

THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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POETRY.

A HYMN.

- "I would not live away; I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way;
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer.
- "I would not live away, thus fetter'd by sin;
Temptation without, and corruption within.
E'en the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears.
- "I would not live away; no--welcome the tomb,
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;
There, sweet be my rest, till he bid me arise
To hail him in triumph descending the skies.
- "Who, who would live away, away from his God;
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright
plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns;
- "Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul!"

LITERATURE.

JACOB'S DEATH-BED.

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The last is the most interesting scene of human life. The previous stages of mortal existence present objects of merely transient interest; and the numerous vicissitudes by which they are marked, derive all their importance from the relation which they bear to a future and unchangeable state. It is the glimmering eye—the cold sweat—the wan visage—the sinking pulse—the tremulous agitation of the whole frame—and the like presages of approaching dissolution, which awaken attention, and interest the feelings of the mind. The death-bed scene assembles a crowd of spectators, drawn by the ties either of blood or of affection; and, for a time, the indifference and levity of the thoughtless and the gay are chastened by the deep impressions of seriousness and concern. Every eye is arrested—every feeling is awakened—every heart is engaged.

The particular state of the departing spirit, in reference to the world which it is about to enter, communicates a shade, either of an enlivening or of a gloomy kind, to the aspect of the death-bed scene. Whilst the removal of a thoughtless being from every idol of his affections, and his unwilling entrance on a state which he never beheld, but with feelings of horror, is to the serious observer the most melancholy spectacle in creation,—the departure of a good man from a world which never possessed one affection of his soul and his introduction into scenes to which his wistful eyes were constantly and eagerly directed, is a sight on which kindred spirits dwell with complacency, and which challenges the admiration and envy of abandoned men.

This latter scene is the interesting and pleasing object of contemplation which we would now invite you to behold. We would call upon you to witness the patriarch Jacob, the illustrious type and progenitor of Messiah (a man alike venerable for character and for years), in his last moments, serene, peaceful, and happy,—leaving the world with no pangs of regret, and approaching the grave with no feelings of alarm,—equally superior to the black despondency of the victim of despair, and to the assumed gaiety and unreasonable mirth of the trembling but proud philosopher. Having attained an assurance of faith, which darts into futurity and realizes its transcendent glories, which triumphs over every feeling of a mind alive to the tenderest sensibilities of nature, and which raises the soul to an eminence from which the noblest objects of mortal ambition are beheld shrinking into insignificance and fading from the view,—the strongest earthly attachments bind not his heart to time, nor disturb the composure of that hour which is to part him for ever from the objects of their fondest endearment. But is it possible he can leave, without regret, Joseph, "the son of his old age,"—Joseph, the object of his strongest parental regards from the first moment of his existence,—Joseph, the child of many

prayers and of many anxious fears,—Joseph, who "was lost and found, who was dead and alive again?" It is impossible! Sooner shall that heart cease to beat, than the affection with which it glows shall languish or expire. Accompanied by his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph approaches the bed on which his parent reclines waiting to receive him, and the aged patriarch addresses the interesting group by which he is surrounded in language of the most ardent but best regulated affection. The hallowed moments are not spent in heart-rending pangs, nor is the fervour of parental love expended in unavailing tears. With a firmness of soul, which communicates energy to every member of his shrivelled frame, the venerable father raises himself on the bed of death, and, summoning the remains of vigour which the strongest affection only could reanimate, he looks around him with divine complacency on the dearest objects of his love, heavenly composure fingers on his countenance, and, in unbroken accents, he says: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." What a fine burst of affection! What a beautiful domestic picture! What an interesting and delightful death-bed scene! Behold, in this affectionate paternal benediction, the noble testimony which the dying patriarch bears to the piety of his fathers,—his own confidence in God, founded in personal experiences of divine faithfulness and love—the importance and value which he attaches to the favour of the Almighty, as that blessing which alone "maketh rich and addeth no sorrow," that "favour which is life, and that loving-kindness which is better than life!" With the intensest feelings of fatherly love, and in circumstances of the deepest interest and most awful solemnity, his delightful employment is prayer; and earnest desires after the blessing of God give the spirit and tone to the address which he presents at the throne of grace. To him it is matter of entire indifference, whether the children of that son who was pre-eminently dear to his heart were to be possessed of a large share of the riches, honours, or pleasures of this mortal state,—whether they were to be oppressed with poverty, or loaded with abundance of earthly good,—to be buried amid the obscurity of humble life, or to emerge into splendour and glory,—doomed to sink under an accumulation of afflictions, or allowed to riot amid a luxuriance of delight; but his "heart's desire and prayer to God" for them is, that they may be *blest*. The favour of Heaven he justly regards as the essence of bliss—as the sum of every thing valuable in time and in eternity—as the perfection of real substantial felicity. And he is fully aware, that in the absence of this noblest of all possessions, "corn, wine, and oil might abound," the ears might resound with the hosannahs of admiring crowds, and the pulse might throb to the voice of glory, and yet the heart might be a stranger to tranquility and peace.

Contemplating the death-bed of Jacob, reader, you may "see with what peace a Christian can die!"—The wicked dread the mortal stroke; but the true believer in Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life" can say, with firmness and triumph, in the near prospect of dissolution,—

"To me it seems like a long wished for happiness,
Beyond what even the expectation paints;
'Tis comfort to the soul,—'tis peace, 'tis rest."

Jacob "cometh to his grave full of years, and as a shock of corn cometh in his season." His labours on earth are ended; he anticipates the glories of that scene which is about to burst upon his astonished sight, for "he has respect to the recompense of reward." No reproaches of sufferers whom he denied the relief which it was in his power to yield—no accusations of a conscience burdened with guilt, and calling aloud for vengeance—no frowns of an angry God, disturb the tranquility of his soul; nor does the thought of leaving a scene, endeared to his heart by many objects of affection, overpower his mind with sorrow, or lessen the composure of his dying moments. His last step is the best step on earth: the animation of his soul glows with unabated ardour; and in his faded eye the light of eternity kindles a splendour which brightens and brightens, till the curtain of death is spread over it. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace;" distinguish him from the mass of ungodly men with which he may be mingled; follow him with a steady eye through all the stages of his earthly existence to the closing scene of life,—for, however numerous and painful the calamities to which he may

be exposed in common with other men, in the course of his pilgrimage on earth, calmness, serenity, and joy shall as surely terminate his sorrows. Is it not the prayer of every heart, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?"—And shall it not be the care and study of every one who reads these pages to follow the righteous in his present godly course—to pursue that path which, by the grace of God, conducts to such a blessed and glorious termination?

In fine, from the importance and value which the dying patriarch attaches to the favour of the Almighty, we may see with what earnestness we should implore for ourselves, and for those consigned to our care, the blessing of God. How irrational and inexcusable is our conduct, if we are solicitous only about the possession of temporal good, for its own sake, and feel no anxiety to have the blessings of life sweetened by the enjoyment of the divine favour!—if we rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of care, that we may amass the treasures of this world which "perish in the using," and never bend the knee to God, or utter one prayer to heaven for a Father's blessing on our exertions, or on the objects of our attainment! How irrational and how inexcusable are those parents and heads of families, who are concerned only to provide for their children "the meat which perisheth," to get them set out in life, to attain the means by which they may rise in the world, and never breathe a wish to Heaven, that they may be kept from the evil of the world—that they may become the ornaments of Christian society, and blessings to those who gave them birth! Whilst such conduct is so generally pursued, need we wonder to hear of domestic tumults of family strifes, and of children who, by their profligacy of manners, are bringing down the "grey hairs" of their parents "with sorrow to the grave?" No; the effect is the genuine and inevitable result of the cause. Let parents, then, as they value the best interests of their children, their own domestic comfort, and the peace of a dying hour, be earnest and importunate at the throne of grace for a blessing on their offspring; and let all of us, in whatever situations and circumstances we may be placed, esteem the enjoyment of the divine favour and blessing as infinitely more valuable than every other possession, and "give no sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids," till we obtain satisfying evidences of our interest in the love of God, who "hath not said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain."

THE BOOK OF JASHER.

We shall shortly have a literary or rather a Biblical curiosity to present to the American reader, which we feel confident in predicting will excite great interest among those who take pleasure in reading and studying the Scriptures. It is the Book of Jasher, referred to in the Bible in Joshua, and in the second book of Samuel, and which has been in the progress of translation from the Hebrew for several years in England, and is now completed, and will be published in a few days in this city, in a very elegant stereotyped edition.

There have been several simulated Books of Jasher, a notice of which we find in the Rev. Mr. Horne's Commentaries on the Study of the Scriptures; but they bear no analogy to the present work, which is written in the purest Hebrew, and a fidelity highly creditable to the eminent scholar who has been so long engaged in the work. The preface to the Hebrew edition speaks of it as having been brought from Jerusalem with other sacred rolls and manuscripts, at the destruction of that city, and carried into Spain, where the Jews had their most celebrated colleges up to the 11th century. On the discovery of printing the manuscript was copied, and carried to Venice, where it was printed by order of the Jewish Consistory of Rabbins in 1613, and is now for the first time translated into the English language and published. The Royal Asiatic Society had a copy in Calcutta, and gave orders to the Rev. Mr. Adams to translate it; but it was abandoned on hearing that a translation was already in progress. It is full of interest, and written with a warmth of piety and sacred devotion worthy of taking an equal rank with any of the missing books not strictly canonical. It does not differ with the Bible in a single instance, but amplifies the events recorded in Scripture, with the single difference in chronology of some 50 years, by making Noah and Abraham contemporary—commencing with the creation of Adam, and ending with the death of Joshua. Josephus refers to this book, and the great