

The Sixth Word

by W.R. Inge

Christ's Passion fulfilled all prophecies and promises, and His love compelled humanity to turn to God.

Scripture: Matthew 22:2

Topics: "The Cross", "Redemption"

Description

W.R. Inge delves into the profound significance of Christ's sixth word on the cross, 'It is finished,' signifying the fulfillment of prophecies, sacrifices, and promises about Him. Christ, as the true Son of God, invites all to partake in the kingdom of heaven's eternal blessedness, showing unparalleled love to compel humanity to turn to God. Through His suffering and sacrifice, Christ overcame the enemy and declared victory over sin and death, offering up His life for the redemption of the elect.

Transcript

WHEN Christ had tasted the draught of vinegar and gall, He spoke the sixth word: "It is finished." Thereby He signified that by His Passion had been fulfilled all the prophecies, types, mysteries, scriptures, sacrifices, and promises, which had been predicted and written about Him. This is that true Son of God, for whom the Father of heaven made ready a supper in the kingdom of His eternal blessedness; and He sent His servant--that is the human nature of Christ, coming in the form of a servant, to call them that were bidden to the wedding. For Christ, when He took human nature upon Him, was not only a servant but a servant of servants, and served all of us for thirty and three years with great toil and suffering. Indeed, He spent His whole life in bidding all men to His supper. It was for this that He preached, and wrought miracles, and travelled from place to place, and proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and that all should be prepared for it. But they would not come. And when the Father of the household heard this, He said to His Servant: "Compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." Then that Servant thought within Himself: "How shall I be able without violence to compel these men to come, that rebellion may be avoided and yet that their privilege and power of free will may remain unimpaired? For if I compel them to come by iron chains, and blows, and whips, I shall have asses and not men." Then He said to Himself: "I perceive that man is so constituted as to be prone to love. Therefore I will show him such love as shall pass all his understanding, love than which no other love can be greater. If man will observe this, he will be so caught in its toils, that he will not be able to escape its heat and flame, and will be constrained to turn to God, and love Him in return. For, turn where he will, he will always be met by the immeasurable benefits, the infinite goodness, and the wonderful love of God; and at the same time he will feel more and more compelled to return love for love, till he will be no more able to resist it, and will be

gently constrained to follow. When this was done, Jesus Christ, this faithful and wise Servant, said to His Lord and Father, "It is finished. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. What more could I have done, and have not done it? I have no member left that is not weary and worn with toil and pain. My veins are dry, My blood is shed; My marrow is spent, My throat is hoarse with crying. Such love have I shown to man, that his heart cannot be human, cannot even be stony, or the heart of a brute beast, but must be quite devilish and desperate, if it be not moved by the thought of these things."

Moreover, this word of our Lord Jesus is a word of sorrow, not of joy. He spoke it not as if He had now escaped from all His suffering. No; when He said, "It is finished," He meant all that had been ordained and decreed by the eternal Truth for Him to suffer. Besides, all the sufferings which had been inflicted upon Him by degrees and singly, He now endures together with immeasurable anguish. Who can have such a heart of adamant as not to be moved by such torment as this? How short were the words which our Lord Jesus spoke on the Cross, yet how full of sacramental mysteries! Now were fulfilled the words of Exodus: "And all things were finished which belonged to the sacrifice of the Lord."

Moreover by this word our Lord declared the glorious victory of the Passion, and how the old enemy, the jealous serpent, was overcome and thrown down; for this was the cause for which He suffered. For this He had taken upon Himself the garment of human nature, that He might vanquish and confound the enemy, by the same weapons wherewith the enemy boasted that he had conquered man. This was the chief purpose of His Passion, and now He confesses that it is finished. O how wonderful are the mysteries, and the victories, included in this little but deep word: "It is finished!" All that the eternal Wisdom had decreed, all that strict justice had demanded for each man, all that love had asked for, all the promises made to the fathers, all the mysteries, types, ceremonies in Scripture, all that was meet and necessary for our redemption, all that was needed to wipe out our debts, all that must repair our negligences, all that was glorious and loving for the exhibition of this splendid love, all that we could desire, for our spiritual instruction--in a word, all that was good and fitting for the celebration of the glorious triumph of our redemption, all is included in that one word, "It is finished." What, then, remains for Him, but to finish and perfect His life in this glorious conflict; and, because nothing remains for Him to do, to commend His precious soul into His Father's hands, seeing that He has fought the good fight, and finished His course in all holiness? It is meet, then, that He should obtain the crown of glory which His heavenly Father will give Him on the day of His exaltation.

Lastly, by this word Christ offered up all His toil, sorrow, and affliction for all the elect, as the Apostle saith: "Who in the days of His flesh offered up prayer and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

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