

"IT IS FINISHED"

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30

The surging crowd at the foot of the cross watched the spectacle of Jesus' death. To them it was a brief episode in the drama of life. They heard strange words which they could not understand, nor did they really care. When He said, "It is finished," they doubtless thought it meant that His life was at an end. But to the ages these words have grown richer in meaning, fuller in content, and more spiritual in significance. These words do not denote defeat, but glorious victory. They are words of hope, shining in the darkness, dispelling gloom, and ushering in hope and life abundant.

Jesus, on Golgotha, looked up and looked down. He looked up to God and thought of His having glorified His name, having finished the work that God gave Him to do. He looked down to men and thought of the saving power which His Cross was to exert over millions of the human family. And it must have been a moment of most intense joy for His last pang was endured, His last service rendered, and His vicarious work completed.

Near the end of His six hours on the Cross, Christ opened His lips to utter just one word--"TELEO". A great dramatist said, "The words of dying men enforce attention." How much more the words of the dying God-Man. The Greeks of old thought saying much in few words was the perfection of oratory. That perfection is found in this cry of Christ. He uttered a sea of truth in the drop of a single word. In the word "teleo" is wrapped up the gospel of God; is contained the ground of the believer's assurance; is discovered the sum of all joy, and the very spirit of all divine consolation. It is probably the greatest single word ever uttered. Krummacher thinks it is the greatest and most momentous word ever spoken on earth. Brooks declared that this word contains "a breadth, and length and depth and height, which will take eternity to comprehend." Also that no one could fathom its profound depths or understand its vast significance. Panton declares: "It is the one word in all literature which summarizes the work of Calvary forever."

To finish means to bring to an end; and there are different ways in which things may be brought to an end. A work is finished when it is completed or brought to perfection. Like the account of creation is concluded as follows: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the hosts of them." A thing is finished when it comes to an end by being destroyed, e. g. an egg broken. Again, the word is used to state something brought to an end without regard to the nature of that end, e. g. Paul said, "I have finished my course." "Teleo" is a word which means "A thing matured," brought to perfection; not a thing brought to an end merely, but something brought to a successful completion. It was verily a shout of triumph; the greatest word ever uttered.

The more difficult and prolonged any task is, the greater is the satisfaction in finishing it. Every one who has aimed at the best, and has worked nobly to achieve the best, knows what it means, after accomplishing anything on which a great deal of labor has been bestowed or the accomplishment of which has been delayed, to be able to say, "There, it is finished at last!"

No other man, since the world began, could have said "teleo" as Jesus said it. He had lived a perfect, complete, human life, in which there were no mistakes, no omissions, no shortcomings. This was an exclamation of supreme satisfaction. Over His teachings, He had wonderful satisfaction. Over His life, He had sweet satisfaction.

Over His miracles and works, He had comforting satisfaction. But when Jesus cried, "It is finished", He had something in His mind of great importance and tremendous value to us. This brings us, then, to this question, WHAT WAS FINISHED?

I. The Prophecies Which He Came To Fulfill.

The Old Testament prophecies had predicted all the remarkable events in the earthly life of Jesus. In the hour when Christ cried, "It is finished", all the prophecies which had been written of Him ere He should die were fulfilled. All the prophecies concerning His life of humiliation upon this earth became history that day.

II. The Suffering Which He Came To Endure.

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." His physical sufferings were excruciating, but they were as nothing compared with His anguish of soul. He suffered loneliness and rejection. He was misunderstood, and nothing can bring greater sorrow than that. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." They did not welcome Him. They did not want Him. Instead of being received, He was rejected. "We will not have this Man to reign over us," was the cry of His own.

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.

III. The Redemption Which He Came To Secure.

Through sin the human race had been brought under the sentence of God's condemnation. Through sin we had become servants and slaves to Satan and self. But Jesus had undertaken the great work of redeeming His people. And as He was uttering the words we are meditating on, He meant: "I have finished that great work of redemption." And He finished it in such a way that God in heaven was satisfied as to the claims of His law. The atonement was complete because it was the offering of a perfect life. He could look back over His life without any regrets. No talent, no gift, had been misused, or left unused. All His influence had been on the side of God. No one had ever been hindered in running the race of life, or harmed, by anything Christ had said or done. Every moment of each and every day He could truthfully say, "I do always those things that please Him."

On account of sin, the demands of justice had to be met; the requirements of God's holiness had to be satisfied; and the awful debt we incurred had to be paid. And on the cross this was done; done by none other than the Son of God; done perfectly; done once for all. "It is finished"—what was finished? The making of atonement. "It is made an end of"—what was? Our sins and their guilt. "It is paid"—what was? The price of our redemption. "It is performed"—what was? The utmost requirements of the law. "It is accomplished"—what was? The work which the Father had given Him to do.

When Jesus said, "It is finished", a greater work was completed than that of creation. When God created this universe He just spoke, "Let there be," and the

world was. But redemption involved a great deal more. God's wisdom, goodness, and power shone in creation. But in redemption, not only wisdom, goodness, and power were manifested, but also, righteousness, love, and mercy. Think of what a sacrifice it meant from the side of the Heavenly Father to give His Son. Think of what a sacrifice it meant on the side of Christ to give His life as a ransom for many. Think of all the labor He had to perform, and the agony He had to suffer, in order to deliver and keep His people forever. Therefore, the work of redemption was even a greater work than that of creation.

On the cross, Christ procured salvation for sinful men. There, He finished His work on earth. Earth's millions cannot blot out their sins, but they can accept Him and know the joy of sins washed away. It is our part to accept the finished work of Christ. There is no work left for us to do for salvation. We can be saved only by entering into the finished work of Christ. Simply accept salvation as a gift. Don't try to add something of your own to merit God's favor.