

**THE CONQUERED  
WORLD, AND  
OTHER PAPERS**

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The Conquered World, and Other Papers by R. F. Horton

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**By R. F. Horton, M.A., D.D.**

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## The Conquered World.

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—JOHN XVI. 33.

It is the parting message which the Lord gave to His disciples as a body. After that He turned to pray to the Father for them, and then spoke no more with them. The words were therefore designed, no doubt, to ring out as the keynote of the Christian's life and of the Church's history until He comes. Set this side by side with the parting message of Buddha. He, as He was dying, said to His disciples, "Work out your salvation with diligence." This is a noble, a necessary, we might even say, a Christian precept. But it



presents a remarkable contrast, as the farewell utterance of a religious leader, with the words of Jesus which are now in our ears. The one message suggests travail and effort; the other suggests victory. The words of Buddha throw men on their own resources; the words of Christ throw them on the strength of Another. This message breathes despondency; that breathes hope. The contrast will almost explain why it is that wherever Buddha is saviour pessimism, and wherever Christ is Saviour optimism, prevails.

Yet there are some Christians whose general tone and practice seem to imply that they are more familiar with Buddha's last words than with Christ's. "Work out your own salvation with diligence" has been the keynote of many strenuous, well-meant Christian

lives. But when Christianity has been triumphant and progressive it has been so in virtue of these thrilling words of its Leader. It has failed, and it does fail, whenever Christian men forget them, or lose their meaning, or do not appropriate them in such a way as to connect themselves with the force of which they speak.

It was a remark of Mr. Ruskin's that the Christian Pulpit fails in its effect because it speaks so much of what men must do to earn salvation, and so little of what God has done to give it. To dwell too strenuously on the things we have to do fosters the Buddhist tendency in us all, and harmonises only too well with the claim to personal merit which we are always disposed to make. On the other hand, it requires much grace and humility to be always insisting on the trans-

cedent facts of the Christian Redemption, which exclude boasting, and place all, even the best of us, in the lowly attitude of recipients.

Now let us try to see what the Lord meant by this last message of His; and if the meaning should dawn upon our minds while we are considering it, we may encourage one another to accept the truth, and then to live in the spirit of this creed. It may, perhaps, surprise us to find that we have attached very little definite meaning to the words. Like many other of His thoughts which have become the commonplaces of Christianity, this is not much observed. For we do not stop to geologise on the flagstones of the pavement, and the familiar truths of the Gospel often pass almost as unnoticed and unexplored. It is