

**POEMS: CHIEFLY  
RELATING TO THE PRESENT  
STATE AND PROSPECTS OF  
THE CHURCH**

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Poems: chiefly relating to the present state and prospects of the Church by H. Clarke

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**H. CLARKE**

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# POEMS:

CHIEFLY RELATING TO

THE PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

OF

**The Church.**

BY

THE REV. H. CLARKE, M.A.

"Poetry is most just to its own Divine origin, when it administers the comforts, and breathes the spirit, of Religion."—WORDSWORTH.

"Thou, Lord, who walkest in the midst of the golden candlesticks, remove not, we pray thee, our candlestick out of its place; but set in order the things which are wanting among us, and strengthen those which remain and are ready to die."—BISHOP ANDRWS.

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## CONTENTS.

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<b>Poems:</b>	<b>Page</b>
ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BEDE . . . . .	5
PEACE AND REST. . . . .	12
SONNET . . . . .	17
BOLTON ABBEY . . . . .	40.
BETWEEN BOLTON ABBEY AND FOUNTAINS . . . . .	21
IN THE CATACOMB UNDER RIPON CATHEDRAL . . . . .	25
THE CHRISTIAN POET . . . . .	29
GLORY TO KINGS, &c. . . . .	35
EQUANIMITY . . . . .	38
ON H. W. . . . .	40
"O ABSALOM, MY SON, MY SON!" . . . . .	42
THE DAILY SERVICE . . . . .	45
TIME . . . . .	48
TO A DESPONDING SAINT . . . . .	51
THE CHURCH . . . . .	52

---

<b>Notes</b> . . . . .	<b>57</b>
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14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27



## P O E M S .

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### On Visiting the Tomb of Bede,

IN THE GALILEE OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

Let him who thinks this age is to be won  
From all the deeds of mischief it has done,  
By gentlest admonitions, go to see  
The tomb of Bede, in Durham's Galilee.<sup>1</sup>  
Safe sleeps the saint beyond misfortune's reach,  
And calumny may rail, and dulness preach,  
But never shall the doubly grating sound  
Impair his honours, or his patience wound!  
Yet wears the stone, in its dismantled nook,  
A dark, forbidding, stern, indignant look,  
As if (since Truth disdains our air to breathe,  
And flies for refuge to the vaults of death)  
It felt its granite entrails inly bleed,  
O'er the wrong'd bones of *miserable* Bede.  
Descend, thou pitying angel,<sup>2</sup> and erase  
His honour'd title from its ancient place!  
This age has proved, by logic sound and stable,  
That what none venerate is not venerable.<sup>3</sup>

True, the pale saint did breathe monastic air,  
 And daily bow'd his knees in public prayer ;<sup>4</sup>  
 True, his great spirit pass'd, by trials hard,  
 Through fast and vigil, to its great reward ;  
 And his ne'er-shrinking hand exhausted fell  
 Dead, on th' illumined page it loved so well :<sup>5</sup>  
 But cells monastic suit not times like these !  
 Dull, daily prayer is made for Pharisees !<sup>6</sup>  
 Fasting 's a trick, with which astucious Rome  
 Cheats God and man—this world and that to come ;  
 And Scripture, by tradition's light illumed,  
 Is fit for souls in ignorance entomb'd  
 And to the body subjugate !—O times !  
 O manners ! Who shall number up the crimes  
 Which, in this giddy turmoil, have laid waste  
 The unimagined glories of the past !  
 Can Keble's fancy give, or Hook instil,  
 With vanquish'd language bending to his will,  
 One faint conception of the burst of praise,  
 That rose, O Durham, in the ancient days,  
 Thine endless aisles and awful tow'rs among,  
 Ere Rome, as yet, with smooth delusive tongue,<sup>7</sup>  
 Her spells through all the charmed air had hurl'd,<sup>8</sup>  
 And fix'd her grasp upon the prostrate world !  
 Sad change has come—but let it stir to prayer  
 And vigorous deeds, not freeze us to despair.  
 Behold yon azure regions of the sky,  
 Which change with ev'ry wind that lives on high,  
 Now blushing in the purple light of morn,  
 Now pale with vapours, now by tempests torn,

Anon resuming all their peace again,  
 And bidding sun-beams course o'er hill and plain,  
 While joyous Earth the dews of gladness quaffs,  
 And Ocean dons his countless gems, and laughs :<sup>9</sup>  
 Yet are they ruled by Him who sits above,  
 And all those countless revolutions move  
 To heavenly music ; nor shall Time have power  
 To stop them, till Creation's latest hour,  
 When Heav'n and Earth new-made shall rise, and wear  
 Immortal robes, imperishably fair !<sup>10</sup>  
*Such* is the Church of God, a fabric proved  
 By storm and sunshine, but in change unmoved.  
 As Time his circle runs, she dauntless hears  
 Th' unearthly voices of the fleeting years,  
 Which cry unto each other in their flight,  
 And learns their lore, but bends not to their might.  
 And we, on History's page, as in a glass,  
 May *see* each shade along her surface pass.  
 First rose the faultless blushes of the day  
 New-born—and pass'd reluctantly away.  
 Next, with most subtle speed, was seen to come  
 A dread malaria creeping up from Rome,  
 And gathering into vapours, dark of hue,  
 Such as the prime of morning never knew.  
 Then silence reign'd a space—when, on the blast<sup>11</sup>  
 A stormy spirit sprung, in fiery haste,  
 Before him drove the clouds with thunder riv'n,  
 And gave to discord all the face of Heav'n !  
 Discord, which never since has left the sky,  
 But still extends its lurid pall on high ;