his legs,' he cites the provision of the Law with regard to the paschal lamb (Ex 12⁴⁶; cf. Is 53⁷); and the pierced side recalls the words of one of the prophecies appended to Zechariah, *They shall look on him* (or, see Zec 12¹⁰ R.V., *unto me*) *whom they pierced*. This is not an occasion to enter upon the general question of the validity of the appeal to the Old Testament which is a prominent feature throughout the New, and which often assumes what to the modern

mind appear far-fetched and unconvincing forms. But this at least must be said, that in searching the Scriptures for anticipations of the work of the Redeemer, the apostolic interpreters of the gospel are only attempting to follow the clue suggested by the Master Himself, when 'he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Lk 24²⁷). And there can be little doubt that Jesus realized His own vocation as the suffering Servant who was also the Son (see Mk 1¹¹, Lk 9³⁵ with R.V. marg. ref.) through meditation upon the expectation of redemption and the method of its achievement exhibited in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms.

This lends significance to the use made by Jesus upon the Cross of the opening sentence of the twenty-second Psalm, which the synoptic tradition is careful to reproduce in the very language in which it was uttered. If it is too much to say that our Lord intended by this word to identify His own experience with that depicted in the Psalm, we are at least entitled to point out that most of the details of the Crucifixion noted by Mk., the offering of wine mingled with myrrh (Mt. gall), the parting of the garments, the railing and wagging of the head, vividly recall the picture of suffering presented in this Psalm and Ps 69. It is difficult to resist the impression that the apostolic community, in which the identification of Jesus with the Servant in Is 2 was immediately made, thought of the Cross thus from the beginning. Upon it the Son of Man wrought redemption for His people through death.

Now it is remarkable that the only other instance besides those already noted, in which the Fourth Gospel in the narrative of the Crucifixion cites the Old Testament, is that where the twenty-second Psalm is quoted in relation to the parting of the garments. As in the case of the vinegar, so here the fulfilment of Scripture is given as the reason for what happens. *These things, therefore, the soldiers did* (Jn 19²⁴). May not the Evangelist be following out the suggestion of the Eli cry in showing us the great Passion Psalm as realizing itself on Calvary even in its more superficial details? If now we turn to this psalm and follow its course, a new light seems to fall upon the word, which must have followed the former loud cry, in the speech of Golgotha—*It is finished*.

The Psalm, then, till just beyond the middle of v.²¹, proceeds in the key set by the opening question—*Why hast thou forsaken me?*—till a cry arises as out of the deep—'Save me from the lion's mouth; yea, from the horns of the wild oxen—' Here

there follows a sharp aposiopesis. *Deliver me* are the words required to finish the appeal. But in a moment comes the change from the minor to a triumphant major key. A glow of joyous feeling attests the answer which has all but anticipated the petition—*thou hast answered me*.

The last ten verses are the glad proclamation of a Divine victory, a mighty deliverance, in which the kingdom of Jehovah, the congregation in which the brethren shall sing praise and eat the bread of thankfulness, is established; while one generation after another takes up the publication of the good news first made by the sufferer himself. *They shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it* (v.³¹).

God hath done it. Here surely in the Passion

Psalm is expressed, not only the sorrow concentrated in the Eli cry, but that good news compressed into the mighty word *Done*, which is the epitome not only of Calvary itself, but of the mission of the Son, the reconciliation wrought by God in His dealings with the world. Whether to the mind of the disciple, who had just cited it, and who was evidently thinking of the sixty-ninth in the immediate context, the twenty-second Psalm was actually present when he reported that *Jesus said, It is finished*, cannot, of course be demonstrated. But there can surely be no question that in this word he recognized what is the essence of all evangelical preaching, the proclamation of the completed sacrifice, 'the finished work of Christ.'

Literature.

INDIA TO-DAY.

THE history of India is long and eventful. But there are those with knowledge who believe that one of the darkest periods that she has ever known is that through which she is passing now. For outsiders it is difficult to form a true and adequate conception of what is really happening in the minds of those three hundred and nineteen millions with their wild welter of conflicting hopes and fears and dreams. Even Dr. Nicol Macnicol, that outstanding authority, confesses that he finds it hard to photograph it for us. But happily he has tried; and his attempt is one of the most interesting and informing books on India that we possess. He takes his title, *India in the Dark Wood* (Edinburgh House Press; 2s. 6d. net), from that passage in Dante where, in the thick of a wild forest, he looks up and sees the eternal stars shining to guide him. Just so is it with India; and she, too, will struggle through her present troubles, led by the light that has never failed her, to a great and glorious new day. This is the book of an expert with abounding first-hand knowledge; and, what is even rarer, a sureness of understanding sympathy with all manner of folk that impresses and sometimes shames. The work falls into two main sections with an important epilogue. There is a really masterly study of non-Christian India, and in particular of its religious mind. It is, indeed, a

tangled skein. But patiently these skilful fingers unravel it, thread by thread, till the confusion falls apart before our minds. Thirty pages deal with that small English-educated minority of some two and a half millions who by their clamour draw and hold men's eyes. The educated-groping so they are entitled. What strikes one here is that the proud claim of thirty years ago that India would be 'the "guru" of the earth' is being abandoned: that there is a revolt against religion: that, whereas a generation back the leaders in social reform were deeply spiritual men, to-day, with a few notable exceptions, it is not so. True, there are not a few most interesting attempts to revivify the old Indian faith, here outlined for us, like the Ramakrishna Mission; and the inrush of 'a new sense of responsibility for others' in place of the brooding type of spirituality so characteristic of its past. But 'Nationalism has taken the place of Religion' in the educated mind of India; and the idea of the brotherhood of all mankind, which had dawned upon it, bids fair to dwindle—or has done so—into a love of Indians as Indians, no more. 'The complete abandonment of all religion, a vague but humanitarian agnosticism, a religion of patriotism, a Hinduism moralized and brought up-to-date, these appear to be some of the paths in the dark wood that the educated classes in India are pursuing.' There are others. Many are looking with an intense admiration towards Jesus Christ, and