

LAST WORDS AT DEATH

BY WILLIAM LOFTUS HARE

THOSE who have observed carefully the phenomena of death, and noticed particularly the moral and psychological reactions that accompany the physical process, tell us that where death proceeds from natural causes, and in some other instances, a concentrated memory occurs of that which has been most significant in life. And this is not surprising. The one about to die has lived in virtue of a will-to-live which, from beginning to end, has unconsciously sustained its energy, while the consciousness has experienced the love of life uniting with the deeper urge of the unconscious; and now the moment has come when, willingly or with resistance, life has to be relinquished. The time is short in which the will has to be adjusted to the new physical conditions which must bring death. The vanquished one has to see all things in a fresh system of relations; a new proportion must be given to the life as a whole and to its various parts; the will-to-live has to be laid down. It is not easy thus to reverse the system of values life has approved and to deny that which has hitherto been so strongly affirmed. Yet as Death stands over us he commands and we must obey.

There are many varieties of Death, which I do not propose to discuss here; but there are two great classes into which death may be divided, namely those where the departing one is reconciled to death and those where he is not. The latter class is no doubt the larger of the two and perhaps complete readiness for death is rare. Yet it is obvious that this readiness alone robs death of its sting.

So far as my knowledge extends the literature on death is singularly insufficient. It may be due to professional etiquette that doctors, who should have great experience, seldom write or speak of death. Novelists treat the subject sentimentally and throw little light upon it. Scientists are so occupied with life that they rarely look her sister in the face. Even philosophers neglect death, despite

the fact that Socrates said that the wise man's life was a preparation for death—a remark that would seem morbid if it came from any man less robust than the old Athenian. Yet, in view of what I have said above it would appear that if reconciliation to death be desirable and possible, the sooner it is effected the more satisfying it will be. A man who embraces life so ardently and never gives a thought to death finds himself taken unawares, suddenly; even if his life has been good and useful the blow appears to him undeserved and is received with rebellion. What an unappropriate ending to a good life! How much better to have added wisdom to mere goodness and to go out of life by consent.

But Socrates was wiser than he knew in this as in most other things. The reason why a philosopher's life should be a preparation for death can be found in physiology as well as in psychology and morals. *Necrobiosis*, or death-in-life, is the biological process by which our bodies are built up. From the very first minute cells are thrown off from their parent stock, and, in differentiating, die to give a basis to the growing and changing organs of the body. Death and life run neck and neck in our bodies for the greater part of our existence, and life is eventually defeated. To understand this *necrobiosis* and to adapt oneself consciously to it is a matter of physical and spiritual hygiene.

In the literature of death I sit at the feet of three masters: Chas. S. Minot for physiology; Leo Tolstoy for psychology and Schopenhauer for philosophy.¹

Religious literature furnishes of course, a rich volume of fact in regard to the ways in which men meet their end, and religion itself may be described, in one sense at least, as a reconciliation with death. Even this, however, is too great a theme for my present purpose which is narrowed down to the consideration of the last words at death of some of the greatest men of our race. Even this will be found a sufficiently arresting theme.

¹ C. S. Minot, *The Problem of Age, Growth and Death* (John Murry); *Master and Man, The Death of Ivan Illych, Sevastopol* are good examples of Tolstoy's treatment; Schopenhauer's *Basis of Morality* (Allen & Unwin) is perhaps the best statement on the subject, though his disciple Deussen treats of it concisely in his *Elements of Metaphysics* (Macmillan).

THE LAST WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

There is probably in all the literature of death no more sublime picture than that exhibited of the end of the Buddha in the *Mahāpara-nirvāna Sūtra*. Devoid of the cruel horror which accompanied the martyrdom of Jesus or the noble tragedy of the end of Socrates, the departure of the great Indian teacher was everything that a death should be, and can be. It was natural, timely, expected and acceptable. Moreover, it was made the significant occasion of the concentration into a few calm and powerful words of the fullness of wisdom gathered in a well-spent life. It is to this aspect that I desire to call attention.

The Buddha had begun his career at the feet of great teachers whom he had nevertheless been led to abandon. No vicarious wisdom or works could save him from life's suffering. A man must, in himself, said the Buddha, find the saving truth; he must be enlightened within. "Be ye lamps unto yourselves: hold fast to the Truth as to a lamp," were his penultimate words, spoken a few minutes before he passed away. The last words were like unto them: "Behold now, brethren I exhort you saying Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence."

In order to realize how completely appropriate were these sentences to close the book of the Buddha's teaching I reproduce from the work above named the following colloquy without further comment:

"And the Blessed One called a certain brother and said: Go now, brother and call Ananda in my name, and say, Brother Ananda, the Master calls for thee. Even so, Lord! said that brother in assent, to the Blessed One. And he went from the place where the Blessed One was; and when he had come there, he said to the venerable Ananda: Brother Ananda, the Master calls thee. Very well brother, said the venerable Ananda, in assent to that brother. And he went up to the place where the Blessed One was, and when he had come there, he bowed down before the Blessed One, and took his seat respectfully on one side.

"Then the Blessed One said to the venerable Ananda, as he sat there by his side: Enough, Ananda! do not let yourself be troubled; do not weep! Have I not already, on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear to us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever our-

selves from them? How, then, Ananda, can this be possible—whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how, then, can this be possible, that such a being should not be dissolved. No such condition can exist! For a long time, Ananda, have you been very near to me by acts of love, kind and good, that never varies, and is beyond all measure. For a long time, Ananda have you been very near to me by words of love kind and good, that never varies, and is beyond all measure. For a long time, Ananda, have you been very near to me by thoughts of love kind and good, that never varies, and is beyond all measure. You have done well Ananda! Be earnest in effort, and you, too, shall soon be free from the great evils—from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion and from ignorance!

“It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddha, or the truth or the path or the way. Enquire brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves with the thought, Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to enquire of the Blessed One when we were face to face with him!

“And when he had thus spoken, the brethren were silent. Then the Blessed One addressed the brethren, and said: Behold now, brethren, I exhort you saying, Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!

“This was the last word of the Perfect One!

“When the Blessed One died, of these brethren who were not yet free from the passions, some stretched out their arms and wept and some fell headlong on the ground, rolling to and fro in anguish, at the thought: Too soon has the Blessed One died! Too soon has the Happy One passed away from existence! Too soon has the Light gone out of the world! But those of the brethren who were free from the passions bore their grief collected and composed at the thought: Impermanent are all component things! How is it possible that they should not be dissolved?

“Now at that time the Mallas of Kusinara were assembled in the council hall. And they took the perfumes and garlands and all the musical instruments and five hundred suits of apparel, and went to the Upavattana, to the Sala Grove of the Mallas where the body of the Blessed One lay. There they passed the day in paying honor, reverence, respect and homage to the remains of the Blessed One with dancing, and hymns, and music, and with garlands and per-

fumes; and in making canopies of their garments and preparing decoration wreaths to hang thereon."

THE PASSING OF CONFUCIUS

K'ung-fu-tze—to give him his proper name—was not the founder of a religion, but occupies a position in the Chinese mind as great as that of any man, greater than most. He was a backward-gazing renovator of all that was conceived to be good in the conduct and custom of earlier sages. With characteristic zeal he collected all he could, rejected all he dared, and re-presented to his contemporaries a well-designed discipline for every phase of life. Necessarily this ethic was founded upon a definite philosophy which as to its main principles was rational and intelligible. The metaphysical part of it was traditional and not the invention of Confucius. The universe was maintained by two complimentary forces, *yang* and *yin*, which penetrated all phenomena and interpenetrated each other. *Yang* is spiritual, *Yin* material; relatively one good and bad, strong and weak, male and female—and so on. The realm of *Yang* contains all the *shen* or superior spirits and that of *yin* the inferior *Kwei*. This dualism introduced a perpetual struggle, in which man was to identify himself with the *Shen* and *Yang*. Born naturally good, as Confucius believed, man suffered declensions, but by a proper mode of life he could lift himself from being an "ordinary man" to become a "superior man."

In detail the teaching of Confucius was nothing but an optimistic appeal to all men thus to live and thus to die. His hope was that death should find him with duty done so that he might pass beyond with no regrets.

"The burden of the scholar is heavy and his course is long. Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers is his to sustain: is it not heavy? Only with death does his course stop: is it not long?"—(*Analects* VIII, c. vii.)

"The body and the animal soul go downwards, and the intelligent spirit is on high."—(*Li-Chi* VII, i. 7.)

"That the bones and flesh should return to earth is what is appointed. But the soul in its energy can go everywhere: it can go everywhere."—(*Li-Chi* II, ii. iii, 13.)

"The intelligent spirit is of the *shen* nature and shows that in fullest measure; the animal soul is of the *kwei* nature and shows that in

the fullest measure. . . . All who live must die, and dying return to the earth. The bones and the flesh moulder below and hidden away become the earth of the fields. But the spirit issues forth and is displayed on high in a condition of glorious brightness.”—(*Li-Chi* XXI, ii. 1.)

“When a bird is about to die, its notes are mournful; when a man is about to die, his words are good.”—(*Analecets* VIII, c. iv. 2.)

It is unnecessary to add to these few passages any others explanatory of the Confucian view of death. They are colored by the fundamental philosophy of the *Yi-Ching* or Book of Change. Impermanence was as much noticed by Confucius and his disciples as by The Buddha. To understand scientifically the nature of the changes which life exhibits was the intellectual task of the sage; to be reconciled to them, and to death the most significant of all, was his moral duty.

Confucius had a long and hard life. Successful at first as an administrator and statesman he sought to apply his ethical system with great thoroughness. But failure overtook him in his later years. At fifty-six he entered upon a futile attempt to induce state after state—to the number of forty it is said—to accept him as a teacher or minister. This wandering lasted for fourteen years and drew to his side some thousands of disciples among whom was an inner circle of affectionate students, including his only son.

A story is told in the *Li-Chi* of one of these disciples who had learned his Master's lesson very well. He was lying very ill in his chamber and was being watched with care by his relatives and friends. “What do I seek for!” he said, “I want for nothing but to die in the correct way.” That perhaps is the last refinement of the Confucian morals—to die in the correct way!

The death of Confucius at the age of seventy-seven was in every way “correct”; as said above his last words were good and completely in harmony with his life's teaching. Theoretically an optimist who believed the best of the universe and of man he was at death naturally pessimistic at the prospect of his failure to accomplish in his nation all that he had once believed possible. The following is the story of his end:

“Confucius rose early one day and with his hands behind him, and trailing his steps, moved slowly about near the door, singing:

‘The great mountain must crumble;

The strong beam must break;

The strong man must wither away like a plant.’

Having thus sang, he entered and sat down opposite the door. Tsze-kung had heard him and said to himself, "If the great mountains crumble, to whom shall I look up? If the strong beam break on what shall I lean? If the wise man wither like a plant, whom shall I imitate? The Master, I am afraid, is going to be ill." He then hastened to the house. The Master said: "Tsze, what makes you so late?" Referring to the traditional preparation for burial he then recounted a dream of the preceding night. 'I dreamt that I dreamt that I was sitting with the offerings to the dead by my side. Alas! intelligent rulers do not arise! And what king under heaven is now able to take me as his Master? I apprehend that I am about to die.'

With this he took to his bed, was ill for seven days and died.—(*Li-Chi* II, i, ii, 20.)

As in the case of the Buddha, the disciples of Confucius were not clear as to the proper demeanor; they were in perplexity as to what dress they should wear—he had given no instructions. Tsze-kung said, "Let us mourn for the Master as if we were mourning for a father but wear no mourning dress." His disciples wore their head bands of sackcloth to express the real feeling of the heart when they went out. One of them recalled the words of the Master that exceeding grief with deficient rites was better than little demonstration of grief with superabundant rites. Confucius disliked those who wailed in the open fields. Evidently he wished that people should mourn "correctly."

THE DYING JEST OF SOCRATES

It has often been remarked that the last words of Socrates are singularly puzzling. Let us remember what has happened during the thirty days preceding his death; he has been visited by many friends while in prison and the discussions have been for the most part of a religious and philosophical character, mainly about the soul, its nature and life after death. Man, he says, is a prisoner who has no right to run away; he is a possession of the gods. Socrates is certain that he is going to a place where live the wise and good, better than those he leaves behind, and therefore he does not fear death. The true philosopher is always dying and life is the best when the soul is most freed from the concerns of the body and is alone by herself. There is talk about medicine and healing. Puri-

fiction (*katharsis*), a technical term, long in use in the Pythagorean philosophy is said by Socrates to be the separation of the soul from the body, for the soul is of the nature of the unchangeable and the body of the changing; the soul rules and the body serves, the soul is in the likeness of the divine and the body of the mortal. In every way therefore we can be quite certain from Socrates' discourse, and what is said about him by the narrator, that he was reconciled to death. The closing scene when he drinks the hemlock, his kind words to the jailer who administers it, his rebuke to those who were weeping—all go to show that he had reached that super-earthly state of consciousness which indicates a readiness for death.

A philosophy of Death figures largely in the earlier writings of Plato, associated with the person of Socrates. There can be no doubt that the old man addressed his judges in the manner depicted in the *Apology*:

"The fear of death, O Athenians, is nothing else than to appear to be wise, without being so; for it is to appear to know what one does not know. For no one knows but that death is the greatest of all goods to man; but men fear it as if they well knew that it is the greatest of evils. . . . I shall never therefore fear or shun things which, for aught I know, may be good, before evils which I know to be evil."

"Moreover, we may conclude that there is great hope that death is a blessing. For to die is one of two things: either the dead are annihilated or there is a certain change and passage of the soul from one place to another. And if it is a privation of all sensation—as it were a sleep in which the sleeper has no dream—death would be a wonderful gain. . . . Even if death be a thing of this kind I say it is a gain. But if on the other hand death is a removal from hence to another place, and that all the dead are there what greater blessing can there be than this?"

Here Socrates breaks out into rollicking rhetoric at the prospect that lies before him of cross-examining all the great men of the past—especially those who have been unjustly put to death! In most solemn vein he falls back on his own inner convictions, in the absence of rational knowledge, "that now to die, and be freed from any cares, is better for me."

The same arguments are repeated with elaboration in the *Gorgias* where Socrates describes the myth of judgment in Hades. In the *Phaedo* the death scene itself is described in Plato's immortal words, which reflect the earlier expressed views of Socrates on death.

And the boy having gone out, and staid for some time, came, bringing with him the man that was to administer the poison, who bought it ready pounded in a cup. And Socrates, on seeing the man, said, "Well, my good friend, as you are skilled in these matter, what must I do?"

"Nothing else, until there is a heaviness in your legs, then lie down; thus it will do its purpose." And at the same time he held out the cup to Socrates. And he having received it very cheerfully, neither trembling, nor changing at all in color or countenance, but, as he was wont, looking steadfastly at the man, said, "What say you of this potion, with respect to making a libation to any one, is it lawful or not?"

"We only pound so much, Socrates, as we think sufficient to drink."

"I understand you," he said, "but it is certainly both lawful and right to pray to the gods, that my departure hence thither may be happy; which therefore I pray and so may it be." And as he said this he drank it off readily and calmly. Thus far, most of us were with difficulty able to restrain ourselves from weeping, but when we saw him drinking, and having finished the draught, we could do so no longer; but in spite of myself the tears came in full torrent, so that, covering my face, I wept for myself, for I did not weep for him, but for my own fortune, in being deprived of such a friend. But Crito even before me, when he could not restrain his tears had risen up. But Apollodorus even before this had not ceased weeping, and then bursting into an agony of grief, weeping and lamenting, he pierced the heart of every one present, except Socrates himself. But he said, "What are you doing, my admirable friends? I indeed, for this reason chiefly, sent away the women, that they might not commit any folly of this kind. For I have heard that it is right to die with good omen. Be quiet, therefore, and bear up."

When we heard this we were ashamed, and restrained our tears. But, he, having walked about, when he said that his legs were growing heavy, laid down on his back; for the man so directed him. And at the same time he who gave him the poison, taking hold of him, after a short interval examined his feet and legs; and then having pressed his foot hard, he asked if he felt it; he said that he did not. And after this he pressed his thighs; and thus going higher, he showed us that he was growing cold and stiff. Then Socrates touched himself, and said, that when the poison reached his heart he should then depart. But now the parts around the lower belly

were almost cold; when uncovering himself, for he had been covered over, he said, and they were his last words, "Crito, we owe a cock to the God Aesculapius; pay it, therefore, and do not neglect it."

"It shall be done," said Crito, "but consider whether you have anything else to say."

To this question he gave no reply; but shortly after he gave a convulsive movement, and the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed: and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes.

There are some enemies of Socrates who point to these last words as an indication of superstitious fear; others, his friends, think the sentence an anti-climax unworthy of the great heights their master had reached. They would much rather he had said some great thing on the level of his recent utterances than to pander to a priestly claim, which his life and teaching regarded lightly.

No apologies are needed. I am going to suggest that when the words are properly understood they are wonderfully appropriate: they do not represent a sudden remembrance of a temple debt he had forgotten to pay which afflicted his conscience just as he was about to enter the presence of the gods; on the contrary he had only a moment ago contracted the debt! In his deeply humorous way he sees the hemlock as a medicine completing his life-long process of purification (*katharsis*) and he wishes to communicate the happy thought to Krito, who perhaps may not have quite understood its whispered tones: *O Krito, he seems to say, for this draught of medicine and for this freedom from my cares I owe a sacrifice to Aesculapius the god of healing: will you see that it is paid?*

Any friend would answer as Krito did: *The debt shall be paid.*

Many a man before now has jested with his last breath, for the sense of humor belongs in a certain way, to the highest life; it was therefore fitting that Socrates, gifted with irony as he was, should, out of the tragic crisis of his struggle with the world, extract an inward smile. If therefore we have rid the memory of Socrates of the stigma of cowardly superstition, we may the more easily assent to the words of Phaidon:

"Such was the end of our friend, concerning whom I may truly say that of all the men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and the justest and the best."

CHRIST ON THE CROSS

The problem of the "last words" here is more difficult than in the earlier examples already discussed, partly on account of the wealth of theological tradition that has grown up around the "sayings from the cross," and partly from the differences in the gospel narratives. I do not propose to consider either doctrinal or critical questions more than is necessary to present the facts in the same manner and for the same purpose that has been pursued hitherto.

There are four separate records: Mark gives one sentence and one inarticulate loud cry; Matthew gives the same two almost *verbatim*. Luke adds two more of singular and convincing beauty while John records three minor sayings.

The teaching of Jesus is so familiar that one might be excused from the attempt to summarize it for the purposes of this study, yet it must be admitted that this very familiarity works against clarity and uniformity of understanding. Death was a constant theme with Jesus but was handled by him in a less logical manner than Socrates and less coldly rational than the Buddha. His attitude is prophetic and apocalyptic and his words are poetic and mystical. The Old Testament differentiation of "the death of the righteous" from the death of the wicked pervades the discourses of Jesus on the subject, albeit there is a singular resemblance to the relative values placed on life and death by Socrates. In several passages in the Gospels the Lord speaks of his own approaching death and, quite apart from the question of miraculous prevision, there is little doubt that he felt his challenge to the world would lead to his martyrdom at its hands. Yet he clearly viewed this event, though bitter in itself, as a glorification of his person, his mission and his Father. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to me," he said to the people, "the time is come for the Son of Man to be glorified." And of Peter he "indicated the kind of death by which that disciple would bring glory to God."

All this goes to show that the Christian view of death resembled the Socratic view in so far as a special significance was given to it when suffered for a righteous cause: it became glorious and it glorified the cause. Nevertheless it is worth remarking that this view was new and not in conformity with the later Jewish ideas; there death is an evil only mitigated by the promise of a resurrection. And as for "the death of the Son of Man" there is no sign of it in the

Apocalyptic writings where that great figure is most clearly delineated. In *The Book of Enoch* and all the dependent apocalypses the Son of Man is a conqueror, a judge, a ruler, not a martyr. Why then do the evangelists strive to prove that the death of Jesus was inevitable? As the Son of Man he ought not to have suffered thus! Their typical figure is "the Suffering Servant of the Lord" drawn by Isaiah II. Their philosophy goes back to the thought of Job, where the righteous man is seen crushed by the world but nevertheless remains inwardly faithful to a higher power; he knows that his redeemer liveth. It was not mere death that made the martyr glorious, but steadfastness in death, triumph over death. "To him that overcometh" were promised such gifts that the world could neither bestow nor take away.

In this atmosphere we must move when we listen to the last words of Jesus; they become more immediately impressive and intelligible.

It is impossible to determine at this date the degree of authority that shall be awarded to the recorded words themselves: all we can do is to receive them as they are and examine their significance. If they seem to have value and consistency that is an argument for their genuineness. Further we cannot go, except to emphasize the appropriateness of the sayings to the general teaching of Jesus.

(1) On the way to the place of crucifixion following Jesus was "a great multitude of the people and women who bewailed and lamented him." He said to them:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. . . . For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?"—(Luke xxiii. 28.)

The saying indicates two things; first that Jesus has "overcome the world" and needs no tears; but secondly, that this is only a beginning of the sufferings that must come to the righteous as the result of a contest with the world. As a prophecy it was sufficiently fulfilled.

(2) Arrived at Golgatha the soldiers crucified Jesus who said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—(Luke xxiii. 34.)

He did not, indeed, weep for himself but for those who pierced his hands and feet. It is the most sublime prayer in the whole gospel story. It calls down mercy upon those who, from the viewpoint of the cause, are the instruments of the greatest error of the age. Serving the prince of this world the soldiers knew not their deed as

evil nor could they see how it was immediately to be turned to the glorification of their victim and the God he claimed as Father. Their commander, the centurion, did not wait long before he had to confess, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

The words reflect in smallest compass and greatest power the Christian ethic of love and forgiveness to those who seek to do us evil, and are a perpetual challenge to our weakness, vindictiveness and hypocrisy. In them the whole Sermon on the Mount is preached again from the accursed tree.

(3) Similarly, the pure gospel is given to the two thieves crucified beside the Lord. They heard the cruel taunts of soldiers, chief priests, scribes, elders and people hurled at their suffering companion, who answered no word of complaint. It was not long before one of them, more compassionate than the other, learned his lesson swiftly and received the comforting response:

"Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—(Luke xxiii, 43.)

He too had conquered death ere it conquered him. He, a malefactor, had entered the Kingdom of Heaven before the "righteous" men of his race—as Jesus said would be the case. In his own bone, he felt the pains of his deliverer from an evil worse than pain, and was helped through the gate by his compassion and his faith. Hour by hour Jesus was being glorified the more, and one who has first reproached him lived long enough to bless him.

In this short sentence is concentrated a dozen of the discourses of Jesus: here beside him is the lost sheep, the lost son whose return gives joy to the angels in heaven. It was to such as this robber that the gospel was to be preached; to this sick man rather than to the hale.

(4) Here we may consider the short words addressed to his mother and his young disciple which Weymouth interprets, I think correctly, thus:

"He is now your son; she is now your mother."—(John xix, 27.)

If so, there is more than the mere commendation of mutual care of two beloved ones. At the last as at the beginning, there is teaching of the universality of relationship which makes us all sons to all mothers, all mothers to all sons. It was the teaching which came from his boyhood's life, and, although it gave offence at that time, it indicates now an ultimate valuation upon human affection which makes us all one family.

(5) The next saying presents many difficulties, first, as to its actual wording and secondly as to its meaning. Mark and Matthew give us the sentence:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—(Mark xxv. 34, Matt. xxvii. 46.)

And immediately tell of the man who ran to fetch vinegar. John accounts for this action by the cry, "I thirst!" while a spectator misunderstood the words, "Eloi, Eloi," to be a call for Elijah. When we eliminate these two minor ideas we are left with a tragic cry more poignant than any in sacred history. It ought not to be difficult to understand and sympathize with the emotions of the sufferer. Jesus had staked so much and lost, apparently all. Had he really been abandoned? Some Gnostics say that it was at this moment that the cosmic Christ withdrew from the person of Jesus and left him to die on the cross. It is hard to believe this, especially as its acceptance involves so much else that is still more hard to believe. Madam Blavatsky provided another solution by translating the words, "My God, my God, how hast thou glorified me!" Such a triumphant saying would be welcome to those who wish to relieve Jesus of the stigma of weakness; but no English translator supports it. The Septuagint of Psalm XXII corresponds closely to Canon Cheyne's, "O my God! to me give ear; Why hast thou forsaken my Soul?" We must leave the words as we find them, and allow them to be entirely appropriate to the agony of death.

(6) The last saying brings us out of all doubt; at the moment of liberation Jesus says:

"It is finished (John xix. 30); Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—(Luke xxiii. 46.)

Mark and Matthew record no words but a cry with a loud voice, while Luke preserves a sentence resembling words from Psalm XXXI, rendered by Cheyne: "To thy keeping I commit my breath, my deliverer, thou faithful God."

The actual last words enshrine the whole Christian teaching of faith in God through life and death.