

son comes back home and committs himself into the care of the father.

The key to this word on the cross is committ. Its root meaning is to place beside or near. It is used to set, therefore, a food on the table. (Luke 10:8, Acts 16:34) It means to place down from oneself or for oneself with anyone. To deposit, to entrust, or to committ to one's charge. Thus four times in his charge to Timothy the apostle Paul uses this word. This charge I committ unto thee, Son, Timothy, according to the propheisies which went before on thee. That thou by them mightest war a good warfare. (1 Tim. 1:8) There the idea is to give something over to another with the power to use it. To committ. We find the element of obligation to use properly, that which has been committed. When food is set before us, there is in it the obligation on our part to eat it. Or else it was prepared and placed there in vain.

Timothy was under compulsion of using the gospel ministry in the right way as it had been committed to him. Many men have been irresponsible in the way they have used the gospel message.

Thus the human redemption is placed into the hands of the father. The father had assigned the son a duty to perform in order that men might be reconciled and this stewardship of Jesus had fully been accomplished. All that he could do now

While all the words of a dying person are full of interest and they seem to have special importance, the very last ones seem to be vital. This is the last words of Jesus that we are to talk about tonight. The story is told of the Englishman who was dying, he called in his daughter, and said come near and see how a Christian can die. Nowhere can it be learned so well as by studying the death of Christ. The last words especially teaches us more than how to die, because there is far more involved.

We cherish these last words that were written by his followers. Who regarded them as the last words that he spoke from the cross. The words of Jesus are stamped indedibly in the very fabric of the universe and in the hearts of the faithful.

Jesus knew that these were his final words before death. Furthermore, he was conscious of the fact that they would be read and studied through the ages. Therefore, we may be certain that he who never spoke an idle word choose these words with deliberate care. That they are cherished by his followers is seen by those who in every age have chosen to die with them upon their lips. For we have record in history of many, many people who have used these words in last moments of life, knowing their content and knowing the strength. A man once



stood by the bedside of his wife as she hovered in the shadow of death and said, "She taught us how to live, now she is going to teach us how to die." This to some degree was how Jesus was to teach us how to die. Because he taught us how to live.

The various gospels speak of Jesus' words, how he spoke "It is finished" and how he spoke about giving up the spirit.

Jesus (gave up the ghost) gave up the spirit, as simply stated. The Bible simply states that. It means that the breaths are out of the spirit. Actually they mean nothing more than that he expired or was out of breath. He breathed his last breath.

We think about what John has to say in his account. He emphasizes the fact that Jesus himself delivered his spirit to God. Deliberately chosen and it is a suggestive act of delivering to one something to keep - the use of it, to take care of it, to manage it. Thus all that the father delivered to the son, for his saving ministry, the son now returns back to the father.

We remember the parable of the talents. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. Jesus uses the words and enlarges upon the meaning of them. We know that he was arrested, he was bound, he was led away, and they

delivered his body to the executioners for his death. Now that their purpose had been realized, Jesus delivers his spirit to the father unto life through his resurrection from the dead.

Matthew describes this or analyzes the death of Jesus with the first word on the cross. He translates forgive at a far greater meaning than he would give permission and not hinder. It means to send away, to bid to go away, or to depart. He sent away his spirit or bade his spirit to depart. During the dread hours of the cross, his spirit was yearning to fly to the bosom of the father. But (until his final bid) of agony had been endured for the sins of the world, he had hindered his departure saying, "Let it be". All things have been accomplished. He said to his spirit, you can go now. He dismissed his spirit as Matthew states it.

Here is a fulfillment of a pre-determined purpose. Jesus was not a martyr. Nor was he a criminal. Nor was his death an accident. The cross was at the end of the road for Jesus. It was in the purpose of God and the last words that he spoke before he dismissed his spirit. "Father into thy hands, I commend my spirit". As at the beginning, so at the end of the crucifixion, he addresses God, as father. No longer is he merely my God. The struggle is over, the victory has been won and Jesus now commits himself to the father as a prodigal



acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief. And he went on to say there is nothing else of any use to me now except this scripture. Now of course the student certainly was overjoyed in the depths of that great man's mind. He knew the other books and some of the books were good and yet in the moment when life was short and when death was imminent, these books were irrelevant and there was no book so appropriate as the book of eternal life to him.

The quotation is from the 31st Psalm, the other great word uttered on the cross was from Psalm 22.

Jesus knew where to go in the Bible for the language that suited him. For he was a diligent ~~student~~ student and he had heard this in his home, in the synagogue and during his childhood. He knew it through and through. He knew the language of the century. He fought with the enemy in the wilderness and overcame him. He used the word to do that. And here in the dying hour, Jesus hid like we should in the word of God.

Of course, he added something to the beginning and he omitted something at the close. At the beginning, he added father and this is not in the Psalm. It could not have been in the Old Testament. The individual had not begun to address God yet by this name. Even though God was called the father of the nation as a whole. He gave the verse new coloring and the Old Testament took on meaning with the New Testament insight

had been done. His spirit is dismissed from his dead body. And it is identified with the price that he had paid as the ransom for many. From now on it is in the hands of the father. God had given his word to save all. The son had finished the work, that the father gave him to do. And now he places the obligation back into the father's hands. Therefore we see the (continuous) ministry of Jesus, to save unto the utmost all that will come unto God. Wherever the sin of one who has believed in Christ comes before God, the sacrifice is there also as evidence that Jesus died for his sins according to God's recorded plan. Thus the intercession of Jesus is the constant reminder through the shed blood. ~~XXXXXXXX~~

Now let us examine this last word from Jesus. We are conscious that in the first place they were important words. They were important last words.

Second what these words were. Just what were they, what did they consist of, and what did they mean? The last words.

First they were words of prayer. These final words of Jesus from the cross were prayer, in the form of a prayer. We know that some of his words were addressed to a thief on the cross, other words were addressed to his mother, to his disciples and yet others to the soldiers. But we note the first word on the cross was a prayer and the last word was a prayer.



While prayer is (appropriate for all times) and seasons, there are occasions when it is very important, and appropriate. At the close of the day when we are about to enter the state of sleep is a wonderful time for prayer. In times of death, in times of peril, in times of fellowship, in times of quietness. There are lots of times for prayer. But here at the deathbed time, how natural it was and it is for a man to lay hold of prayer. To lay hold of what alone we can lay hold of. And this is what prayer does. For it lays hold of God.

It is so natural to pray when that prayer might be supposed to be an invariable element of the last scenes. The deathbed without God is an awful sight. Yet it does occur. There are even deathbeds where the thought of God is a terror, which the dying man keeps away. And sometimes his friends assist him in keeping it away.

Natural as prayer is, it is only so to those who have learned to pray before. It had not long been to Jesus the language of life. He had prayed without ceasing. On the mountain top, in the garden, and at other times. As he breathed his last, he turned to God. But we should commence praying also, so that it will be natural for us. You remember one man prayed, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his. Thus these were words of prayer.

2. They were quotation from the scripture. This is not the first time that Jesus quoted from the Bible. Because when he said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me; they were words from the Old Testament.

We have judged that prayer was a natural thing with Jesus. So it seems that scripture was not something that was seasonal but it was part of his language. Just as Latin is the language of law, French the language of diplomacy, German the language of philosophy, English the language of commerce; so we think of the most sacred moments of life. And these moments take their setting in the language of the Bible. Now everything we see that is connected with death will fit right in with the quotation from the scripture. A tombstone for example, how out of place some of them are. But as a rule, when you see the quotation of scripture there, you think how fitting. But some other quotations seem to be out of place and seem to be not so fitting.

For example, for illustration, a student went to visit his professor who was a dying man and they went out for a while and the professor had been visiting with some of the other students earlier. And the professor confessed that they had been reading to him the works of some philosopher Sartor Resartus. And the professor said, I'm tired of it. And then he began to repeat: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all



to his body. Suppose that you deposit your money in a reputable bank. It is after safe-keeping until the day when you call for it. However, the banker may utilize your funds. He is obligated to keep them safe, for you. In good times and bad times, he is there as a symbol to care for them. It would be foolish for you to place your money in the bank and then pace back and forth before the strong vaults guarded by armed men and wonder whether or not it was going to be secure. In like manner when you place your soul on deposit with God, it is there for safe-keeping until the day when you shall appear before him. The purpose of keeping your soul safe. He is able, he is strong to keep that which you have committed unto him. And thus you can say, I know in whom I have believed. This becomes a conviction of one's soul. I might know that the bank is safe, yet never deposit a cent in it. But if I thoroughly perceive the experience of others until it becomes a conviction within their own hearts, leading me to deposit my treasure in the bank, it is so with the bank of God. I may say I know whom I have believed. But until that knowledge becomes conviction, in my soul and until I have made the deposit, I can never really say, I know in whom I have believed. I need never to have any care about the safety of it. It matters little what happens to the body of the Christian

3. This is a word about his spirit. The dying Saviour. Dying persons are sometimes must take up a lot of time with their bodies, their pain, their trouble. With their doctors, and some display a peculiar anxiety about what's going to happen to their body after life and they leave careful instructions as to what will happen. It is not infrequent that the dying people are occupied with worldly affairs. They have property to dispose of, they are distracted about the anxieties of the family. But the example of Jesus shows that it is not wrong to bestow attention upon the earthly things because his fifth word, "I thirst", took care of the body necessities. He made provision for his mother's future comfort. Yet he was concerned his supreme concern was about that of his spirit. What is the spirit? It is the finest, highest, sacredest part of our being. In ordinary we call it the soul. Man is composed of body and soul, but in the language of the scripture we call this the spirit - the soul. And Jesus knew that he the art of living is in us.

4. Filing a report. These words of Jesus were like one filing a report. The idea of bringing forward by way of proof. It is a term used in a letter of recommendation. (Acts 14:23) From the cross the filing of his report adds to the



completion of his task. The release of his spirit from his spent physical form is proof that his mission was accomplished. And he seems to report to his commander-in-chief the enemy had been seated, Satan's forces had been completely routed, and now he is in control of the battle field.

It is as a filing of declarations and restrations of claims on property. One's claim of ownership sent to the clerk of records. The idea of his filing a claim on property. The soul's of men he had purchased with his blood. (Acts 20:28) He inserts in the registry of heaven his claim of ownership. "And I gave unto them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This is blessed assurance. When we believe in Christ, we die to sin.

But in such death, our lives are hid with God in Christ Jesus. He is placing himself along beside another. After the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. This is a position of power.

We read that Stephen looked up and saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God. (Acts 7:56) Stephen is the first of Jesus' followers to pay for the loyalty of following him with his life. If he fails, others will fail. If he is faithful unto the point of dying, others will likewise be true. So concerned is Jesus over the outcome that he stood up to watch the struggle transpiring on earth.

Peter writing about the persecution says, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God committ the keeping of their souls to him; in well doing as unto a faithful creator."

Jesus then henceforth, forevermore, gives to us the missionary challenge to every Christian. Jesus was faithful in all things in redeeming us to God. Now he places himself beside the father. Waiting and expecting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. His expectations can be realized only as we are faithful to his commission to make disciples of all nations.

5. These words are as making a deposit in a bank. When Jesus said that he committed his spirit to him, if we would take banking terms we would say, he deposit. A thing committed to one's charge or trust is like a treasure in a bank for safe keeping. It was for the purpose that the father would keep it safe until the resurrection.

Neither life nor death need to bring fear to the Christian as Paul said. "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep, to guard that which I have committed, placed on deposit, unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12) On the Damascus, he deposited his soul for safe keeping in the bank of God's grace. And it mattered little now what happened



their endless ceremonies. The visit to the temple within the city walls, and amid the singing of the Psalms, the blasting of silver trumpets, these priests received the blood of the thousands of pascal lambs that were slain before the altar. The base of that altar was soaked with blood. Year after year for centuries, they had been doing it. Thousands upon thousands of lambs had been slain and yet the work was never done. The all-sufficient lamb had never been found.

But here is a different kind of priest that has appeared with a lamb that brought bloody sacrifice for ever to men. Jesus the son of God offers his broken body without spot and blemish, pours out his precious blood at the foot of the cross, and the veil of the temple in twain from top to bottom is rent, and God has emancipated and there will be no more blood. But his blood.

Read Hebrews 7:22 and 27 And also Hebrews 9:24 - 28.

Here we see ~~how~~ Calvary's altar - the crucified priest offered himself, the lamb of God.

Martin Luther in one of his periods of depression, saw his horrible crimes and transgressions written on a wall in his room. The accusing hand wrote down his sinful faults. The sinful words, the evil deeds, the sins of omission and commission, secret sins, open sins. There seemed to be none to them. Luther bowed his head in prayer. When he looked up

if the soul has been committed to God in Christ. Man may kill the body but he cannot harm the soul. You see the body is the tabernacle in which man lives and he has committed all in that.

6. These words are a view of death. Commending his spirit to God implies that he was giving it away in a hope of finding it again. Depositing it in a safe place to which after the crisis of death was over, he would come and recover it. Such is the force of the words that are easy to call to mind that Paul says where he knows that God will keep that which he has committed against that day. Which day? Obviously some point in the future when he could appear and claim from God that which he had trusted God with. Death is a disruption of the parts of which human nature is composed. One part is the spirit was going away to God. Another was in the hands of men, who were wrecking it by their wicked will.

There is a momentous question that men dying often ask. "If a man die shall he live again?" Does he all die? And does he die forever? It is to Christ we have to go. He had the words of eternal life. He spoke on this subject without hesitation. His dying word proves that he believed what he taught to others.

John Huss was being led to execution and there was stuck on his head a paper cap with pictures of devils on it to whom



the wretched priest had assigned his soul. But again and again he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit". These also were the last words of Polycarp, of Jerome, of Luther, of Melanchthon, and of many others. Who could wish his spirit to be carried away to God in a more glorious fashion than as Jesus.

Jesus did not yield to death in weakness. And it is significant that the writer does not say, he died. But he says he gave up the ghost. It was on his part. Augustine said he gave up his life because he willed it, when he willed it, and as he willed it. The word translated commend might properly be said then I render up or I lay down.

We know that the factors in death invariably leads a man to lift his head in the last moment, to fill his lungs with the life-giving oxygen, and the heart ceases to beat, the head falls back on the breast. But with Jesus he bowed his head before he died. And there is clear intimation that he gave up his life.

### III. Who Spoke these Words?

This is also important that we get a bird's eye view of the last words on the cross. The important words, and what these words were and who spoke them. I think we can wrap this up in three words, prophet, priest, and king.

-As prophet every word that Jesus spoke, he spoke as a

prophet. Not always predicting the future, but he spoke about as a prophet of (security) Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. He was in the hollow of God's hands.

George McDonald used to tell the story of a mother who argued that her sailor boys were perfectly safe because they were in God's care. But an objector used to argue with her, supposing that all you say is true and that they are safe. But suppose one of your sons be drowned at sea. Well, she replied, I trust they are none the less safe for that. It would be a strange thing for an old woman like me to suppose that safety lay in not being drowned. What is the bottom of the ocean, sir? The bottom of the ocean is the hollow of his hand.

As a prophet Jesus said, father and it spoke of his sonship. That he was the son of God and that he was God's son and voluntarily committed himself for God's service. And that here was in action, the words of a prophet.

It was a priest who spoke. He as a high priest on the last passover day was offering himself to God. The bleeding sacrifice, a toned for man's sin.

See his cross as the altar of sacrifice. See him both as bloody sacrifice and as a officiating priest. But this was a voluntary death. He was in the very hollies of God's presence.

At that very season many of the priests were going through



the writer was still there facing him. Thou hast forgotten just one thing, said Luther, take thy pen once more and write across it all "The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin". And at the mention of the blood of Jesus, the evil spirit vanished and the walls were clean.

An unknown poet has pictured two men of God as crossing a battle field where they had fought that day. And now they stand beside a manly form outstretched alone. His helmet from his head had fallen, his hand still firmly grasped his clean but broken sword. His face was white and cold, and thinking he was gone, they were just passing on for time was precious. When a faint sigh caught their attentive ear, life was still there so bending down, they wispered in his ears most earnestly, yet with that hush and gentleness with which we ever speak to a departing soul, Brother the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses from every sin. The pale lips moves and gently whispered, "Hush". Then they closed. And life again seemed gone. But yet once more they whispered those thrice blessed words in hope. To point the parting soul to Christ in heaven, "Brother, the precious blood of Jesus Chist can cleanse from every Sin".

And the pale lips moved, all else was still and motionless, for death already had his fatal work half done. But gathering up his quickly failing strength, the dying soldier, the dying

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victor said, "Hush, for the angels call the muster roll". I wait to hear my name."

They spoke once more that need to speak again. For now full well, they knew on whom his dying hopes were fixed. And what his prospects were. So hushed and still they kneeled, watched, and presently a smile as a most thrilling and intense delight played for a moment on the soldier's face. And with his one last breath, he whispered, "Here".

Now one who seeks the Christ of the cross shall be disappointed with the priestly ministry on the resurrection day., when they meet God.

He who spoke is a king. This was not the cry which had failed, for this was the voice of one who had won a victory. Let us not forget that Jesus went of the cross of the king. He confessed before Pilate that he was a king. They condemned him for being a king. The board that was nailed on the cross declared that he was a king. He wore a strange crown indeed.

But his last word from the cross was a proclamation of a king. This king rushes from the torments of hell and fearlessly into God's persence he says, Father, on his lips.

Nothing like that has ever happened before, or can happen again. It means that he was stronger than hell's power to hold him a prisoner. It means that he had seduced Satan. It means that he and the father are one in power and purpose.

For no sinner or prisoner of Satan or rebel from God's will can address God as father.

This king (commands death) to come to his service and convey his spirit to God. Never had the world seen anything like this before. The first Adam was death's servant, he could do nothing more than to obey death. But the last Adam is master of death. He could command death to come and to convey his body home. Here is a symbol of his power. He takes the cross and makes it his great servant. And uses it to destroy the thing it stood for - death and despair.

On August 1, 1838 a strange funeral was conducted in Jamaica. A beautiful coffin was lowered in the grave. The doxology was sung by thousands of voices. What was this, who was it they buried? In the coffin was a whip. It had been used by the white man as a symbol of his power over the slaves of these islands. Now freedom had come. And the slaves were burying this insignia of their bondage. In something of the same manner, Jesus took that which sinful man supposed would enslave him and destroy him forever and there on the cross this strange king said "Father to thy hands, that means that the Godhead is to be supreme. No more rebellion can successfully threaten the heavenly throne.