

**The
Seven
Sayings
of the
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the Cross**

6. The Word of Victory



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“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished” John 19:30.

Our last two studies (booklets) have been occupied with the tragedy of the cross; we turn now to its *triumph*. In his words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” we heard the Saviour’s cry of *desolation*; in his words “I thirst” we listened to his cry of *lamentation*; now there falls upon our ears his cry of *jubilation* — “It is finished.” From the words of the victim we turn now to the words of the victor, It is proverbial that every cloud has its silver lining: so had the darkest cloud of all. The cross of Christ has two great sides to it: it showed the profound depths of his humiliation, but it also marked the goal of the Incarnation, and further, it told the consummation of his mission, and it forms the basis of our salvation.

“It is finished.” The ancient Greeks boasted of being able to say much in little — “to give a sea of matter in a drop of language” was regarded as the perfection of oratory. What they sought is here found. “It is finished” is but one word in the original, yet in that word is wrapped up the gospel of God; in that word is contained the ground of the believer’s assurance; in that word is discovered the sum of all joy, and the very spirit of all divine consolation.

“It is finished.” This was not the despairing cry of a helpless martyr; it was not an expression of satisfaction that the termination of his sufferings was now reached; it was not the last gasp of a worn-out life. No, rather was it the declaration on the part of the divine Redeemer that all for which he came from heaven to earth to do, was now done; that all that was needed to reveal the full character of God had now been accomplished; that all that was required by law before sinners could be saved had now been performed: that the full price of our redemption was now paid.

“It is finished.” The great purpose of God in the history of man was now accomplished — accomplished *de jure* as it will yet be *de facto*. From the beginning, God’s purpose has always been one and

indivisible. It has been declared to men in various ways: in symbol and type, by mysterious hints and by plain intimations, through Messianic prediction and through didactic declaration. That purpose of God may be summarized thus: to display his grace and to magnify his Son in the creating of children in his own image and glory. And at the cross the foundation was laid which was to make this possible and actual.

“It is finished.” What was finished? The answer to this question is a very full one, though a number of excellent expositors have sought to limit the scope of these words and to confine them strictly to a single application. We are told it was *the prophecies* concerning the sufferings of the Saviour which were finished, and that he referred *only* to this. It is readily granted that the immediate reference *was* to the Messianic predictions, yet we think there are good and sufficient reasons for *not confining* our Lord’s words here to them. Yea, to us it seems certain that Christ referred specially to his sacrificial work, for *all* scripture concerning his suffering and shame was *not* fulfilled. There still remained the dismissal of his spirit into the hands of the Father (Psa. 31:5); there still remained the “piercing” with the spear (Zech. 12:10: and note that the word used for the piercing of his hands and feet — the *act* of crucifixion — in Psa. 22:16 is a different one); there still remained the preserving of his bones unbroken (Psa. 34:20), and the burial in the rich man’s grave (Isaiah 53:9).

“It is finished.” *What* was finished? We answer, his sacrificial work. It is true there yet remained the act of death itself, which was necessary for the making of atonement. But, as is so often the case here in John’s Gospel — wherein our text is found — (cf.: John 12:23, 31; 13:31; 16:5; 17:4), the Lord here speaks *anticipatively* of the completion of his work. Moreover, it must be remembered that the three hours darkness was already past, the awful cup had already been drained, his precious blood had already been shed, the outpoured wrath of God had already been endured; and these are the primary elements in the making of propitiation. The sacrificial work of the Saviour, then, was completed, excepting only the act of death which followed immediately. But, as we shall see, the completing of the sacrificial work made an end of a number of things, and to them we shall now turn our attention.

“It is finished.”

1. Here we see the accomplished fulfilment of all the prophecies which had been written of him ere he should die.

This is the immediate thought of the context: “When Jesus *therefore* had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished” (John 19:30). Centuries beforehand, the prophets of God had described step by step the humiliation and suffering which the coming Saviour should undergo. One by one these had been fulfilled, wonderfully fulfilled, fulfilled to the very letter. Had prophecy declared that he should be the “*woman’s seed*” (Gen. 3:15): then he was “born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Had prophecy announced that his mother should be a “*virgin*” (Isa. 7:14): then was it literally fulfilled (Matthew 1:18). Had prophecy revealed that he should be of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 22:18): then mark its fulfilment (Matthew 1:1). Had prophecy made it known that he should be a lineal descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12, 13): then such he actually was (Rom. 1:3). Had prophecy said that he should be named *before* he was born (Isa. 49:1): then so it came to pass (Luke 1:30, 31). Had prophecy foretold that he should be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic. 5:2): then mark how this very village was actually his birthplace. Had prophecy forewarned that his birth should entail sorrowing for others (Jer. 31:15): then behold its tragic fulfilment (Matthew 2:16-18). Had prophecy foreshown that the Messiah should appear before the sceptre of tribal ascendancy had departed from Judah (Genesis 49:10): then so he did, for though the ten tribes were in captivity. Judah was still in the land at the time of his advent. Had prophecy referred to the flight into Egypt and the subsequent return into Palestine (Hosea 11:1 and cf. Isa. 49:3, 6): then so it came to pass (Matthew 2:14, 15).

Had prophecy made mention of one going before Christ to make ready his way (Malachi 3:1): then see its fulfilment in the person of John the Baptist. Had prophecy made it known that at the Messiah’s appearing that “then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (Isa. 35:5, 6): then read through the four gospels and see how blessedly this proved to be true. Had prophecy spoken of him as “poor and

needy” (Psa. 40:17 — see beginning of psalm): then behold him not having where to lay his head. Had prophecy intimated that he should speak in “parables” (Psa. 78:2): then such was frequently his method of teaching. Had prophecy depicted him stilling the tempest (Psa. 107:29): then this is exactly what he did. Had prophecy heralded his “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9): then so it came to pass.

Had prophecy announced that his person should be despised (Isa. 53:3); that he should be rejected by the Jews (Isa. 8:14); that he should be “hated without a cause” (Psa. 69:4): then sad to say, such was precisely the case. Had prophecy painted the whole picture of his degradation and crucifixion — then was it vividly reproduced. There had been the betrayal by a familiar friend, the forsaking by his cherished disciples, the being led to the slaughter, the being taken to judgment, the appearing of false witnesses against him, the refusal on his part to make defence, the establishing of his innocence, the unjust condemnation, the sentence of capital punishment passed upon him, the literal piercing of his hands and feet, the being numbered with transgressors, the mockery of the crowd, the casting lots for his garments — all predicted centuries beforehand, and all fulfilled to the very letter. The last prophecy of all which remained ere he committed his spirit into the hands of his Father had now been fulfilled. He cried “I thirst” and after the tendering of the vinegar and gall all was now “accomplished;” and as the Lord Jesus reviewed the entire scope of the prophetic word *and saw its full realization*, he cried, “It is finished!”

It only remains for us to point out that as there was a complete set of prophecies which had to do with the *first* advent of the Saviour, so also is there a complete set of prophecies which have to do with his second advent — the latter as definite, as personal, and as comprehensive in their scope as the former. Just as we see the actual fulfilment of those which had to do with his first coming to the earth, so we may look forward with absolute confidence and assurance to the fulfilment of those which have to do with his second coming. And, as we have seen that the former set of prophecies were fulfilled *literally*, actually, personally, so also must we expect the latter set to be. To grant the literal fulfilment of the former, and then to seek to spiritualize and symbolize the latter, is

not only grossly inconsistent and illogical, but is highly injurious to us and deeply dishonouring to God and to his word.

“It is finished.”

2. Here we see the completion of his sufferings.

But what tongue or pen can describe the sufferings of the Saviour? O the unutterable anguish, physical, mental, and spiritual which he endured! Appropriately was he designated “the Man of Sorrows.” Sufferings at the hands of men, at the hands of Satan, and at the hands of God. Pain inflicted upon him by enemies and friends alike. From the beginning he walked amid the shadows which the cross cast athwart his path. Hear his lament: “I am afflicted and ready to die from *my youth up*” (Psa. 88:15). What a light this throws on his earlier years! Who can say how much is contained in those words? For us, an impenetrable veil is cast over the future; none of us know what a day may bring forth. But the Saviour knew the end from the beginning!

One has only to read through the gospels to learn how the awful cross was ever before him. At the marriage-feast of Cana, where all was gladness and merriment, he makes solemn reference to “his hour” not yet come. When Nicodemus interviewed him at night the Saviour referred to the “lifting up of the Son of man.” When James and John came to request from him the two places of honour in his coming kingdom, he made mention of the “cup” which he had to drink and of the “baptism” wherewith he must be baptized. When Peter confessed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, he turned to his disciples and began to show unto them “how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21). When Moses and Elijah stood with him on the mount of transfiguration it was to speak of “his *decease* which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

If it is true we are quite unable to estimate the sufferings of Christ due to the *anticipation* of the cross, still less can we fathom the dread reality itself. The physical sufferings were excruciating, but even this was as nothing compared with his anguish of soul. To a considering of these sufferings we have already devoted several paragraphs in previous chapters (booklets), yet we make no

apology in turning to them again. We cannot contemplate too often what the Saviour endured in order to secure our salvation. The better we are acquainted with his sufferings, and the more frequently we meditate thereon, the warmer will be our love and the deeper our gratitude.

At last the closing hours have come. There had been the terrible experience in Gethsemane followed by the appearances before Caiaphas, before Pilate, before Herod, and back again before Pilate. There had been the scourging and mocking by the brutal soldiers; the journey to Calvary; the fastening of his hands and feet to the cruel tree. There had been the reviling of the priests, the crowd, and the two thieves crucified with him. There had been the callous indifference of a vulgar mob, among whom “none took pity” and none spoke a word of “comfort” (Psa. 69:20). There had been the awful cloud that hid from him the Father’s face, which wrung from him the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” There had been the parched lips which drew from him the exclamation “I thirst.” There had been the fearful conflict with the power of darkness as the serpent “bruised” his heel. Well might the sufferer ask, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and *see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hat afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger” (Lam. 1:12).

But now the suffering is ended. That from which his holy soul shrank is over. The Lord has bruised him; man and devil have done their worst. The cup has been drained. The awful storm of God’s wrath has just spent itself. The darkness is ended. The sword of divine justice is sheathed. The wages of sin have been paid. The prophecies of his sufferings are all fulfilled. The cross has been “endured.” Divine holiness has been fully satisfied. With a cry of triumph — a *loud* cry, a cry which reverberated throughout the entire universe — the Saviour exclaims, “It is finished.” The ignominy and shame, the suffering and agony are past. Never again shall he experience pain. Never again shall he endure the contradiction of sinners against himself. Never again shall he be in the hands of Satan. Never again shall the light of God’s countenance be hidden from him. Blessed be God, all that is finished!

“The head that once was crowned with thorns, is crowned with glory now;

A royal diadem adorns the mighty Victor’s brow.

*The highest place that Heaven Affords is His by Sovereign right,
The King of kings and Lord of lords. and Heaven’s eternal
Light.*

*The Joy of all who dwell above, the Joy of all below,
To whom He manifest his love, and Grant His name to know.”*

“It is finished”

3. Here we see the goal of the Incarnation is reached.

Scripture indicates there is a special work peculiar to each of the divine persons, though, like the persons themselves, it is not always easy to distinguish between their respective works. God the Father is specially concerned in the government of the world. He ruleth over all the works of his hands. God the Son is specially concerned in the work of redemption: he was the one who came here to die for sinners. God the Spirit is specially concerned with the scriptures: he was the one who moved holy men of old to speak the messages of God, as he is the one who now gives spiritual illumination and understanding, and guides into the truth. But it is with the work of God the Son we are here particularly concerned.

Before the Lord Jesus came to this earth a definite work was committed to him. In the volume of the book it was written of him, and he came to do the recorded will of God. Even as a boy of twelve the “Father’s business” was before his heart and occupied his attention. Again, in John 5:36, we find him saying, “But I have greater witness than that of John: for *the works which the Father hath given me to finish*, the same works that I do.” And on the last night before his death, in that wonderful high-priestly prayer we find him saying, “I have glorified thee on the earth: *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*” (John 17:4).

In his book on the seven sayings of Christ on the cross, Dr Anderson-Berry makes use of an illustration from history which by its striking antithesis shows up the meaning and glory of the finished work of Christ. Elizabeth, Queen of England, the idol of society and the leader of European fashion, when on her death-bed turned to her lady-in-waiting, and said: “O my God! It is over. I

have come to the end of it — the end, the end. To have only one life and to have done with it! To have lived, and loved, and triumphed; and now to know it is over! One may defy everything else but this.” And as the listener sat watching, in a few moments more, the face whose slightest smile had brought her courtiers to their feet, turned into a mask of lifeless clay, and returned the anxious gaze of her servant with nothing more than a vacant stare. Such was the end of one whose meteoric course had been the envy of half the world. It could not be said that she had “finished” anything, for with her all was “vanity and vexation of spirit.” How different was the end of the Saviour — “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

The mission upon which God had sent his Son into the world was now accomplished. It was not actually finished till he breathed his last, but death was only an instant ahead, and in anticipation of it he cries, “It is finished.” The difficult work is done. The divinely-given task is performed. A work more honourable and momentous than ever entrusted to man or angels has been completed. That for which he had left heaven’s glory, that for which he had taken upon him the form of a servant, that for which he had remained upon earth for thirty-three years to do, was now consummated. Nothing remained to be added. The goal of the Incarnation is reached. With what joyous triumph must he here have viewed the arduous and costly work which committed to him had now been perfected!

“It is finished.” The mission upon which God had sent his Son into the world was accomplished. That which had been eternally purposed had come to pass. The plan of God had been fully carried out. It is true that the Saviour had been by “wicked hands crucified and slain,” yet was he “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). It is true that the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ; nevertheless, it was but for to do what God’s hand and God’s counsel “determined before to be done” (Acts 4:28). Because he is the Most High, God’s secret will *cannot* be thwarted. Because he is supreme, God’s counsel *must* stand. Because he is Almighty, God’s purpose *cannot* be overthrown. Again and again the scriptures insist upon the *irresistibility* of the pleasure of the Lord God. Because this truth is

now so generally called into question we subjoin seven passages which affirm it:

“But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, *even that he doeth*” (Job 23:13).

“I know that thou canst do everything, *and that no thought of thine can be hindered*” (Job 42:2).

“But our God is in the heavens: *he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased*” (Psa. 115:3).

“There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel *against the Lord*” (Prov. 21:30).

“For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, *and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and Who shall turn it back*” (Isa. 14:27)?

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel *shall stand*, and I *will do all my pleasure*” (Isa. 46:9, 10).

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to *his will* in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and *none can stay his hand*, or say unto him, What doest thou” (Dan. 4:35)?

And, in the triumphant cry of the Saviour — “It is finished” — we have a prophecy and pledge of the *ultimate* carrying out of God’s plan *completely and irresistibly*. At the end of time, when everything is wound up, and God’s purpose has been fully consummated, when everything has been done which he before determined should be done, then shall it be said again, “It is finished.”

“It is finished.”

4. Here we see the accomplishment of the atonement.

Above we have spoken of Christ reaching the goal of the Incarnation, and of the consummation of his mission to the earth; what that goal and mission were, the scriptures plainly reveal. The

Son of Man came here “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Christ Jesus came into the world “to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, “to redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4). He was manifested “to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5). And all this involved the cross. The “lost” which he came to seek could only be found there — in the place of death and under the condemnation of God. Sinners could be “saved” only by one taking their place and bearing their iniquities. They who were under the law could be “redeemed” only by another fulfilling its requirements and suffering its curse. Our sins could be “taken away” only by their being blotted out by the precious blood of Christ. The demands of justice *must* be met: the requirements of God’s holiness must be satisfied: the awful debt we incurred *must* be paid. And on the cross this was done; done by none less than the Son of God; done perfectly; done once for all.

“It is finished.” That to which so many types looked forward, that which so much in the tabernacle and its ritual foreshadowed, that of which so many of God’s prophets had spoken, was now accomplished. A *covering* from sin and its shame — typified by the coats of skin with which the Lord God clothed our first parents — was now provided. The *more excellent sacrifice* — typified by Abel’s lamb — had now been offered. A shelter from the storm of divine judgment — typified by the ark of Noah was now finished. The *only-begotten and well-beloved Son* — typified by Abraham’s offering up of Isaac — had already been placed upon the altar. A *protection* from the avenging angel — typified by the shed blood of the Passover lamb was now supplied. A *cure* from the serpent’s bite — typified by the serpent of brass upon the pole — was now made ready for sinners. The providing of a *life-giving fountain* — typified by Moses striking the rock — was now effected.

“It is finished.” The Greek word here, *teleo*, is variously translated in the New Testament. A glance at some of the different renderings in other passages will enable us to discern the fullness and finality of the term used by the Saviour. In Matthew 11:1, *teleo* is rendered as follows: “When Jesus had *made an end* of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence.” In Matthew 17:24 it is rendered, “They that received tribute money came to Peter, and

said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?” In Luke 2:39 it is rendered, “And when they had *performed all* things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee.” In Luke 18:31 it is rendered, “All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be *accomplished.*” Putting these together we learn the scope of the Saviour’s sixth cross-utterance, “It is finished.” He cried: it is “made an end of; it is “paid;” it is “performed;” it is “accomplished.” What was made an end of? Our sins and their guilt. What was paid? The price of our redemption. What was performed? The utmost requirements of the law. What was accomplished? The work which the Father had given him to do. What was finished? The making of atonement.

God has furnished at least *four proofs* that Christ did finish the work which was given him to do. First, in the rending of the veil, which showed that the way to God was now open. Second, in the raising of Christ from the dead, which evidenced that God had accepted his sacrifice. Third, the exaltation of Christ to his own right hand, which demonstrated the value of Christ’s work and the Father’s delight in his person. Fourth, the sending to earth of the Holy Spirit to apply the virtues and benefits of Christ’s atoning death.

“It is finished.” What was finished? The work of atonement. What is the value of that to us? This: to the sinner, it is a message of glad tidings. All that a holy God requires has been done. Nothing is left for the sinner to add. No works from us are demanded as the price of our salvation. All that is necessary for the sinner is to rest now by faith upon what Christ did. “The *gift* of God is eternal life *through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:23). To the believer, the knowledge that the atoning work of Christ is finished brings a sweet relief over against all the defects and imperfections of his services. There is much of sin and vanity in the very best of our efforts, but the grand relief is that we are “*complete*” in Christ (Col. 2:10)! Christ and his finished work is the ground of all our hopes.

***“Upon a Life I did not live,
Upon a Death I did not die,
Another’s death Another’s life***

*I cast my soul eternally
Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who, aught to my charge can lay?
Fully absolved by Christ I am,
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."*

"It is finished."

5. Here we see the end of our sins.

The sins of the believer — all of them — were transferred to the Saviour. As saith the scripture, "The Lord *hath laid on him* the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). If then God laid my iniquities on Christ, they are no longer on me. Sin there is *in* me, for the old Adamic nature remains in the believer till death or till Christ's return, should he come before I die, but there is no sin *on* me. This distinction between sin *IN* and sin *ON* is a vital one, and there should be little difficulty in apprehending it. Were I to say the judge passed sentence *on* a criminal, and that he is now *under* sentence of death, everyone would understand what I meant. In like manner, everyone out of Christ has the sentence of God's condemnation resting *upon* him. But when a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus, receives him as his Lord and Master, he is no longer "under condemnation" — sin is no longer *on him*, that is, the *guilt*, the *condemnation*, the *penalty* of sin, is no longer upon him. And why? Because Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). The guilt, condemnation and penalty of our sins, was *transferred to our substitute*. Hence, because my sins were transferred to Christ, they are no more upon me.

This precious truth was strikingly illustrated in Old Testament times in connection with Israel's annual Day of Atonement. On that day, Aaron, the high priest (a type of Christ), made satisfaction to God for the sins which Israel had committed during the previous year. The manner in which this was done is described in Leviticus 16. Two goats were taken and presented before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle: this was *before* anything was done with them: it represented Christ presenting himself to God, offering to come into this world, and be the Saviour of sinners. One of the goats was then taken and *killed*, and its blood was carried into the tabernacle. within the veil, into the Holy of Holies. and there it was sprinkled

before and upon the mercy-seat — foreshadowing Christ offering himself as a sacrifice *to God*, to meet the demands of his justice and satisfy the requirements of his holiness.

Then we read that Aaron came out of the tabernacle and laid both his hands upon the head of the second (living) goat — signifying an act of *identification* by which Aaron, the representative of the whole nation, identified the people with it, acknowledging that *its* doom was what *their* sins merited, and which, today, corresponds with the hands of faith laying hold of Christ and identifying ourselves with him in his death. Having laid his hands on the head of the live goat, Aaron now *confessed* over him “*all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat*” (Lev. 16:21). Thus were Israel’s sins transferred to their substitute. Finally we are told, “*And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness*” (Lev. 16:22). The goat bearing Israel’s sins was taken into an uninhabited wilderness, and the people of God saw him and their sins *no more!* In type this was Christ taking our sins into that desolate land *where God was not*, and there making an end of them. The cross of Christ then is *the grave* of our sins!

“It is finished.”

6. Here we see the fulfilment of the law’s requirements.

“The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good” (Rom. 7:12). How could it be anything less when Jehovah himself had framed and given it! The fault lay not in the law but in man who, being depraved and sinful, could not keep it. Yet that law must be kept, and kept by a man, so that the law might be honoured and magnified, and its giver vindicated. Therefore we read, “*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in (not “by”) us, who walk not after flesh, but after the Spirit*” (Rom. 8:3, 4). The “weakness” here is that of fallen man. The sending forth of God’s Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh (Greek) refers to the Incarnation: as we read in another scripture, “*God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, that*

he might redeem them that were under the law” (Gal. 4:4, 5 Revised Version). Yes, the Saviour was born “under the law,” born under it that he might keep it perfectly in thought, word and deed. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy. but to fulfil” (Matthew 5:17); such was his claim.

But not only did the Saviour *keep* the precepts of the law, he also suffered its penalty and endured its curse. We had broken it, and taking our place, he must receive its just sentence. Having received its penalty and endured its curse the demands of the law are fully met and justice is satisfied. Therefore is it written of believers, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*” (Gal. 3:13). And again, “For Christ is *the end of the law* for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). And yet again, “*For ye are not under the law, but under grace*” (Romans 6:14).

***“Free from the law, O happy condition!
Jesus hath blest and there is remission.
Cursed by the law and dead by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.”***

“It is finished.”

7. Here we see the destruction of Satan’s power.

See it by faith. The cross sounded the death-knell of the devil’s power. To human appearances it looked like the moment of his greatest triumph, yet in reality, it was the hour of his ultimate defeat. In view of the cross (see context) the Saviour declared, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31). It is true that Satan has not yet been chained and cast into the bottomless pit, nevertheless, sentence has been passed (though not yet executed); his doom is certain; and his power is already broken so far as believers are concerned.

For the Christian the devil is a *vanquished* foe. He was defeated by Christ at the cross — “that *through death* he might destroy him that *had* the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Believers have already been “*delivered* from the power of

darkness” and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). Satan, then, should be treated as a *defeated* enemy. No longer has he any legitimate *claim* upon us. Once we were his lawful “captives” but Christ has freed us. Once we walked “according to the Prince of the power of the air;” but now we are to follow the example which Christ has left us. Once Satan “worked in us;” but now *God* worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. All that we now have to do is to “Resist the devil,” and the promise is, “he will *flee* from you” (James 4:7).

“It is finished.” Here was the triumphant answer to the rage of man and the enmity of Satan. It tells of the perfect work which meets sin in the place of judgment. All was *completed* just as God would have it, just as the prophets had foretold, just as the Old Testament ceremonial had foreshadowed, just as divine holiness demanded, and just as sinners needed. How strikingly appropriate it is that this sixth cross-utterance of the Saviour is found in John’s gospel — the gospel which displays the glory of Christ’s deity! He does not here commend his work to the approval of God, but seals it with *his own imprimatur*, attesting it as complete, and giving it the all-sufficient sanction of *his own approval*. None other than the Son of God says “*IT IS finished*” — who then dare doubt or question it.

“It is finished.” Reader, do you believe it? or, are you trying to add something of your own to the finished work of Christ to secure the favour of God? All you have to do is to accept the pardon which he purchased. *God is satisfied* with the work of Christ, why are not you? Sinner, the moment you believe God’s testimony concerning his beloved Son, that moment every sin you have committed is blotted out, and you stand accepted in Christ! O would you not like to possess the assurance that there is nothing between your soul and God? Would you not like to know that every sin had been atoned for and put away? Then believe *what God’s word* says about Christ’s death. Rest not on your feelings and experiences but on the written word. There is only one way of finding peace, and that is through faith in the shed blood of God’s Lamb.

“It is finished.” Do you *really* believe it? Or, are you endeavouring to add something of your own to it and thus merit the

favour of God? Some years ago a Christian farmer was deeply concerned over an unsaved carpenter. The farmer sought to set before his neighbour the gospel of God's grace, and to explain how that the finished work of Christ was *sufficient* for his soul to rest upon. But the carpenter persisted in the belief that he must do something himself. One day the farmer asked the carpenter to make for him a gate, and when the gate was ready he carried it away to his wagon. He arranged for the carpenter to call on him the next morning and see the gate as it hung in the field. At the appointed hour the carpenter arrived and was surprised to find the farmer standing by with a sharp axe in his hand. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "I am going to add a few cuts and strokes to your work," was the response. "But there is no need for it," replied the carpenter, "the gate is all right as it is. I did all that was necessary to it." The farmer took no notice, but lifting his axe he slashed and hacked at the gate until it was completely spoiled. "Look what you have done!" cried the carpenter. "You have *ruined my work!*" "Yes," said the farmer, "and that is exactly what you are trying to do. You are seeking to nullify the finished work of Christ by your own miserable additions to it!" God used this forceful object lesson to show the carpenter his mistake, and he was led to cast himself by faith upon what Christ had done for sinners. Reader, will you do the same?

The sixth of seven booklets.

