

as a warning to presuming sinners that *in general men die as they live*, and that though it is certain *true repentance* never comes too late, it is also certain that *late repentance* is seldom true.

"Woman, behold thy son!" "Behold thy mother!" (S. John xix. 26, 27). In our Saviour's pardon to the dying thief, He speaks to us supremely as God. In His next words it is His manhood that is more strikingly set before us. Thus touchingly He hallows earthly love; thus tenderly He teaches all men to honour their parents in life and death. Son and mother was the earthly relation He had specially sanctified; and now that His mother was about to lose her Son—now that the sword, foretold by Simon, was about to pierce her soul—He chooses, to replace the loss, the disciple who had been the friend of His own man's heart; who had been beloved by Him with a peculiar degree of affection; who, doubtless returning this love to the utmost degree possible to humanity, was at once of all men in the world fittest to comfort, and in his own case most worthy to receive, such a mother.

As Lent draws on to Passiou-tide, appropriately do our thoughts pass on to the final agony of our Redeemer; to those two fearful utterances wrung out of His torture; and finally to the glad outburst of victory that foreruns our Easter-tide.

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (S. Matt. xxvii. 46; Ps. xxii. 1.) Following upon the words of our Saviour to His disciple S. John, came the three hours of miraculous darkness, when all created light veiled its shining before Jesus in agony, and enveloped in darkness a world that crucified Him. Then was "*the Son of Righteousness*," "*the Light of the World*," under an eclipse. Then was Jesus in agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness; suffering His Father's displeasure against the sin of man, for which He was making himself an offering. Then (in that *He was made sin for us*) was His soul full of sin, and the light of His Father's and the Comforter's love withdrawn from Him. Then was He truly "*very man*." And from his manhood rang out that exceeding bitter cry, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?*"

Let us not forget that our sins formed part of this agony. Let us not forget that for us also Christ was crucified. Let us not dwell too entirely on the sin of his actual murderers; lest, without due prayer and watchfulness on our own part, we also "*crucify the Son of God afresh*;" lest, equally with the revilers who stood about His cross, we also "*put Him to open shame*."

It is notable that in this utterance of our Saviour's agony—that during this special and exclusive assumption of His manhood—He no longer uses his own words, as in the former instances we have been considering; but those of His great human prototype, David.

"*I thirst*" (S. John xix. 28; Ps. lxix. 21.) Still the agony! still the man Christ Jesus, wrestling, suffering, wailing! He whose blood had been poured out like water; whose blood still writhed in torture; from whose soul—now an altar, whereon were laid the sacrifices of sin—the light of His Father's love was still withdrawn—this man thirsted; thirsted the thirst which is ever the consequence of intense and prolonged human suffering; thirsted as had been foretold; thirsted for the redemption which His sufferings were to win; thirsted—what sinner can imagine how intensely?—to behold again the light of His Father's face. And even in this last suffering, may we see a last signal and saving act of mercy. "*Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar; and*" (in answer to His cry of thirst) "*they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to His*