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the first principles of their faith, then, as to-day, Fundamentalism was leagued against the point of view popularly known as Modernism. According to Tertullian ('I believe in the impossible just because it is impossible'), simple faith was sufficient to counteract the deadly intellectualism of the gnostics. Clement succeeded in keeping the door open to intellectual inquiry and the rights of reason, thereby more truly upholding—as he clearly does in his portrait of the *gnostikos*, or enlightened Christian—the spirit and teaching of both St. Paul and St. John. But chiefly of St. John, whose doctrine of the immanent Spirit—for ever guiding and illuminating the believer—is the foundation of his thought. He teaches us to look for the seat of authority not in tradition, however venerable and august, but in the perpetual testimony of the Spirit of Truth which keeps both soul and intellect alive to the inspiration of all new light, and in the inevitable flux of dogmas, forms, and institutions is for ever drawing on what is Christ's and disclosing it to us.

The Words from the Cross.

VII. 'And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit' (Luke xxiii. 46).

By the Reverend Thomas Yates, D.D., Bournemouth.

There is no embroidery in the narratives of the Passion and the Cross in the Gospels. They are direct and even laconic, without trace of dramatization, and with no comment. When St. Luke has to tell of the worst thing ever told about human nature, and of the classic example of corporate guilt, there is only the curt, bald statement, 'There they crucified him.' Yet this same Evangelist is not able to set down with the same simple bluntness, 'He died.' Nor can any of the others, when they wrote their own accounts. There was more in it than could be told by the simplicity of 'He died.' The impression left by that tragic moment was not simply of one who could bear no more, and gave up the struggle. It was the impression of One who, with powers of will and choice still in His possession, rallied them all, and *gave Himself*. There was a conscious self-giving in the very article of death. It was not the sob of a thinned and ebbing tide the onlookers heard, but the full note of a life-choice, flooding forth in the face of death. 'He yielded up His spirit,' is St. Matthew's revealing account, and the illuminating comment upon this is the heart of the allegory of the Good Shepherd in the Fourth Gospel, 'This is why my Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it again. No one taketh it from me, I lay it down of my own accord. I have my Father's command for this.' When the sense of His Father's presence had been the surest thing in His daily experience, His Father's command had been His one guide. When in the darkest hour the sense of that presence was for a moment lost and gone, the command remains. In the absence of His consciousness of the Father's nearness, it is still His meat and drink to do the Father's will. The faith that stands in experience is a victory that overcometh the world, but the faith that can stand in the absence of experience overcometh more than the world. It is the victory of the spirit over the powers beyond the world. It is the overcoming of the last enemy.

The three Synoptics all tell that it was with a loud cry that Jesus made His final self-committal to God. Everything must have been in the tone and accent of that cry. The thing that He said as He thus loudly cried are words which can be uttered so diversely. They may sound like the expression of a dim hope which is half a despair. They can be imagined as the half-strangled gasp of some one confronting with dismay the last necessity, and hardly knowing what is said. They can be read as if they came from a soul nearly drowned in the cold flood, and grasping with desperate grip some broken piece, in hope that somehow and somewhere he will be floated ashore.

But there is something here of a wholly different order, and if we can catch the right accent we may be able to understand the victory. Twice did Jesus loudly cry upon the Cross. Once it was a cry of horror, and once it was a cry of joy. When He knew the abyss of desolation, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' He cried

with a loud voice. That life can reach a sense of God-forsakenness smote His soul with a great horror as He made that experience His own. It was the first loud cry of Jesus. But the second time He cried with a loud voice, it was again a cry of surprise. It was strange that a soul should know desertion, passing strange for such a soul as His; but more wonderful by far was it to pass from this in sudden transition into the profoundest realization of the Father and of His love.

This is reality for Him, for there was no play-acting when Jesus died. It is reality for us, for this is our Brother. This our Brother is the great third brother of a story He Himself once told. The other Brother is not in the story of the Prodigal Son, because it was Himself, the other Brother, who was telling the story. That other Brother took the track of the wandering prodigal to find him and bring him back. His loud cry of forsakenness is the very cry of the far country. 'My God! why hast thou forsaken me?' is the authentic voice of the far country. But the second loud cry was the cry of the Homecomer who sees the face of the Father, and knows that He may come home and rest secure in the Father's love. And not He alone; He is the way for every soul among us to move out to the same receiving Father. We are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus.

It is the magnificence of Divine grace that there waits for our receiving, and as an everlasting surprise, the nearness and availableness of the infinite mercy and goodness of God. Between the awful cry of forsakenness and the cry of discovery and rest there need be but a moment and a movement. Believest thou this? It is the everlasting reality which flooded the pure soul of Jesus in His passing. 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit.' 'O death, where is thy sting?'

There is more. If my soul can take hold of this 'Into thy hands,' not in a momentary fervour, but reaching down into it, and living within it, as an abiding creed, then will I say not only, 'O death, where is thy sting?' but I will cry also, 'O world! O life! where is thy menace and thy power to harm?' With all their sinister things, all their chances and mischances, all their blows of circumstance, all their buffetings of fate, all their seductions of evil, they have lost their sting. If only my soul can get down on to this as its final faith, 'Father, into thy hands!'

We want to know what is behind this strange world which crucifies its best. We want to know what is underneath and behind the last strange mystery of death. If we can get behind both these, can we hope to find something substantial, or anything good? Is it all just law—mechanical, rigid, remorseless? Is it fate, so that my seeming choices are a mockery, and myself a cog in a machine? Is it all chance, so that we are puppets dancing at the end of a string, and some one pulling the strings and sometimes only for mischief?

These are the big questions of philosophy, and not without their great answers from that quarter. But at the end of these answers, it is faith and religion which have to take up the tale and say the last word. The last word is GOD. The God revealed in Jesus Christ; the God who was loyal to Jesus in His human career, and who brought Him through death. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. With Him is power of redemption. Do not speak of our Saviour falling back like a tired child on the arms of God. It is a beautiful picture, but it is not the real sight of Jesus on His Cross. A tired child does not cry with a loud voice. See Him rather as Greatheart, the Strong Son of God, nearly beaten and broken by life's evil and malignancy, but finding God surer and greater than everything else, and knowing in the last great moment that He can be sure of, and is secure, in Him.

What is our life? A poor thing blown about like a vapour, slipping like sand through our fingers, a flickering candle in the winds, soon out and soon over? 'Underneath are the everlasting arms,' said an ancient seer. If we can get down to this underneath, down into it as a refuge so that out of its deeps our souls can cry, 'Into thy hands we commend our spirits, Father,' then we grow quiet and strong. We know then that we are not the frail creatures of a day, but sons of God. Life has lost its fear, and death its sting, and we can laugh at the sun and the shining stars, for when they are old, cold and dead, we shall be found—found in Him.

This word of Jesus on His Cross has, then, as much to do with living as with dying. Jesus did not begin to say, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' when dying. He had been saying it all His life. Through youth and manhood He had used these words as the gates of each day opened, and as they closed. Life's ending will likely be as life's habit.

To make this conscious, deliberate surrender of life to God, and to take life's way as those who are committed thus, is to make the ending secure of peace. Said the angel to the pilgrim at the river, 'It is because thou didst hear that now thou dost not fear. Thou hast forestalled the going, and so for thee the bitterness of death is passed.'

We who believe in Jesus must believe with Him in this, and make His last cry on the Cross into our living and operative credo and confession. And if the grapple of the world is tightly on us, so that we feel the moral and spiritual coil in which we are entangled to be so hopeless that if left to ourselves it will be a fate, the more we must wrestle past ourselves, and summon all our faith to this venture, until we believe mightily that God is good enough, His grace and love assured enough, His power to save adequate enough for us in life, in death, and for ever.

There is a much thumbed page in my old copy of Browning, and the book almost opens itself there. It is Browning's '*Instans Tyrannus*,' the tale of a vexed, brow-beaten creature, and of how his persecutor laid his last plan 'to extinguish the man.'

> Over-head, did my thunder combine
> With my underground mine:
> Till I looked from my labour content
> To enjoy the event.

That event was to be the doom of the soul.

> When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
> Did I say, 'without friend'?
> Say, rather, from marge to blue marge
> The whole sky grew his targe
> With the sun's self for visible boss,
> While an Arm ran across
> Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
> Where the wretch was safe prest!
> Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
> The man sprang to his feet,
> Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
> —So, *I* was afraid!

We hear again these sayings of Jesus from His Cross. Let us at the hearing, and in sight of that solemn Cross, like that man in Browning's story, spring to our feet, stand erect, catch at God's skirts, and pray.

Saviour of men, we reach through Thy dying cry, past Thy very Cross, and catch at the skirts of God, for life and for death. 'Into thy hands we commend our spirits.'

Recent Foreign Theology.

Otto on Indian Religion.

In recent years Professor Otto has written much on Indian mysticism and its significance for Western minds, and the mistaken notion may have gone abroad that he believed himself to have discovered a good substitute for Christianity. This booklet[1] ought to dispel the error. It is full of the sympathy which makes Otto perhaps the most discerning of all theological writers on Indian religion, but also of the Christian decision that never loses touch with history and spiritual fact.

Are there messages of salvation, in India or elsewhere, which might rightly claim to displace the gospel? Certainly the great Indian faiths do profess to impart salvation; they are to-day sending missionaries to Europe and America. The only formidable rival of Christianity, Otto holds, is not acosmistic mysticism, but the Bhakti-faith. For it speaks of fellowship with God, of salvation not by knowledge or by works but by faith alone, of the immanence of a personal and transcendent God who emphatically is not identical with the world, of two kinds of life (the worldly and the spiritual), of evangelism, of the word of promise, of eternal election and utter grace, of a present redemption. 'The rescue of the sheerly lost, of those who have neither claim nor value, their rescue not through their own power or merit but solely by free, unconditioned, electing grace—this has been taught as much in India as by ourselves.' The theology of Ramanuja and his followers reveals the most curious and detailed parallels to the Protestant discussions on grace. We can hardly wonder that Xavier, encountering the Bhakti-faith in Japan, wrote home to say that among the Buddhists there he had found the Lutheran heresy.

It is clear that Otto has a keen eye for similarities, and we may ask ourselves (apropos, for instance, of the Fall) whether he is not finding them where they have no existence. But if we wait and see, it transpires that the contrasts are greater still, and are vital.

He points out that the Gita and the New Testament are in different worlds, as the Hebrew prophets and the New Testament are not. There is nothing in Indian thought like the idea of the Kingdom of

[1] *Indiens Gnadenreligion und das Christentum*, by Professor Rudolf Otto (Gotha: Leopold Klotz; 1930, pp. 110).