

# The Church.

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.

VOL. I.]

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[NO. XXIX.]

## Poetry.

### BREVITY OF LIFE.

#### Behold

How short a span  
Was long enough of old,  
To measure out the life of man!  
In those well-temper'd days his time was then  
Survey'd, cast up, and found but threescore years and ten.

#### Alas!

And what is that!  
They come, and slide, and pass,  
Before my pen can tell thee what.  
The posts of time are swift, which having run  
Their sev'n short stages o'er, their short liv'd task is done.

#### Our days

Begun we lend  
To sleep and antic plays  
And toys, until the first stage end:  
Twelve waning moons, twice five times told, we give  
To unrecover'd loss—we rather breathe than live.

#### How vain

How wretched is  
Poor man, that doth remain  
A slave to such a state as this!  
His days are short, at longest; few, at most;  
They are but bad, at best; yet lavish'd out or lost.

#### They be

The secret springs,  
That make our minutes flee  
On wheels more swift than eagles' wings;  
Our life's a clock, and every gasp of breath  
Breathes forth a warning grief, till time shall strike a death.

#### How soon

Our new-born light  
Attains to full-aged noon!  
And this, how soon to grey-haired night!  
We spring, we bud, we blossom, and we blast,  
Ere we can count our days, our days they flee so fast.

#### They end

When scarce begun,  
And ere we apprehend  
That we begin to live, our life is done.  
Man! count thy days; and if they fly too fast  
For thy dull thoughts to count, count every day thy last.  
Francis Quarles: 1664.

### LAST DAYS OF WILLIAM IV.

At no period, from the commencement of his attack, had his majesty been insensible to his critical state; but when he alluded to the subject, it was evident that any anxiety which he felt arose less from personal apprehension than from solicitude for the country, and from a contemplation of the embarrassment into which it might possibly be thrown by his early dissolution. It was to such reflections as these that his majesty gave expression on the morning of the 10th, when he observed to the queen, 'I have had some quiet sleep; come and pray with me, and thank the Almighty for it.' Her majesty joined in this act of heartfelt devotion, and when the king had ceased, said, 'And shall I not pray to the Almighty that you may have a good day? To which his majesty replied, 'Oh, do! I wish I could live ten years for the sake of the country. I feel it my duty to keep well as long as I can.'

On the morning of Sunday the 11th, grateful for the refreshing rest which he had enjoyed, his majesty's mind was impressed with the most pure devotional feelings. Seeing lady Mary Fox occupied with a book, he inquired what she was reading, and being told that it was a Prayer book, his countenance beamed with pleasure, but he said nothing. After a considerable lapse of time, the queen asked whether it would be agreeable to him if she read the prayers to him. His Majesty answered, 'O yes! I should like it very much, but it will fatigue you.' He then desired to be informed who preached that morning in the chapel of the castle; and when lady Mary had ascertained and told him that it was Mr. Wood who preached, he directed he might be sent for.

When Mr. Wood entered the room, the king said, 'I will thank you, my dear Sir, to read all the prayers till you come to the prayer for the church militant;'—by which words His Majesty intended to include the communion service, and the other parts of the liturgy used in the celebration of public worship.

It was equally an affecting and instructive lesson to observe the devout humility of his majesty, fervently dwelling, as could be perceived from his manner and the intonation of his voice, on every passage which bore even the most remote application to his own circumstances. His mind seemed quite absorbed in the duty in which he was engaged, and to rise for a time superior to his bodily infirmities; for during the whole service his attention was undisturbed, and he experienced none of those fits of coughing and oppression which for some days past had formed an almost uninterrupted characteristic of his complaint. As Mr. Wood withdrew, his majesty graciously expressed his thanks, and afterwards said to the queen, 'It has been a great comfort to me.' Nor was this a transitory feeling. To this pure and scriptural source of spiritual consolation his majesty resorted with unfeigned gratitude; and on each day of the ensuing week did Lord Augustus Fitzclarence receive the king's commands to read to him the prayers either of the morning or evening service. On one of these occasions, when his majesty was much reduced and exhausted, the queen, fearful of causing any fatigue to him, inquired hesitatingly, whether, unwell as he was, he should still like to have the prayers read to him? He replied, 'O, yes! beyond every thing.' Though very languid, and disposed to sleep

from the effects of medicine, his majesty repeated all the prayers. The fatal progress of the king's complaint was very visible during the three following days, June 12th, 13th, and 14th.

\* \* \* The king's attention to his religious duties, and the great comfort which was inspired by their performance, have already been referred to. It will, therefore, create no surprise that his majesty joyfully assented to the queen's suggestion, that he should receive the sacrament, or that he at once named the Archbishop of Canterbury as the person whom he wished to administer that holy rite. Sunday was the day fixed by the king for the discharge of this solemn duty; and a message was accordingly sent to his grace, desiring his presence at Windsor Castle on the ensuing Saturday.

It had been arranged, as has been already remarked, that the king should on this day receive the sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and when Sir Herbert left the room, it appeared to the queen that the most favorable time had arrived. The physicians, however, suggested to her majesty the expediency of deferring the ceremony till the king should have in some degree recovered from his fatigue; but his majesty had already experienced the blessed consolations of religion, and removed the doubts which his anxious attendants were entertaining, by eagerly desiring the queen to send for the archbishop; seeming, as it were, anxious to ratify the discharge of his earthly, by the performance of his spiritual duties. His grace promptly attended, attired in his robes, and at a quarter to eleven administered the sacrament to his majesty and the queen, lady Mary Fox communicating at the same time. The king was very calm and collected—his faculties were quite clear, and he paid the greatest attention to the service, following it in the Prayer-book which lay on the table before him. His voice, indeed, failed, but his humble demeanor and uplifted eyes gave expression to the feeling of devotion and of gratitude to the Almighty, which his faltering lips refused to utter.

The performance of this act of religion, and this public attestation of his communion with that church, for the welfare and prosperity of which he had more than once during his illness ejaculated short but fervent prayers, was the source of great and manifest comfort to his majesty.

Though the shorter form had been adopted by the archbishop, his majesty was, nevertheless, rather exhausted by the duration and solemnity of the ceremony; but as his grace retired, the king said, with that peculiar kindness of manner by which he was so much distinguished, and at the same time gently waving his hand and inclining his head, 'God bless you—a thousand thousand thanks!' There cannot be more certain evidence of the inward strength and satisfaction which the king derived from this office of religion, than that in spite of great physical exhaustion, his majesty, after the lapse of an hour, again requested the attendance of the archbishop, who, in compliance with the wishes of the queen, read the prayers for the evening service, with the happiest effect on the king's spirits. This being done, the archbishop naturally fearing the consequences of so much mental exertion on his majesty's debilitated frame, was about to retire, when the king motioned to him to sit down at the table, on the opposite side of which he himself was seated. His majesty was too weak to hold any conversation, but his spirits seemed soothed and comforted by the presence of the archbishop, in whose venerable and benign countenance his majesty's eye reposed with real pleasure.

The king, at this interview, stretched his hand across the table, and taking that of the archbishop, pressed it fervently, saying, in a tone of voice which was audible only to the queen, who was seated near his majesty, 'I am sure the Archbishop is one of those persons who pray for me.' The afternoon of this day witnessed a still further diminution of his majesty's strength, but in proportion to the decay of his bodily power was the increase of his spiritual hope and consolation. At nine o'clock in the evening, the archbishop was again summoned by his majesty's desire. The king was now still less able to converse than on the last occasion; but his grace remained more than three-quarters of an hour, supplying by his presence the same comfort to the king, and receiving from his majesty the same silent though expressive proof of his satisfaction and gratitude. At length, on the suggestion of the queen, that it was already late, and the archbishop might become fatigued, the king immediately signified his assent that he should retire; and crossing his hands upon his breast, and inclining his head, said, as his grace left the room, 'God bless thee, dear, excellent, worthy man; a thousand, thousand thanks.'

The whole course of his majesty's illness affords abundant proof, not only of his composure, his patience, and his resignation, but that even when under the pressure of great pain and suffering, his mind, far from being absorbed with the sad circumstances of his own situation, was often dwelling on subjects connected either with the affairs of the country, or with the comfort and convenience of individuals.

Monday, June 19.—Though his majesty passed a tolerably tranquil night, yet no corresponding effect was produced upon his health. Decaying nature could no longer be recruited by the ordinary sources of strength and sustenance. His majesty, however, rose at seven, for he had at no time during his illness been confined to his bed, and had even, for some weeks, anticipated by an hour his usual time of rising. There was much in the king's language and manner this morning which bespoke his sense of approaching death. On awaking, he observed to the queen, 'I shall get up once more to do the business of the country;' and when being wheeled in his chair from his bed-room to his dressing-room, he turned round, and looking with a benign

and gracious smile on the queen's attendants, who were standing in tears near the door, said, 'God bless you!' and waved his hand.

At nine o'clock, by the desire of the queen, who was naturally anxious that the hope so fervently expressed by the king on the preceding night might be gratified as soon as possible, the archbishop entered the king's room, and was received, as at all other times, with the significant tokens of joy and thankfulness, which his grace's presence never failed to call forth.

On this occasion the archbishop read the service for the Visitation of the Sick. The king was seated, as usual, in his easy chair; the queen affectionately kneeling by his side, making the responses, and assisting him to turn over the leaves of a large Prayer-book which was placed before him. His majesty's demeanor was characterized by the most genuine spirit of devotion. Though unable to join audibly in the responses which occur in the service, yet when the archbishop had rehearsed the articles of our creed, his majesty, in the fulness of his faith, and laboring to collect all the energies of sinking nature, enunciated with distinct and solemn emphasis the words, 'All this I steadfastly believe.'

During the whole service his majesty retained hold of the queen's hand, and in the absence of physical strength to give utterance to his feelings, signified by his fervent pressure of it, not only his humble acquiescence in the doctrines of our holy faith, but his grateful acknowledgment of those promises of grace and succour which so many passages of this affecting portion of the Liturgy held out to the dying Christian, and the belief of which his majesty so thankfully appreciated in this his hour of need.

With the other hand his majesty frequently covered his eyes and pressed his brow, as if to concentrate all his powers of devotion, and to restrain the warmest emotions of his heart, which were so painfully excited by the distress of those who surrounded him. His majesty did not allow the archbishop to withdraw without the usual significant expression of his gratitude, 'A thousand, thousand thanks.'

It was when the archbishop pronounced the solemn and truly affecting form of blessing contained in the 'service for the visitation of the sick,' that the queen for the first time in his majesty's apartment was overpowered by the weight of affliction.

The king observed her emotion, and said, in a tone of kind encouragement, 'Bear up, bear up.'

At the conclusion of the prayers his majesty saw all his children; and as they successively knelt to kiss his hand, gave them his blessing in the most affectionate terms, suitable to the character and circumstances of each. They had all manifested the most truly filial affection to his majesty during his illness; but on lady Mary Fox, the eldest of his majesty's surviving daughters, had chiefly devolved the painful, yet consolatory duty, of assisting the queen in her attendance on the king.

During this afternoon, to such an extremity of weakness was the king reduced, that he scarcely opened his eyes, save to raise them in prayer to heaven, with a look expressive of the most perfect resignation. Once or twice indeed this feeling found expression in the words 'Thy will be done!' and on one occasion he was heard to utter the words, 'the church—the church!' and the name of the archbishop.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening of this day that the archbishop visited the king for the last time.

His majesty's state altogether incapacitated him from joining in any act or exercise of devotion; but, as at each preceding interview, his grace's presence proved a source of joy and consolation to the dying monarch, who strove in vain to convey any audible acknowledgments of the blessing, which he sensibly enjoyed; but when, on leaving the room, the archbishop said, 'My best prayers are offered up for your majesty,' the king replied, with slow and feeble yet distinct utterance, 'Believe me, I am a religious man.'

After this exertion his majesty gently moved his hand in token of his last farewell, and the archbishop withdrew.

As the night advanced, a more rapid diminution of his majesty's vital powers was perceptible.

His weakness now rendered it impracticable to remove him into his usual bed room, and a bed was accordingly prepared in the royal closet, which communicates with the apartment in which his majesty had passed the last ten days of his life. At half past ten the king was seized with a fainting fit, the effects of which were mistaken by many for the stroke of death. However, his majesty gradually though imperfectly, revived, and was then removed into his bed.

From this time his voice was not heard, except to pronounce the name of his valet. In less than an hour his majesty expired, without a struggle and without a groan, the queen kneeling at the bedside, and still affectionately holding his hand, the comfortable warmth of which rendered her unwilling to believe the reality of the sad event.

Thus expired in the seventy-third year of his age, in firm reliance on the merits of his Redeemer, king William the Fourth, a just and upright king, a forgiving enemy, a sincere friend, and a most gracious and indulgent master.

J. R. W.

Christian Examiner.

#### COLLINS THE POET.

Collins is well known as a celebrated English poet. In the latter part of his life, he withdrew from his general studies, and travelled with no other book than an English New Testament, such as children carry to school. When a friend took it into his head to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, the poet said, 'I have only one book, but that is the best.'