

# The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER 1, 12.

VOLUME II.]

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## Poetry.

### PASSION WEEK.

"They gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not."—St. Mark, xv. 23.

"Fill high the bowl, and spice it well, and pour  
The dews oblivious: for the cross is sharp,  
The cross is sharp, and He  
Is tenderer than a lamb.

"He wept by Lazarus' grave—how will He bear  
This bed of anguish? and His pale weak form  
Is worn with many a watch  
Of sorrow and unrest.

"His sweat last night was as great drops of blood,  
And the sad burthen press'd Him so to earth,  
The very torturers paused  
To help Him on his way.

"Fill high the bowl, benumb His aching sense,  
With medic'd sleep."—Oh awful in thy woe!  
The parching thirst of death  
Is on thee, and thou triest

The slumbersome potion bland, and wilt not drink:  
Not sullen, nor in scorn, like haughty man  
With suicidal hand  
Putting his solace by:

But as at first thine all-pervading look  
Saw from thy Father's bosom to th' abyss,  
Measuring in calm presage  
The infinite descent;

So to the end, though now of mortal pangs  
Made heir, and emptied of thy glory awhile,  
With unaverted eye  
Thou meetest all the storm.

Thou wilt feel all, that Thou may'st pity all;  
And rather would'st Thou wrestle with strong pain,  
Than overcloud thy soul  
So clear in agony,

Or lose one glimpse of Heaven before the time.  
O most entire and perfect sacrifice,  
Renew'd in every pulse  
That on the tedious cross

Told the long hours of death, as, one by one,  
The life-strings of that tender heart gave way;  
Even sinners, taught by thee,  
Look sorrow in the face,

And bid her freely welcome, unbeguiled  
By false kind solaces, and spells of earth;—  
And yet not all unsooth'd;  
For when was joy so dear,

As the deep calm that breath'd "Father, forgive,"  
Or, "Be with me in Paradise to-day?"  
And, though the strife be sore,  
Yet, in his parting breath

Love masters agony: the soul that seem'd  
Forsaken, feels her present God again,  
And in her Father's arms  
Contented dies away.

Keble's Christian Year.

### CHRIST ALONE WITHOUT SIN.

A SERMON, CONCLUDED.

Gladdened by this single ray of hope, gained from the knowledge that there is a Mediator between God and man, "the man Christ Jesus," I shall give a loose to my better feelings and principles. Though in enmity by sin to God, still I am in great want—in great spiritual destitution; death is near, and I am deprived of my earthly stays and wonted consolations: I will endeavour, then, to meet the mediation with the frankness wherewith it was proffered; I remember that the Mediator is man; I feel towards him as towards a brother; he draws me by the cords of a man, and I know what those cords are; for I was taught an incident from the days of old by one—now, I trust, sainted in the realms of heaven—which assures my heart in drawing nigh to him—for "Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians, and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" This exemplifies the undying love of brotherhood; and as I must give credit to the mediator for a fervency and extent of love equal to this, I again contemplate the man Christ Jesus, in anxious scrutiny for a feature from whence to gather hope; for if I be not reconciled to God by him, I and all my fellow-men have nothing but a revelation of tribulation and punishment to expect.

The case in the abstract reality may be different, but in my practical view of it—the one designed—I am wrought on by the Mediator being of my flesh and blood,—of the race of Adam, of the seed of the woman; and though also indeed the Immanuel, God with us, the Word made flesh,—and therefore if a mediation be effected, I anticipate favourable terms. But what terms can be favourable which violate the sanctity of the divine name? what terms unfavourable to God in the mediation would not also be speedily visited on ourselves? I am therefore again bewildered by the difficulty, even with the aid of this Mediator, of adjusting our concerns—the concerns of a world in disgrace with God.

In a matter of such vital importance let me consider well the matter, and in all its circumstances. Let me defer in my perplexed mood to the universal sentiment and belief of man; where ten million million fellow-sufferers have a common interest, let me listen to their general tone. And in adverting to that general assent, I learn that they all favour the idea of a mediation between God and man; that they all expect a Mediator; that they all act as if they had found some substitute for one,—the shadow of a probable reality.

For, when Pausanias, that intrepid Grecian commander, suffered his unresisting soldiers to fall beneath the wounds

of an enemy, whom, on the power of Heaven giving the signal, he easily vanquished, what was the important link in the chain of action? It was a sacrifice,—a sacrifice, indeed, not at first accepted, but finally a sacrifice, which rose to the dignity of a propitiation. Now whence arose the idea of that sacrifice and that propitiation? It was not confined to Pausanias: it extended over his whole country. It was not confined to that country: it had before prevailed in the kindred countries from which the first peoplers of Greece had proceeded. It was not restricted either by those bounds, but extended to every inhabited country of the globe,—to such a degree, that wherever you beheld man, there you might be sure you would find, in his relations to heaven, a sacrifice and a priest interposed.

The origin, then, of this abstract idea of sacrifice is the point which it concerns our anxious souls to ascertain.—When Pausanias and others relied—at the risk of their lives, and honour in their professions—on the sacrifice, neither he nor they could have believed that the whole virtue lay in the subject of that sacrifice,—sheep, or bullock, or whatever domesticated animal it might be. They were conscious that there was something lying below,—a principle, though not then developed—a source of virtue not then revealed.

I avail myself, in my anxious desire to find a Mediator between me and heaven, of this idea; I find in the man Christ Jesus the prototype of these sacrifices—the substance of those shadows. And I am confirmed in the correctness of my opinion,—an opinion in which I would not fain go wrong, for my eternal interests depend upon it,—by the words of the Apostle, describing the office and act of the Mediator, in my text,—viz:

4. That Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, i. e. in the words of my article, "Christ, in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things (sin only except) from which he was clearly void both in his flesh, and in spirit. He came to be a Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as St. John saith, was not in him."

We, being sinners, lost in sin, the Mediator required to be pure and perfect and sinless,—the object of toleration and complacency with the higher covenanting power,—the object of veneration and respectful affection with the inferior party. On the purity, and unstained personal attributes of the Mediator essentially rested the efficacy of the mediation. Now to be sinless—to be of unimpeached purity and holiness,—is a matter in man which it is very difficult to conceive; which we labour to appreciate and understand; which is, as it were, a mystery and a miracle to us. For example, you, my reverend Brethren, watching in your pastoral care, may find an individual as it were on the morrow to all your knowledge blameless. But, apart from open, and positive, and implied sin, that individual has to go through the morrow's diurnal round of duty. Duties then we see, conflict: he has a parent, he has a wife, he has children, he has a benefactor, he has friends, and neighbours, and enemies—though enemies, still entitled to their due. A step in action is to be taken, on which these several parties have their respective claims. If he is dutiful to the parent, he is injurious to the wife—he is unjust to his children; or if he would serve a benefactor, he is in danger of violating the other relative duties. Such is the Gordian knot of difficulty in these respects, each successive hour, that men, with reckless desperation, seldom give themselves much trouble to determine in each advance. For men unfortunately do not in sincerity and seriousness aspire at being perfect characters. But the Mediator between God and men does assume this claim to utter sinlessness, and blame-worthiness. The man Christ Jesus is presented to us, without a single slightest deduction from his claim, as perfectly free from sin and blame—as perfectly entitled in every act and in the whole course of life to praise,—from man, and still more from God. We are awe-struck and astonished, not alone at the exemption from sin, but also at the positive virtue, and the immaculate piety; but he was the "Word made flesh." In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He was God's beloved and only Son,—the express image of the Father.

An estimate of the purity of the man Christ Jesus it is requisite for us to establish in our minds, before we can come to appreciate the value of his efficacious Mediation.

Being thus pure—thus exempt from sin—thus approved in undeviating holiness,—still the perplexity remains, how could his mediation between God and men be effectual? How could he serve the eternal interests of men, in a way not derogatory from, but even, as was exigent, advancing God's glory? How could he maintain the honour and untangible name of God, and yet save the faulty race of men from the pit of destruction?

The very exhibition of his Apostolic appellation explains the whole difficulty. He was the one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus; and hence, for undertaking the mediation, failure itself would have been worse than death: hence, he gave himself a ransom for men. The whole difficulty is explained before we arrive at the actual denouement: the ransom of his self-offered life was implied, when the angel Gabriel announced the incarnation of God to the Virgin Mother.

For such being the relative position of God and men,—such the Mediator,—the case is stated, the conclusion is inevitable: it is inevitable on the established principles of human judgment in society. The event, I say, was inevitable; and I mention it only to point out the fatuity and the folly of unbelief; I point it out only in scorn of those pretenders, who affect to be wise by rejecting a belief in the fact,—a fact so obvious, that it was foreshadowed from the beginning—predicted with infallible persuasion of truth in the precise degree that the promises were known, and looked for from the day that Simeon took the child from his mother's arms till the sobs of that remembering mother broke forth at the foot of the cross.

The main point, however, is this,—that he, the only Me-

diator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, gave himself a ransom for all men. He bought us with a price,—and that price was his own precious body offered on the bloody cross. In which however is to be included all those previous humiliations, all that round of painful self-denial, all those labours of love—that hungering, that thirsting, that contumely and unfair treatment, and those nights of prayer,—all these pretudes of the cross are to be included in the price paid for us. The sweat and the blood of the sinless being were given for us; but even then there was no ransom. Nor unless it had been the man divine—the man Christ Jesus, the one only Mediator between God and men—would the redemption have been effected. It is true that Reuben might speak unto his father, and say of Benjamin, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again;" it is true that man might be hostage for man; but here the ransom was not of one man only from the power of sin to the favour of God,—its scope was as immense as its object was holy: the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,—not only sin in the infinity of individuals, but sin in the most lurid and revolting depth of dye.

The price which the man Christ Jesus, in his mediation, was to pay was his precious self. He yielded up his own life, at the hands of men on behalf of the doctrine he proclaimed: he suffered his body to become accursed, hanging on a tree: he endured the scoffs of sinners, and the ignominy of a crucifixion; and he descended into the arms of revolting death, and into the horrors of the lower parts of the earth. Doing this,—giving his inestimable person to these undeserved dishonours, out of love to and on behalf of mankind,—he satisfied the unyielding justice of the un-deceivable and immutable Father. That was the part of the mediation which had an aspect to God. And paying this price, as the man Christ Jesus, the reward in that quarter was, that all, who might be stamped hereafter with the impress of Christ,—i. e. imitating his life, obeying his precepts, and influenced by his doctrine, should have the benefit of his prevailing intercession. So that when any sinner, melted by the Saviour's love, and aided by the Saviour's grace, should try to struggle and extricate himself from the miry ways of sin, and die during the warfare,—that reclaimed sinner going to the bar of God for a final adjudication of state, and Satan on the one side objecting this, and fellow-men and good angels on the other objecting that,—while the great majestic Father might pause, Christ the Mediator and Intercessor would confess indeed for the disciple the sin, and confess the infirmity, but then he would point to the prints of his own hands and feet, and to the wound in his own side, and throw the mantle of his merits over the trembling candidate to shield him for ever from the wrath of God; while sprinkling his metaphoric blood upon him, he would renovate his nature, and render him for ever acceptable and beloved. And this not as in mercy from God, but as in justice. Such was the covenant of Mediation: there was love unutterable—there was mercy undeserved in originating and permitting that mediation; but the covenant once established, the man Christ Jesus asserts his rights before the essential justice of God, and the more rigid and unalterable that justice, the more assured and certain only is the final salvation of every man, for whom Christ, as for a disciple, intercedes.

The stock of merit here towards God is infinite, is undiminishable,—is now, and for ever will be unimpaired. The purchase of a Church, partly militant, partly in heavenly mansions, partly in futurity, is Christ's peculiar and undivided work,—a work of the whole honour, the costly honour of which, he is jealous with no inferior jealousy. He will have no competitor in this praise; he will impart the glory to no Simon for any bribe. And this, because there is none other name under heaven whereby men may be saved. Should angel or archangel, should pope or priest, should relic or affected prophet, claim ever so little a portion of the glory of this intercession, his frown and his judgments would ensue thereon: against such his red right arm of vengeance would teach him, as in church history we already see it has taught him, terrible things.

The man Christ Jesus, acting as Mediator, the sole Mediator, between God and men, gave himself a ransom for all. That is, in return for the condescension of his incarnation and lowly estate,—in return for those days of labour, and nights of watching,—in return for his assiduous teaching and divine revelation of most consoling and animating doctrines,—he claims, as in justice from us to him, and as in love and gratitude, that we enable him, in our individual respects, to keep his unimpaired faith with his Father. That we be actually wrought upon by the mercies which he extends to us, and the lowliness to which his divine and holy nature has stooped on our account,—that we open our minds and hearts to the reception of his mediatorial applications,—and that, as he knows what is in man, and has adapted his whole scheme to work upon us as men, by human motives and kindly sympathies, that we will act a human part, and as we imitate and love our fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and familiar friends, catch their manners, and adopt their modes of thinking,—so that we will suffer the same humanity of nature to govern us with respect to him, who though a divine Benefactor and Saviour, yet presents himself to us as an elder brother—a pastor, guide and friend. While we do this,—while we believe and are baptized, and pray to and praise God with our lips, and honour him by a holy obedience in our lives, there will not only be shed abroad upon our hearts from him, by that Spirit which he has procured for us from the Father to sustain our infirmities, the most delightful serenity of approving conscience, and the most ecstatic hopes of good, inconceivable and ever increasing, in store for us,—but there will be a discharge from the adorable and blessed Father to him, so far as it applies to that part of the mediation. We acquit, by our discipleship and obedience, the benevolent Mediator of the responsibility to the Father which he had assumed on our account, and we aid at once

the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an object, than which none could be dearer to them or evince greater love to us.

There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus,—who gave himself a ransom for all. For God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And yet while he would have all exalted to salvation, he will compel none. And this brings me to my last head, i. e. To be testified in due time.

Whether there is efficacy in these awful and important truths,—and what their effect will be upon the world will be proved by the actual experiment;—their truth and certainty being assumed, then it will be found that Christ at his death bequeathed to twelve apostles the ministry and labour of carrying on his scheme of love,—that these Apostles, by preaching and writing, caused an incredible and unexampled change in the visible, and in the moral, and in the spiritual world. And where all had been atheists or idolaters, had left even at the close of their own day many myriads of holy livers and Christian believers,—that in a century or two, kings even became the nursing fathers, and queens the nursing mothers of a holy religion, which the majority of their subjects had previously embraced,—that since that time, for fifteen or sixteen centuries, the mediation of Christ has been essential, in carrying divine Providence to enlighten the greater part of the countries of the globe,—and that by the facility of printing and the extension of intercourse it is probable, that the whole world will soon be converted, notwithstanding partial oppositions, and circumstances of inferior magnitude.

If we descend from the bright and extensive spiritual community denominated the Church visible, and which acknowledges Christ as the only prevailing name, the only Intercessor with God, and select here and there an individual from the mass, and weigh in the scales as to general intelligence, piety, virtue, happiness, usefulness in society, hopefulness and so forth, with the idolator, or the unregenerate person, or the infidel,—perhaps the efficacy of the mediation and ransom of souls by the man Christ Jesus will appear fully as vividly and impressively.

External danger to the general church of Christ may now be considered as past, on this globe, and from foreign attack of violence or oppression the individual christian has little to dread, so far as his soul's hope is concerned. But a secret poison lurks within the holy pale itself: another tempter is in another Eden, and tempts with specious promises the weaker disciples from the shield and protection of their God. And it was against such deluders that the remainder of my article was drawn up. For Christ indeed we glory in extolling as sinless,—"but all we the rest—although baptized and born again in Christ—yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." I shall not detain you by going at any length into this, for I conceive that the principles already advanced strike at the root of the error here condemned. The truth is, as Christ Jesus mediated from the beginning, so does he perpetually intercede. The more we improve in holiness and faith the closer do we draw to him, and the more do we perpetually need his beneficent acts of intercession; the brighter the light he throws upon us, the more clearly do we see our own spiritual deformity; the nearer we draw nigh to the palace of the great King, the more visible are the rags of our righteousness, and the more do we feel the want of a wedding garment. The air we breathe is not more constantly vital to our bodies than Christ's perpetual mediation and intercession is to our souls in every stage of our Christian progress. The lights were burning constantly in the temple of Solomon,—the fire never went out upon the altar,—there was a robed and ministering priest ever ready there, and a victim ever at the sacred gates; and yet the babe hangs not so dependently upon the nurse's breast, as does the disciple militant here upon the unceasing intercession of Christ, the Lord of glory.

But if these things be not so; if there be no God, or more than one God,—if there be no Mediator, or many mediators of diverse kinds,—if the man Christ Jesus were but Jesus son of Joseph and Mary,—if the giving himself a ransom for all were not even an act of more significance than the self-devotion of the Roman Decii,—surely, in the progress of time, this would have been testified. There would in eighteen centuries have, in that case, been other forms and principles of social life, and man would then have assumed many phases of being, and there would have been rival and excelling systems of religion to point to triumphantly against the Christian's hope. But nothing of this has happened; and what is more, nothing of the kind can happen. In early times brute force and tyrant persecution assailed the Church, built on the truths of my text: in the last century, the phalanx of philosophers, with most determined effort and embittered hatred, attempted to make an impression on the solid fabric of Christianity, but they failed, as signally as their predecessors; and their failure added another to the thousand persuasive arguments in favour of our holy faith.

No; let tyrants rage, the multitude deride or frown, and the infidel undermine and sap, this text written by the hand of an inspired apostle, once an ignorant persecutor himself, will remain imperishable in its truth, and increasing in its force. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

May that sole and awful Mediator exercise upon me, his preacher, this day the benefits of his intercession, for the feeble and imperfect manner in which I have attempted to do honour to his name! may he pardon the deficiencies of my statement, as I have presumed to touch so sacred a subject!

May his prevailing intercession be with you, my reverend Brethren, before your God; enabling you to preach and inculcate effectually his faith, and to adorn his doctrine by your exemplary lives.

And on the rest of this audience, may the ransom of his