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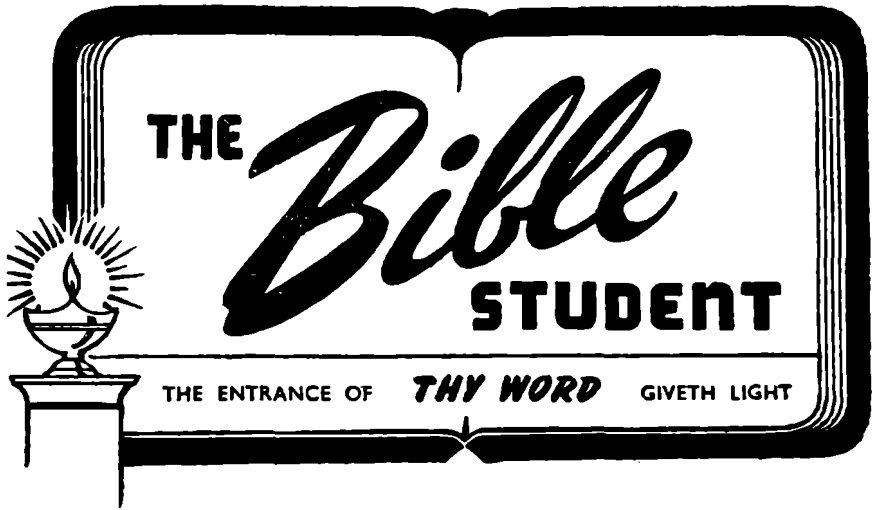
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CHRIST'S PARTING WORDS

S. E. DUTTON

In the Gospel of John, chs. 19, 20 and 21, there are four short sentences uttered by our blessed Lord:

I. Ch. 19:30. Three *Precious* Words: 'It is finished' = MY PARDON.

II. Ch. 20:19. Three *Gracious* Words: 'Peace be unto you' = MY PEACE.

III. Ch. 21:15. Three *Searching* Words: 'Lovest thou Me?' = MY POWER.

IV. Ch. 21:22. Three *Responsible* Words: 'Follow thou Me'. = MY PATTERN. 'How long, Lord? Till I come' = MY PROSPECT.

Here are four groups of words revealing the leadings of God's Spirit for every one of us, into the rich sphere of blessing and testimony.

I. **It is Finished**—HOW TRIUMPHANT! Surely it is

1. The victorious cry of *the Perfect Servant*, who knowing, the perfect will of God, accomplished the great task fully, faithfully and finally.

2. The victorious cry of *the Perfect Substitute*. He took my place and yours. He stood in my room and stead, and we with subdued hearts stand, and as we behold Him, say like the leper would say on the day of his cleansing, seeing those birds slain and loosed: 'For me, for me, for me!'

3. The victorious cry of *the Perfect Sufferer*. For there alone in the darkness fell upon Him God's wrath, man's sin, Satan's power, and He says afresh, 'Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by' But finally it is:

4. The victorious cry of *the Perfect Saviour*, who—

(a) Satisfied and glorified God.

(b) Defeated and dethroned Satan.

(c) Saves and sanctifies sinners.

(d) Separates and supplies believers.

Praise God for such a victorious work and such a mighty Saviour!

II. Peace Unto You — JOHN 20:19.

What gracious words! If we are in the enjoyment of the great fact expressed in the first three words, which give the guilty conscience peace, how we shall appreciate these words: 'Peace unto you!'

No Fears, No Worries, } **WHY ?** { He showed them His
 No Cares, No Doubts, } { Hands and His Side.

What evidence more was needed?

1. Christ Crucified. Made peace with God for us.
2. Christ Risen. Preaches peace to us.
3. Christ Glorified. He is our Peace, and the very moment we believe we have, Present, Perfect, Permanent Peace.

'Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin.'

III. Lovest Thou Me? — JOHN 21:15.

Peter, 'Lovest thou Me?' Here we have Peter's restoration in a threefold way brought before us.

1. Restoration of Position. They had gone back to their fishing again. The Lord called them from it at first, you will remember, and now they were back again with no fruit. Therefore there had to be a restoration back to Him and His calling.

2. Restoration of Conscience as to who He was. When they saw His works one said, 'It is the Lord'. May the very failures and weakness around and within stir our consciences so that we may get a fresh glimpse of Himself again, as Peter did.

3. Restoration of Heart. 'Lovest thou Me?' He who has
 - (a) Borne our judgment (ch. 19:30).
 - (b) Brought us peace (ch. 20:19).
 - (c) Begets our hearts (ch. 21:15).

Because of all this, are our hearts drawn out to Him? Of course the true loyal-hearted believer can say: 'We love Him, because He first loved us'. How beautifully pictured is this in David and Jonathan after that combat in the Valley of Elah!

When David defeated and gained the victory over Goliath, Jonathan's heart was knit to David. He loved him as his own soul. Seeing then that our beloved Saviour has done so much and gained such a victory, He asks afresh: 'Lovest thou Me?' Beloved, one of the great secrets of power is devotion and love to Christ.

Show me the believer who loves and is devoted to his Lord, then I will show you power and blessing. If the Lord (who still walks amidst the golden candlesticks) says to you and me, 'Thou hast left thy first love' (Rev. 3:1-6), let us repent and do the first works.

IV. Follow Thou Me—JOHN 21:22.

He never trod a pathway of failure, and He it is who says: 'Follow'. Surely I need a Pattern to walk as I go, and the same Person who is my Pardon, Peace, and Power becomes my Pattern. We are to follow His steps and seek to walk as He walked. We become exactly like what we are occupied with. If we are occupied with the world we shall be worldly. If with self, we shall be selfish. If with Christ, we shall be Christlike. Here is our copy: 'Follow thou Me'. Let us keep close to the Copy, and our lives will respond and in a measure we shall be able to return love again. Till He come is the great prospect. He says to us today: 'Till I come, Follow thou Me'. God grant it.