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Lenten and Easter Meditation: Voices of the Passion: The Seven Words from the Cross: The Sixth Word, 1944

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THE SEVEN WORDS ^{From} ON THE CROSS

THE SIXTH WORD

"It Is Finished"

Oct. 44

This is the moment of the Cross triumphant. The divine plan of salvation for the redemption of humanity moves to its close. It is probable that the last few moments on Calvary were very quiet. Even mobs become still when death comes. Again our Saviour raised^s His head and the magnificent words "It Is Finished" sounded over the hill and the world like the trumpet of salvation. To the mob, the Scribes and Pharisees, these words must have sounded like the crack of doom. They were killing this Man, but He seemed to feel that He had won a victory. Had they, after all, lost in their battle against the carpenter's Son from Nazareth? Yes, they had! Each thorn in His crown was becoming a shining gem in His diadem of glory, ~~the~~^{His} nails were being forged into the scepter of a King, and His wounds were clothing Him with the purple of empire. He had won! The world was changed. Humanity was redeemed. Now the eternal fate of all men in all ages would be determined by the Cross. There could^{be}/no neutrality over against the final fact of history and life. Until the Day of Judgment it would be ~~and~~^{either} a stone of stumbling ^{or} on the way to Heaven.

"It is finished!" This is the cry of final victory. All history testifies to this fact. Since that day the story of men is a continuing testimony of His power. Even when they hate Him, they can not leave Him alone. They speak against Him, they write books against Him, they live without Him. It should be very clear to us of the twentieth century that the enemies of our Lord provide one of the greatest proofs ^{of} His living victory and power. When all is said and done, only the emotion of love reaches beyond the grave. When a loved one dies, our love does not die with him. Hate, however, does not reach beyond the grave. Men do not hate the dead. Today^x no one hates Napoleon, or Caesar, or Genghis Khan. By their hatred of Him the enemies of our Lord testify to His continuing power.

There are two kinds of faith in the world, the saving faith of the redeemed and the protesting faith of the unbelieving. Both are evidences of the dynamic life of our Lord in the world.

"It is finished!" Today we may be tempted to say: "Lord, nothing is finished. The clouds of hate and fear hang dark over the world. Untold millions are still without the Cross. Even Thy Church is often sluggish and cold." When such thoughts come to us of the twentieth century, we must remember the full meaning of His dying cry. It meant that His work was done and that He would now be with us and His Church for all time. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He has said farewell to our eyes but not to us. Yes, the work of God is finished. Everything is done. It is now up to us to bring that message to the world.

"It is finished!" Sometime sooner or later we shall come to our own twilight as He came to it on the Cross. We, too, shall face the door of death. Our Lord's voice will come to us: "Put away the little things of life and living. Your little treasures; your little hopes and fears. It is time for you to say your prayers and go to sleep." We shall not want to go, but His voice will be warm and insistent.

Then there will be another morning. Our own Easter! The great moment of God! By the power of His dying cry, "It is finished" we shall wake up in Heaven to see finally and forever the full plan of God completed for us and in us. Flaming and glowing against the walls of Heaven, all our little unfinished problems will be cleansed, glorified, and transfigured. They will be finished for us over night by hands that were once torn with nails.

Between this hour and that hour we can live ^{by} the faith in His cry: "It is finished!" We can face the world sure and unafraid. We can follow Him wherever He will lead. Our salvation is sure. Our life is safe. Our ^{destiny} ~~testimony~~ is certain.