

Classic Poetry Series

Michael Wigglesworth
- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Michael Wigglesworth(1631 - 1705)

WIGGLESWORTH, MICHAEL (1631—1705), American clergyman and poet, was born in England, probably in Yorkshire, on the 18th of October 1631. His father, Edward (d. 1653), persecuted for his Puritan faith, emigrated with his family to New England in 1638 and settled in New Haven. Michael studied for a time at a school kept by Ezekiel Cheever, and in 1651 graduated at Harvard, where he was a tutor (and a Fellow) in 1652—1654. Having fitted himself for the ministry, he preached at Charlestown in 1653—1654, and was pastor at Malden from 1656 until his death, though for twenty years or more bodily infirmities prevented his regular attendance upon his duties—Cotton Mather described him as “a little feeble shadow of a man.” During this interval he studied medicine and began a successful practice. He was again a Fellow of Harvard in 1697—1705. He died at Malden on the 10th of June 1705. Wigglesworth is best known as the author of *The Day of Doom; or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment* (1662). At least two English and eight American editions have appeared, notable among them being that of 1867 (New York), edited by

W. H. Burr and including other poems of Wigglesworth, a memoir and an autobiography. For a century this realistic and terrible expression of the prevailing Calvinistic theology was by far the most popular work written in America. His other poems include *God's Controversy with New England* (written in 1662. “in the time of the great drought,” and first printed in the

Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for 1781), and *Meat out of the Eater, or Meditations concerning the Necessity, End and Usefulness of Afflictions unto God's Children* (1669; revised in 1703).

His son, SAMUEL (1689—1768), also a clergyman, was the author of several prose works and of one poem of merit, “A Funeral Song” (1709). Another son, Edward (1693—1765), was the first Hollis professor of Divinity at Harvard (1722—1765), and the author of various theological works; and a grandson, Edward (1732—1794), was the second Hollis professor of Divinity (1765—1791), in which position he was succeeded by Michael Wigglesworth's great-grandson, Rev. David Tappan (1752—1803).

A Postscript Unto The Reader

And now good Reader, I return again
To talk with thee, who hast been at the pain
To read throughout, and heed what went before;
And unto thee I'll speak a little more.
Give ear, I pray thee, unto what I say,
That God may hear thy voice another day.
Thou hast a Soul, my friend, and so have I,
To save or lose; a Soul that cannot die,
A soul of greater price than God and Gems;
A Soul more worth than Crowns and Diadems;
A Soul at first created like its Maker,
And of Gods Image made to be partaker:
Upon the wings of Noblest faculties,
Taught for to soar above the Starry Skies,
And not to rest, until it understood
It self possessed of the chiefest good.
And since the Fall, thy Soul retaineth still
Those Faculties of Reason and of Will,
But Oh, how much deprav'd, and out of frame,
As if they were some others, not the same.
Thine Understanding dismally benighted,
And Reason'd eye in Sp'ritual things dim-sighted,
Or else stark blind: Thy Will inclin'd to evil,
And nothing else, a Slave unto the Devil;
That loves to live, and liveth to transgress,
But shuns the way of God and Holiness.
All thin Affections are disordered;
And thou by head-strong Passions are misled.
What need I tell thee of thy crooked way,
And many wicked wand'rings every day?
Or that thine own transgressions are more
In number, than the sands upon the Shore:
Thou art a lump of wickedness become,
And may'st with horroure think upon thy Doom,
Until thy Soul be washed in the flood
Of Christ's most dear, soul-cleansing precious blood.
That, that alone can do away thy sin
Which thou wert born, and hast long lived in.
That, only that, can pacifie Gods wrath,

If apprehended by a lively Faith,
Now whilst the day and means of Grace do last,
Before the opportunity be past.
But if O man, thou liv'st a Christless creature,
And Death surprize thee in a state of nature,
(As who can tell but that may be thy case)
How wilt thou stand before the Judge's face?
When he shall be reveal'd in flaming fire,
And come to pay ungodly men their hire:
To execute due vengeance upon those
That knew him not, or that have been his foes?
What wilt thou answer unto his demands,
When he requires a reason at thy hands
Of all the things that thou hast said, or done,
Or left undone, or set thine heart upon?
When he shall thus with thee expostulate,
What cause hadst thou thy Maker for to hate,
To take up Arms against thy Sovereign,
And Enmity against him to maintain?
What injury hath God Almighty done thee?
What good hath he with-held that might have won thee?
What evil, or injustice, hast thou found
In him, that might unto thine hurt redound?
If neither felt, nor feared injury
Hath moved thee to such hostility;
What made thee then the Fountain to forsake,
And unto broken Pits thy self betake?
What reason hadst thou to dishonour God,
Who thee with Mercies never cease to load?
Because the Lord was good, hast thou been evil,
And taken part against him with the Devil?
For all his cost to pay him with despite,
And all his love with hatred to requite?
Is this the fruit of Gods great patience,
To wax more bold in disobedience?
To kick against the bowels of his Love,
Is this aright his Bounty to improve?
Stand still, ye Heav'ns and be astonished,
That God by man should thus be injured!
Give ear, O Earth, and tremble at the sin
Of those that thine Inhabitants have bin.
But thou, vile Wretch, hast added unto all

Thine other faults, and facts so criminal,
The damning sin of wilful unbelief,
Of all Transgressors hadst thou been the chief;
Yet when time was, thou might'st have been set free
From Sin, and Wrath, and punishment by mee.
But thou wouldst not accept of Gospel Grace,
Nor on my terms Eternal Life embrace.
As if that all thy breaches of Gods Law
Were not enough upon thy head to draw
Eternal Wrath: Thou hast despis'd a Saviour,
Rejected me, and trampled on my favour.
How oft have I stood Knocking at thy door,
And been denied entrance evermore?
How often hath my Spirit been withstood,
When as I sent him to have done thee good?
Thou hast no need of any one to plead
Thy Cause, or for thy Soul to intercede:
Plead for thy self, it thou hast ought to say,
And pay thy forfeiture without delay.
Behold thou dost ten thousand Talents owe,
Or pay thy Debt, or else to Prison go.
Think, think, O Man, when Christ shall thus unfold
Thy secret guilt, and make thee to behold
The ugly face of all thy sinful errours,
And fill thy Soul with his amazing terrours,
And let thee see the flaming Pit of Hell
(Where all that have no part in him shall dwell)
When he shall thus expostulate the case,
How canst thou bear to look him in the face?
What wilt thou do without an Advocate?
Or plead, when as thy state is desparate?
Dost think to put him off with fair pretences?
Or wilt thou hide and cover thine offences?
Can any thing from him concealed be,
Who doth the hidden things of darkness see?
Art thou of force his Power to withstand?
Canst thou by might escape out of his hand?
Dost thou intend to run out of his sight,
And save thy self from punishment by flight?
Or wilt thou be eternally accurst,
And bide his Vengeance, let him do his worst?
Oh, who can bear his indignation heat?

Or bide the pains of Hell, which are so great?
If then thou neither canst his Wrath endure,
Nor any Ransom after death procure:
If neither Cryes nor Tears can move his heart
To pardon thee, or mitigate thy smart,
But unto Hell thou must perforce be sent
With dismal horrour and astonishment:
Consider, O my Friends, what cause thou hast
With fear and trembling (while as yet thou may'st)
To lay to heart thy sin and misery,
And to make out after the Remedy.
Consider well the greatness of thy danger,
O Child of wrath, and object of Gods anger,
Thou hangest over the Infernal Pit
By one small thread, and car'st thou not a whit?
There's but a step between thy Soul and Death,
Nothing remains but stopping of thy breath,
(Which may be done to morrow, or before)
And then thou art undone for evermore.
Let this awaken thy Security,
And make thee look about thee speedily,
How canst thou rest an hour or sleep a night,
Or in thy Creature-comforts take delight;
Or with vain Toyes thy self forgetfull make
How near thou art unto the burning Lake?
How canst thou live without tormenting fears?
How canst thou hold from weeping floods of tears,
Yea, tears of blood, I might almost have sed,
If such like tears could from thine eyes be shed?
To gain the world what will it profit thee,
And loose thy Soul and self eternallie?
Eternity on one small point dependeth:
The man is lost that this short life mispendeth,
For as the Tree doth fall, right so it lies;
And man continues in what state he dies.
Who happy die, shall happy rise again;
Who cursed die, shall cursed still remain,
If under Sin, and Wrath, Death leaves thee bound,
At Judgment under Wrath thou shalt be found:
And then wo, wo that ever thou wert born,
O wretched man, of Heav'n and Earth forlorn!
Consider this, all ye that God forget,

Who all his threatenings at nought do set,
Lest into pieces he begin to tear
Your Souls, and there be no deliverer.
O you that now sing care and fear away,
Think often of the formidable Day,
Wherein the Heavens with a mighty noise,
And with a hideous, heart-confounding voice,
Shall pass away together, being roll'd
As men are wont their garments for to fold;
When th' Elements with fervent heat shall melt,
And living Creatures in the same shall swelt,
And altogether in those Flames expire,
Which set the Earths Foundations on fire.
Oh, what amazement will your hearts be in,
And how will you to curse your selves begin
For all your damned sloth, and negligence,
And unbelief, and gross Impenitence,
When you shall hear that dreadful Sentence past,
That all the wicked into Hell be cast?
What horreur will your Consciences surprise,
When you shall hear the fruitless doleful cries
Of such as are compelled to depart
Unto the place of everlasting smart?
What, when you see the sparks fly out of Hell,
And view the Dungeon where you are to dwell,
Wherein you must eternally remain
In anguish, and intolerable pain?
What, when your hands and feet are bound together,
And you are cast into the Lake for ever?
Then shall you feel the truth of what you hear,
That hellish pains are more than you can bear,
And that those Torments are an hundred fold
More terrible than ever you were told.
Nor speak I this, good Reader, to torment thee
Before the time, but rather to prevent thee
From running head-long to thine own decay,
In such a perillous and deadly way.
We, who have known and felt Jehovah's terrours,
Perswade men to repent them of their errours,
And turn to God in time, e're his Decree
Bring forth, and then there be no Remedee!
If in the night, when thou art fast asleep,

Some friend of thine, that better watch doth keep,
Should see thy house all on a burning flame,
And thee almost inclosed with the same:
If such a friend should break thy door and wake thee,
Or else by force out of the peril take thee:
What? wouldst thou take his kindness in ill part?
Or frown upon him for his good desert?
Such, O my friend, such is thy present state,
And danger, being unregenerate.
Awake, awake, and then thou shalt perceive
Thy peril greater than thou wilt believe.
Lift up thine eyes, and see Gods wrathful ire,
Preparing unextinguishable fire
For all that live and die impenitent.
Awake, awake, O Sinner, and repent,
And quarrel not, because I thus alarm
Thy Soul, to save it from eternal harm.
Perhaps thou harbourest such thoughts as these:
I hope I may enjoy my carnal ease
A little longer, and my self refresh
With those delights that gratifie the flesh,
And yet repent before it be too late,
And get into the comfortable state;
I hope I have yet many years to spend,
And time enough those matters to attend.
Presumptuous heart! Is God engag'd to give
A longer time to such as love to live
Like Rebels still, who think to stain his Glory
By wickedness, and after to be sorry?
Unto thy lust shall he be made a drudge,
Who thee, and all ungodly men, shall judge?
Canst thou account sin sweet, and yet confess,
That first, or last, it ends in bitterness?
Is sin a thing that must procure thee sorrow?
And woulst thou dally with't another morrow?
O foolish man, who lovest to enjoy
That which will thee distress, or else destroy!
What gained Sampson by his Delilah?
What gained David by his Bathsheba?
The one became a Slave, lost both his eyes,
And made them sport that were his Enemies;
The other penneth, as a certain token

Of Gods displeasure, that his bones were broken,
Besides the woes he after met withal,
To chasten him for that his grievous Fall:
His own Son Ammon using crafty wiles,
His Daughter Thamar wickedly defiles;
His second Son more beautiful than good,
His hands embreweth in his Brothers Bolld:
And by and by aspiring to the Crown,
He strives to pull his gentle Father down:
With hellish rage, him fiercely persecuting,
And bruitishly his Concubines polluting.
Read whoso list, and ponder what he reads,
And he shall find small joy in evil deeds.
Moreover this consider, that the longer
Thou liv'st in sin, thy sin will grow the stronger,
And then it will an harder matter prove,
To leave those wicked haunts that thou dost love.
The Black-moor may as eas'ly change his skin,
As old transgressors leave their wonted sin.
And who can tell what may become of thee,
Or where thy Soul in one days time may be?
We see that Death ner old nor young men spares,
But one and other takes at unawares.
For in a moment, whil'st men Peace do cry,
Destruction seizeth on them suddenly.
Thou who this morning art a lively wight,
May'st be a Corps and damned Ghost ere night.
Oh, dream not then, that it will serve the turn,
Upon thy death bed for thy sins to mourn,
But think how many have been snatcht away,
And had no time for mercy once to pray.
It's just with God Repentance to deny
To such as put it off until they dy,
And late Repentance seldom proveth true,
Which if it fail, thou know'st what must ensue;
For after this short life is at an end,
What is amiss thou never canst amend.
Believe, O man, that to procrastinate,
And put it off until it be too late,
As 'tis thy sin, so is it Satans wile,
Whereby he doth great multitudes beguile.
How many thousands hath this strong delusion

Already brought to ruine and confusion,
Whose Souls are now reserv'd in Iron Chains,
Under thick darkness to eternal pains?
They thought of many years, as thou dost now,
But were deceived quite, and so may'st thou.
Oh, then my friend, while not away thy time,
Nor by rebellion aggravate thy Crime.
Oh put not off Repentance till to morrow,
Adventure not without Gods leave to borrow
Another day to spend upon thy lust,
Lest God (that is most holy, wise, and just)
Denounce in wrath, and to thy terrour say:
This night shall Devils fetch thy Soul away.
Now seek the face of God with all thy heart;
Acknowledge unto him how vile thou art;
Tell him thy sins deserve eternal wrath,
And that it is a wonder that he hath
Permitted thee so long to draw thy breath,
Who might have cut thee off by sudden death,
And sent thy Soul into the lowest Pit,
From whence no price should ever ransom it,
And that he may most justly do it still
(Because thou hast deserv'd it) if he will.
Yet also tell him that, if he shall please,
He can forgive thy Sins, and thee release,
And that in Christ his Son he may be just,
And justifie all those what on him trust:
That though thy sins are of a crimson dy,
Yet Christ his Blood can cleanse thee thorowly.
Tell him, that he may make his glorious Name
More wonderful by covering thy shame;
That Mercy may be greatly magnify'd,
And Justice also fully satisfy'd,
If he shall please to own thee in his Son,
Who hath paid dear for Men's Redemption.
Tell him thou hast an unbelieving heart,
Which hindereth thee from coming for a part
In Christ: and that although his terrours aw thee,
Thou canst not come till he be pleas'd to draw thee.
Tell him thou know'st thine heart to be so bad,
And thy condition so exceeding sad,
That though Salvation may be had for nought

Thou canst not come and take, till thou be brought.
Oh beg of him to bow thy stubborn Will
To come to Christ, that he thy lusts may kill.
Look up to Christ for his attractive pow'r,
Which he exerteth in a needful hour;
Who saith, whenas I lifted up shall be,
Then will I draw all sorts of men to me.
O wait upon him with true diligence,
And trembling fear in every Ordinance;
Unto his call earnest attention give,
Whose voice makes deaf men hear, and dead men live.
Thus weep, and mourn, thus hearken, pray and wait,
Till he behold, and pittie thine estate,
Who is more ready to bestow his Grace,
Then thou the same art willing to imbrace;
Yea, he hath Might enough to bring thee home,
Though thou hast neither strength nor will to come.
If he delay to answer thy request,
Know that oft-times he doth it for the best:
Not with intent to drive us from his door,
But for to make us importune him more;
Or else to bring us duly to confess,
And be convinc'd of our unworthiness.
Oh, be not weary then, but persevere
To beg his Grace till he thy suit shall hear:
And leave him not, nor from his foot-stool go,
Till over thee Compassions skirt he throw.
Eternal Life will recompence thy pains,
If found at last, with everlasting gains.
For if the Lord be pleas'd to hear thy cries,
And to forgive thy great iniquities,
Thou wilt have cause for ever to admire,
And laud his Grace, that granted thy desire.
Then shalt thou find thy labour is not lost:
But that the good obtain'd surmounts the cost.
Nor shalt thou grieve for loss of sinful pleasures,
Exchang'd for heavenly joyes and lasting treasures.
The yoke of Christ, which once thou didst esteem
A tedious yoke, shall then most easie seem.
For why? The love of Christ shall thee constrain
To take delight in that which was thy pain;
The wayes of Wisdom shall be pleasant wayes,

And thou shalt chuse therein to spend thy dayes.
If once thy Soul be brought to such a pass,
O'bless the Lord, and magnifie his Grace.
Thou, that of late hadst reason to be sad,
May'st now rejoyce, and be exceeding glad,
For thy condition is as happy now,
As erst it was disconsolate and low;
Thou art become as rich as whilome poor,
As blessed now, as cursed heretofore;
For being cleansed with Christs precious Blood,
Thou hast an int'rest in the chiefest good:
Gods anger is towards thy Soul appeased,
And in his Christ he is with thee well pleased.
Yea, he doth look upon thee with a mild
And gracious aspect as upon his child;
He is become thy Father and thy Friend,
And will defend thee from the cursed Fiend.
Thou need'st not fear the roaring Lyon's rage,
Since God Almighty doth himself engage
To bear thy Soul in Everlasting Armes,
Above the reach of all destructive harms.
What ever here thy sufferings may be,
Yet from them all the Lord shall rescue thee.
He will preserve thee by his wond'rous might
Unto that rich Inheritance in light.
Oh, sing for you, all ye regenerate,
Whom Christ hath brought into this blessed state!
O love the Lord, all ye his Saints, who hath
Redeemed you from everlasting wrath:
Who hath by dying made your Souls to live,
And what he dearly bought doth freely give:
Give up you selves to walk in all his wayes,
And study how to live unto his praise.
The time is short you have to serve him here:
The day of your deliv'rance draweth near.
Lift up your heads, ye upright ones in heart,
Who in Christ's purchase have obtain'd a part.
Behold, he rides upon a shining Cloud,
With Angels voice, and Trumpet sounding loud;
He comes to save his folk from all their foes,
And plague the men that Holiness oppose.
So come, Lord Jesus, quickly come we pray:

Yea come, and hasten our Redemption day.

Michael Wigglesworth

A Prayer Unto Christ

The Judge Of The World

O Dearest Dread, most glorious King,
I'll of thy justest Judgements sing:
So thou my head and heart inspire,
To Sing aright, as I desire.
Thee, thee alone I'll invoke,
For I do much abominate
To call the Muses to mine aid:
Which is th' Unchristian use, and trade
Of some that Christians would be thought,
And yet they worship worse then nought.
Oh! what a deal of Blasphemy,
And Heathenish Impiety,
In Christian Poets may be found,
Where Heathen gods with praise are Crown'd,
They make Jehovah to stand by,
Till Juno, Venus, Mercury,
With frowning Mars, and thundering Jove
Rule Earth below, and Heaven above.
But I have learnt to pray to none,
Save unto God in Christ alone.
Nor will I laud, no, not in jest,
That which I know God doth detest.
I reckon it a damning evil
To give Gods Praises to the Devil.
Thou, Christ, art he to whom I pray,
Thy Glory fain I would display.
Oh! guide me by thy sacred Sprite
So to indite, and so to write,
That I thine holy Name may praise,
And teach the Sons of men thy wayes.

Michael Wigglesworth

A Short Discourse On Eternity

[1]

What Mortal man can with his Span
mete out Eternity?
Or fathom it by depth of Wit,
or strength of Memory?
The lofty Sky is not so high,
Hells depth to this is small:
The World so wide is but a stride,
compared therewithall.

Isa. 57:15

Mark. 3:29

Matt. 25:46

[2]

It is a main great Ocean,
withouten bank or bound:
A deep Abyss, wherein there is
no bottom to be found.
This World hath stood now since the Flood,
four thousand years well near,
And had before endured more
than sixteen hundred year.

[3]

But what's the time from the Worlds prime,
unto this present day,
If we thereby Eternity
to measure should assay?
The whole duration since the Creation,
though long, yet is more little,
If placed by Eternity,
then is the smallest tittle.

[4]

Tell every Star both near and far,
in Heav'ns bright Canopee,
That doth appear throughout the year,
of high or low degree:
Tell every Tree that thou canst see
in this vast Wilderness,
Up in the Woods, down by the Floods,
in thousand miles progress.

[5]

The sum is vast, yet not so vast,
but that thou may'st go on
To multiply the Leaves thereby,
that hang those Trees upon:
Add thereunto the Drops, that thou
imaginest to be
In April Show'rs, that bring forth Flow'rs,
and blossoms plenteously:

[6]

Number the Fowls and living Souls
that through the Air do Fly,
The winged Hosts in all their Coasts
beneath the Starry Sky:
Count all the Grass as thou dost pass
through many a pasture-land,
And dewy Drops that on the tops
of Herbs and Plants do stand.

[7]

Number the Sand upon the Stran,
and Atomes of the Air;
And do thy best on Man and Beast,
to reckon every Hair:
Take all the Dust, if so thous lust,
and add to thine Account:
Yet shall the Years of sinners tears,
the Number far surmount.

2 Thes. 1:9

Rev. 14:11

[8]

Nought joyn'd to nought can ne're make ought,
nor Cyphers make a Sum:
Nor things Finite, to infinite
by multiplying come:
A Cockle-shell may serve as well
to lade the Ocean dry,
As finite things and Reckonings
to bound Eternity.

[9]

O happy they that live for aye,
with Christ in Heav'n above!
Who know withal, that nothing shall
deprive them of his love.
Eternity, Eternity!
Oh, were it not for thee,
The Saints in bliss and happiness
could never happy be.

1 Thes. 4:17

Rom. 8:38, 39

[10]

For if they were in any fear,
that this their joy might cease,
It would annoy (if not destroy)
and interrupt their peace:
But being sure it shall endure
so long as God shall live;
The thoughts of this unto their bliss,
do full perfection give.

1 John 4:18

John 6:35, 40, 51

Rev. 21:4

[11]

Cheer up, ye Saints, amidst your wants,
and sorrows many a one,
Lift up the head, shake off all dread,
and moderate your mone.
Your sufferings and evil things
will suddenly be past;
Your sweet Fruitions, and blessed Visions,
for evermore shall last.

Heb. 12:12

2 Cor. 4:17

Psal. 16:11

[12]

Lament and mourn you that must burn
amidst those flaming Seas:
If once you come to such a doom,
for ever farewell ease.
O sad estate and desparate,
that never can be mended,
Until Gods Will shall change, or till
Eternity be ended!

Luke 13:28

Matt. 25:41, 46

Rev. 14:11

[13]

If any one this Question
shall unto me propound:
What, have the years of sinners tears
no limits, or no bound?
It kills our heart to think of smart,
and pains that last for ever;
And hear of fire that shall expire,
or be extinguish'd never.

Mark. 9:43, 44

[14]

I'll Answer make (and let them take
my words as I intend them:
For this is all the Cordial
that here I have to lend them)
When Heav'n shall cease to flow with peace
and all felicity;
Then Hell may cease to be the place
of Wo and Misery.

[15]

When Heav'n is Hell, when Ill is Well,
when Vertue turns to Vice,
When wrong is Right, when Dark is Light,
When Nought is of great price:
Then may the years of sinners tears
and sufferings expire,
And all the hosts of damned ghosts
escape out of Hell-fire.

[16]

When Christ above shall cease to love,
when God shall cease to reign,
And be no more, as heretofore,
the Worlds great Sovereign,
Or not be just, or favour lust,
or in mens sins delight:
Then wicked men (and not till then)
to Heav'n may take their flight.

[17]

When Gods great Power shall be brought lower,
by forreign Puissance;
Or be decay'd, and weaker made
through Times continuance
When drowsiness shall him oppress,

and lay him fast asleep:
Then sinful men may break their pen,
and out of Prison creep.

[18]

When those in Glory shall be right sorry
they may not change their place,
And wish to dwell with them in Hell,
never to see Christs face:
Then those in pain may freedom gain,
and be with Glory bright:
Then Hellish Fiends may be Christ's Friends,
and heirs of Heaven hight.

[19]

Then, Ah poor men! what, not till then?
No, not an hour before:
For God is just, and therefore must
torment them evermore.
ETERNITY! ETERNITY!
thou mak'st hard hearts to bleed:
The thoughts of thee in misery,
do make men wail indeed.

[20]

When they remind what's still behind,
and ponder this word NEVER,
That they must here be made to bear
Gods Vengeance for EVER:
The thought of this more bitter is,
then all they feel beside,
Yet what they feel, nor heart of steel,
nor Flesh of Brass can bide.

Mark. 9:43, 44,
45, 46 &c.

[21]

To lye in wo, and undergo
the direful pains of Hell,
And know withall, that there they shall
for aye, and ever dwell;
And that they are from rest as far
when fifty thousand year,
Twice told, are spent in punishment,
as when they first came there.

2 Thes. 1:8, 9

Mat. 25:46

Rev. 14:10, 11

[22]

This, Oh! this makes Hells fiery flakes
much more intolerable;
This makes frail wights and damned sprights,
to bear their plagues unable.
This makes men bite, for fell despite,
their very tongues in twain:
This makes them rore for great horror,
and trebleth all their pain.

Michael Wigglesworth

The Day Of Doom

Still was the night, Serene & Bright,
when all Men sleeping lay;
Calm was the season, & carnal reason
thought so 'twould last for ay.
Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease,
much good thou hast in store:
This was their Song, their Cups among,
the Evening before.

Wallowing in all kind of sin,
vile wretches lay secure:
The best of men had scarcely then
their Lamps kept in good ure.
Virgins unwise, who through disguise
amongst the best were number'd,
Had closed their eyes; yea, and the wise
through sloth and frailty slumber'd.

For at midnight brake forth a Light,
which turn'd the night to day,
And speedily a hideous cry
did all the world dismay.
Sinners awake, their hearts do ake,
trembling their loynes surprizeth;
Amaz'd with fear, by what they hear,
each one of them ariseth.

They rush from Beds with giddy heads,
and to their windows run,
Viewing this light, which shines more bright
than doth the Noon-day Sun.
Straightway appears (they see 't with tears)
the Son of God most dread;
Who with his Train comes on amain
to Judge both Quick and Dead.

Before his face the Heav'ns gave place,
and Skies are rent asunder,
With mighty voice, and hideous noise,

more terrible than Thunder.
His brightness damps heav'ns glorious lamps
and makes them hang their heads,
As if afraid and quite dismay'd,
they quit their wonted steads.

No heart so bold, but now grows cold
and almost dead with fear:
No eye so dry, but now can cry,
and pour out many a tear.
Earth's Potentates and pow'rful States,
Captains and Men of Might
Are quite abasht, their courage dasht
at this most dreadful sight.

Mean men lament, great men do rent
their Robes, and tear their hair:
They do not spare their flesh to tear
through horrible despair.
All Kindreds wail: all hearts do fail:
horror the world doth fill
With weeping eyes, and loud out-cries,
yet knows not how to kill.

Some hide themselves in Caves and Delves,
in places under ground:
Some rashly leap into the Deep,
to scape by being drown'd:
Some to the Rocks (O senseless blocks!)
and woody Mountains run,
That there they might this fearful sight,
and dreaded Presence shun.

In vain do they to Mountains say,
fall on us and us hide
From Judges ire, more hot than fire,
for who may it abide?
No hiding place can from his Face
sinners at all conceal,
Whose flaming Eye hid things doth 'spy
and darkest things reveal.

The Judge draws nigh, exalted high,
upon a lofty Throne,
Amidst a throng of Angels strong,
lo, Israel's Holy One!
The excellence of whose presence
and awful Majesty,
Amazeth Nature, and every Creature,
doth more than terrify.

The Mountains smook, the Hills are shook,
the Earth is rent and torn,
As if she should be clear dissolv'd,
or from the Center born.
The Sea doth roar, forsakes the shore,
and shrinks away for fear;
The wild beasts flee into the Sea,
so soon as he draws near.

Before his Throne a Trump is blown,
Proclaiming the day of Doom:
Forthwith he cries, Ye dead arise,
and unto Judgment come.
No sooner said, but 'tis obey'd;
Sepulchres opened are:
Dead bodies all rise at his call,
and 's mighty power declare.

His winged Hosts flie through all Coasts,
together gathering
Both good and bad, both quick and dead,
and all to Judgment bring.
Out of their holes those creeping Moles,
that hid themselves for fear,
By force they take, and quickly make
before the Judge appear.

Thus every one before the Throne
of Christ the Judge is brought,
Both righteous and impious
that good or ill hath wrought.
A separation, and diff'ring station
by Christ appointed is

(To sinners sad) 'twixt good and bad,
'twixt Heirs of woe and bliss.

Michael Wigglesworth

To The Christian Reader

Reader, I am a fool;
And have adventured
To play the fool this once for Christ,
The more his fame to spread.
If this my foolishness
Help thee to be more wise,
I have attained what I seek,
And what I onely prize.

Thou wonderest perhaps,
That I in Print appear,
Who to the Pulpit dwell so nigh,
Yet come so seldome there.
The God of Heaven knows
What grief to me it is,
To be with-held from Serving Christ:
No sorrow like to this.

This is the sorest pain
That I have felt of feel:
Yet have I stood some shocks that might
Make stronger Men to reel.
I find more true delight
In serving of my Lord,
Tan all the good things upon Earth,
Without it, can afford.

And could my strength endure,
That work I count so dear;
Not all the Riches of Peru
Should hire me to forbear;
But I'm a Prisoner,
Under a heavy Chain:
Almighty God's afflicting hand,
Doth me perforce restrain.

Yet some (I know) do judge,
Mine inability,
To come abroad and do Christ's Work,

To be Melancholy;
And that I'm not so weak,
As I my self conceit,
But who, in other things have found
Me so conceited yet?

Or who of all my friends,
That have my tryals seen,
Can tell the time in seven years,
When I have dumpish been?
Some think my voice is strong,
Most times when I do Preach:
But ten days after what I feel
And suffer, few can reach.

My prisoned thoughts break forth,
When open'd is the door,
With greater force and violence,
And strain my voice the more.
But vainly do they tell,
That I am growing stronger,
Who hear me speak in half an hour,
Till I can speak no longer.

Some for, because they see not
My chearfulness to fail,
Nor that I am disconsolate,
Do think I nothing ail.
If they had born my griefs,
Their courage might have fail'd them,
And all the Town (perhaps) have known
(Once and again) what ail'd them.

But why should I complain
That have so good a God,
That doth mine heart with comfort fill,
Ev'n whilst I feel his Rod?
In God I have been strong,
When wearied and worn out;
And joy'd in him, when twenty woes
Assail'd me round about.

Nor speak I this to boast;
But make Apology
For mine own self, and answer those
That fail in Charity.
I am (alas) as frail,
Impatient a Creature,
As most that tread upon the ground,
And have as bad a nature.

Let God be magnify'd,
Whose everlasting strength
Upholds me under sufferings
Of more than ten years length.
Through whose Almighty pow'r
Although I am surrounded
With sorrows more than can be told,
Yet am I not confounded.

For his dear sake have I
This service undertaken,
For I am bound to honour Him,
Who hath not me forsaken.
I am a Debtor too,
Unto the sons of Men;
Whom wanting other means, I would
Advantage with my Pen.

I would, But (ah!) my strength,
When tried, proves so small,
That to the ground without effect,
My wishes often fall.
Weak heads, and hands, and states,
Great things cannot produce:
And therefore I this little Piece
Have publish'd for thine use.

Although the thing be small,
Yet my good will therein,
Is nothing less then if it had
A larger Volumn been.
Accept it then in Love,
And read it for thy good:

There's nothing in't can do thee hurt,
If rightly understood.

The God of Heaven grant
These Lines so well to speed,
That thou the things of thine own peace,
Through them may'st better heed,
And may'st be stirred up
To stand upon thy guard,
That Death and Judgment may not come,
And find thee unprepar'd.

Oh get a part in Christ,
And make the Judge thy Friend:
So shalt thou be assured of
A happy, glorious end.
Thus prays thy real Friend,
And Servant for Christ's Sake,
Who had he strength would not refuse,
More pains for thee to take.

Michael Wigglesworth

Vanity Of Vanities

A Song of Emptiness

To Fill up the Empty Pages Following

Vain, frail, short liv'd, and miserable Man,
Learn what thou art when thine estate is best:
A restless Wave o'th' troubled Ocean,
A Dream, a lifeless Picture finely drest:

A Wind, a Flower, a Vapour, and a Bubble,
A Wheel that stands not still, a trembling Reed,
A rolling Stone, dry Dust, light Chaff, and Stubble,
A Shadow of Something, but nought indeed.

Learn what deceitful Toyes, and empty things,
This World, and all its best Enjoyments bee:
Out of the Earth no true Contentment springs,
But all things here are vexing Vanitee.

For what is Beauty, but a fading Flower?
Or what is Pleasure, but the Devils bait,
Whereby he catcheth whom he would devour,
And multitudes of Souls doth ruinate?

And what are Friends but moral men, as we?
Whom Death from us may quickly separate;
Or else their hearts may quite estranged be,
And all their love be turned into hate.

And what are Riches to be doted on?
Uncertain, fickle, and ensnaring things;
They draw Mens Souls into Perdition,
And when most needed, take them to their wings.

Ah foolish Man! that sets his heart upon
Such empty Shadows, such wild Fowl as these,
That being gotten will be quickly gone,
And whilst they stay increase but his disease.

As in a Dropsie, drinking draughts begets,

The more he drinks, the more he still requires:
So on this World whoso affection sets,
His Wealths encrease encreaseth his desires.

O happy Man, whose portion is above,
Where Floods, where Flames, where Foes cannot bereave him,
Most wretched man, that fixed hath his love
Upon this World, that surely will deceive him!

For, what is Honour? What is Sov'raignty,
Whereto mens hearts so restlesly aspire?
Whom have they Crowned with Felicity?
When did they ever satisfie desire?

The Ear of Man with hearing is not fill'd:
To see new sights still coveteth the Eye:
The craving Stomack though it may be still'd,
Yet craves again without a new supply.

All Earthly things, man's Cravings answer not,
Whose little heart would all the World contain,
(If all the World should fall to one man's Lot)
And notwithstanding empty still remain.

The Eastern Conquerour was said to weep,
When he the Indian Ocean did view,
To see his Conquest bounded by the Deep,
And no more Worlds remaining to subdue.

Who would that man in his Enjoyments bless,
Or envy him, or covet his estate,
Whose gettings do augment his greediness,
And make his wishes more intemperate?

Such is the wonted and the common guise
Of those on Earth that bear the greatest Sway:
If with a few the case be otherwise
They seek a Kingdom that abides for ay.

Moreover they, of all the Sons of men,
That Rule, and are in highest places set,
Are most inclin'd to scorn their Bretheren

And God himself (without great grace) forget.

For as the Sun doth blind the gazer's eyes,
That for a time they nought discern aright:
So Honour doth befool and blind the Wise,
And their own Lustre 'reaves them of their sight.

Great are their Dangers, manifold their Cares;
Thro which, whilst others Sleep, they scarcely Nap
And yet are oft surprized unawares,
And fall unwitting into Envies Trap!

The mean Mechanick finds his kindly rest,
All void of fear Sleepeth the Country-Clown,
When greatest Princes often are distrest,
And cannot Sleep upon their Beds of Down.

Could Strength or Valour men Immortalize,
Could Wealth or Honour keep them from decay,
There were some cause the same to Idolize,
And give the lye to that which I do say.

But neither can such things themselves endure
Without the hazard of a Change one hour,
Nor such as trust in them can they secure
From dismal dayes, or Deaths prevailing pow'r.

If Beauty could the beautiful defend
From Death's dominion, then fair Absalom
Had not been brought to such a shameful end:
But fair and foul unto the Grave must come.

If Wealth or Scepters could Immortal make,
Then wealthy Croesus, wherefore are thou dead?
If Warlike force, which makes the World to quake,
Then why is Julius Caesar perished?

Where are the Scipio's Thunder-bolts of War?
Renowned Pompey, Caesars Enemie?
Stout Hannibal, Romes Terror known so far?
Great Alexander, what's become of thee?

If Gifts and Bribes Death's favour might but win,
If Power, if force, or Threatnings might it fray,
All these, and more, had still surviving been:
But all are gone, for Death will have no Nay.

Such is this World with all her Pomp and Glory,
Such are the men whom worldly eyes admire:
Cut down by Time, and now become a Story,
That we might after better things aspire.

Go boast thy self of what thy heart enjoyes,
Vain Man! triumph in all thy worldly Bliss:
Thy best enjoyments are but Trash and Toyes:
Delight thy self in that which worthless is.

Omnia Praetereunt praeter amare Deum.

Michael Wigglesworth