

**THOUGHTS ON THE  
SEVEN LAST WORDS  
OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED**

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Thoughts on the Seven Last Words of Christ Crucified by Frederick Cavan Blyth

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**FREDERICK CAVAN BLYTH**

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SEVEN LAST WORDS  
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THOUGHTS ON  
The Seven Last Words  
OF  
Christ Crucified.

BY THE  
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## PREFACE.

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THESE Thoughts are gathered from many sources. They are published in the hope that they may be found useful to the younger clergy in preparing courses of sermons for Lent, and meditations for Holy Week and for the Three Hours' Services on Good Friday; also to many who, through age, infirmity, or sickness, are unable to avail themselves of the special services in church which are now so generally provided during those holy seasons; and to all who have learned to find their greatest daily comfort in coming to the Cross of Christ.

QUATFORD VICARAGE,  
*Epiphany, 1880.*

## THOUGHTS ON THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

*How these be the last words of David.*<sup>1</sup>—2 SAM. xxiii. 1.

THE dying words of a good man have always a sacred and solemn interest. And if they have been the expression of pious devotion, earnest counsel, or affectionate remembrance, they linger in the memory, and are cherished in the heart of those who heard them, and thus live, as an active influence for good, long after the tongue that uttered them is silenced in the grave. The Holy Scriptures, true, as ever, to the instincts of our nature, take notice of and call special attention to the last words of many of God's saints. The prophetic utterances of Jacob, at the close of which "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people" (Gen. xlix. 33); the "commandment" which "Joseph, when he died, gave concerning his bones" (l. 25), which the apostle adduces as the expression of the patriarch's faith in the promises of God (Heb. xi. 22); "the blessing wherewith

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.



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Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death" (Deut. xxxiii. 1); Joshua's last address to all the tribes of Israel (Josh. xxiv.); the especial mention of David's last profession of faith (2 Sam. xxiii. 1); and the dying words of the proto-martyr, S. Stephen (Acts vii. 59, 60);—these examples will readily recur to the diligent reader of the sacred records.

It is natural that those who in their life have laboured to glorify God and edify His people, should wish to die as they have lived; and, knowing that "the time of their departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6), and that "shortly they must put off this their tabernacle" (2 S. Pet. i. 14), they will try, so long as the faculties of reason and of speech are continued to them, to make their last words worthy of remembrance; and, like S. Paul, will declare their hope for the future as based upon God's promise through Christ (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8); and, like S. Peter, will rivet in the minds of the bystanders the truths which they have taught or professed in their life, and "endeavour that they may be able, after their decease, to have these things always in remembrance" (2 S. Pet. i. 15). So our own poet-laureate represents Cranmer as saying to the people, just before his end,—

"Good people, every man in time of death  
Would fain set forth some saying that may live  
After his death, and better human-kind;  
For death gives life's last word a power to live,  
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain  
After the vanished voice, and speak to men."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's "Queen Mary," p. 204.

And our Lord has consecrated this usage by adopting it Himself. On the eve of His Passion He gathered round Him the twelve, and spoke those memorable words which, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, S. John has recorded in the thirteenth and following chapters of his gospel; and then, immediately before he crossed the brook Cedron and entered the garden of His agony, He breathed forth to the Father, in the hearing of His disciples, that prayer for those whom He was about to leave, and for His people to the end of time, which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the same gospel.

But even these were not his last words. Even when He was crucified He still spake; and probably one reason why He chose "the death of the cross," was, that to the very last He might retain the liberty of speech. And if at all times His words had a mighty power and influence; if at the close of His sermon on the mount, "the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority" (S. Matt. vii. 28, 29); if when the Pharisees and chief priests sent to take Him, the officers returned with the commission unfulfilled, urging, as the excuse of their failure, "Never man spake like this Man" (S. John vii. 46); if, when Judas and his band came to apprehend Him, at those awful words "I am (He)"—ἐγώ εἰμι—"they went backward and fell to the ground"<sup>1</sup> (S. John xviii. 6);—"if, then, His words thus at other times were so gracious or so awful, what shall we expect—or rather,

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<sup>1</sup> "Quid iudicaturus faciat, qui iam licendus hoc fecit? quid regnaturus poterit, qui moriturus hoc potuit" (S. Augustine).

#### 4 *Seven Last Words of Christ Crucified.*

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what shall we not expect—of Him that speaketh from the cross?!"<sup>1</sup>

From the memorable day on which these Seven Words were spoken, to the present hour, His people have ever treasured them as most fruitful subjects for pious meditation, and have found in them lessons for the regulation of their life, and for their preparation for death. And as all and every part of our Lord's life and death in some manner contributed to the work of our redemption and the satisfaction for our transgressions, who shall say how many of our "idle words," and impatient murmurings, and angry curses, and malicious slanders, and bitter upbraidings were atoned for by these Seven Sayings of our Saviour as He hung upon the cross?

"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (Heb. xii. 25).

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Abraham's "Festival and Lenten Lectures."