

A N  
E L E G Y  
O N T H E  
D E A T H  
O F T H E  
R E V. J O H N G I L L, D. D.

Who departed this Life, Oötober 14th, 1771,  
in the Seventy-Fourth Year of his Age.

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B Y J O H N F E L L O W S.

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*For I determined not to know any Thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST,  
and him crucified.*

I COR. ii. 2.

*He being dead yet speaketh.*

HEB. XI. 4.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author, and sold by J. ROBINSON, *Shad Thames.*

M. DCC. LXXI.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]



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A N

E L E G Y

O N T H E D E A T H O F T H E

R E V. J O H N G I L L, D. D.

A WAKE, O muse! awake, ye tuneful throng!  
Zion, in tears, demands the fun'ral song;  
Still to the tombs she turns her weeping eyes,  
Fresh scenes of grief in sad succession rise:  
Still, still she must her sacred sorrows shed,  
And mourn the loss of the renowned dead.

Ye highly favour'd race! to whom 'tis giv'n  
To love the Lord, and know your peace with  
Heav'n;  
Who gladly see IMMANUEL's glory rise,  
But view his sinking cause with weeping eyes:

Ye

Ye youths and virgins, all ye pious throng,  
 Fathers and matrons, listen to my song;  
 Attend the mournful strain, oh with me join,  
 Assist my grief, and mingle tears with mine!

How are the mighty fallen! Lord, when will  
 Thine anger cease? The great, the learned GILL  
 Now pale and breathless lies! his hoary head  
 Sunk to the grave, and number'd with the dead.

Let Zion's daughters mourn—let all her sons  
 Appear in sadness; while the sorrow runs  
 From heart to heart, and with a gen'ral groan  
 We raise our cries to the eternal throne.  
 Ah! mighty God!—but why should we repine?  
 We dare not murmur, for the stroke is thine:  
 Deep is the wound! yet we (tho' mourn we must)  
 Are dumb before thee, and confess thee just.  
 The blessings we neglected in their day,  
 An angry God may justly take away.  
 But spare thy people, Lord! nor let thy cause  
 Be trodden down; for if thy pow'r withdraws

We

We sink for ever—Oh, return! return!  
 For, void of hope, why should thy people mourn?  
 Shew us the sins which make thine anger rise;  
 Lead in thy ways, and teach us to be wise.

How deep the ways of Heav'n! Why, at a time  
 When folly reigns, and ev'ry hateful crime;  
 When daring vice presumes strange heights to rise,  
 And the bold infidel blasphemes the skies,  
 Should Zion's pillars fall, while Babel's stand  
 In strength increasing, and o'er shade the land?  
 But stop, presumptuous muse! and rather say,  
 Why did the mighty stroke so long delay?  
 Why the fair star, by Heav'n ordain'd to shine  
 In brighter skies, so long continu'd thine?  
 Why was the saint, so well prepar'd to go,  
 Chain'd to this scene, and kept so long below?

Short is the space which time to man can give!  
 Where are our fathers? do the prophets live?

Dropp'd

Dropp'd in the grave long since, no more they  
 speak ;

Rich was the treasure, but the vessel weak.

He, whose decease demands these mournful lays,  
 Was gather'd to his people full of days.

As in some well-till'd field, the yellow grain,

With plenteous crop rewards the lab'ring swain ;

The heavy sheaves full-ripe, without delay,

Are gather'd in at the appointed day.

So, rich in grace and honour, fell the sage,

Mature in knowledge, as advanc'd in age ;

Rich, both in faith and works, divinely wise,

And, ripe for glory, fought his kindred skies.

Nor needs his much-renown'd, his much-lov'd  
 name,

The aid of verse, to eternize his fame :

In his own page his matchless glories shine,

Will live for ever, and he needs not mine.

Nor should we always hang about his urn,  
 But rather to his learned labours turn.

Tho' dead, he speaks; his mighty spirit lives;  
 Whate'er we ask, his page profusely gives.  
 He lives, he breathes, in his extensive lines,  
 And there his solid sense supremely shines,  
 There our relief, and there his glory lies,  
 And there shall rest, till time, till nature dies.

Yet justly we attempt a fun'ral verse,  
 And with harmonious sorrows strew his hearse;  
 His worthy deeds to our remembrance bring,  
 And, with alternate transport, sigh and sing.

When youth's first bloom (affording artless joy)  
 Glow'd in his cheek, and sparkled in his eye,  
 Touch'd by thy hand, IMMANUEL! soon he felt  
 His native loss, and trembled at his guilt.  
 For quick relief thy healing pow'r he sought,  
 And his first off'rings to thine altar brought:  
 The paths of early piety he trod,  
 And with his first-ripe fruits approach'd his God:  
 With willing steps in vig'rous youth he came,  
 Beheld thy glory, and ador'd thy name.

Scarce

Scarce in the sacred stream his feet had prov'd  
 His zeal for truth, and own'd the Lord he lov'd,  
 But, call'd to public labours, all his mind,  
 Intent and fervent, in the office join'd.  
 His ardent soul in quest of knowledge flies,  
 And ev'ry ancient source of science tries :  
 Whate'er to learned Greece or Rome was known  
 He studied deeply, and he made his own.  
 But all the flow'rs which in this province lay,  
 He soon neglected, as his childish play ;  
 And his enlighten'd soul with full delight  
 Beheld the sacred Volume. All his might  
 Was here collected. With laborious mind,  
 And ceaseless care, he sought its depth to find

Truth, at her fountain-head, he strove to draw,  
 And in JEHOVAH'S language learnt his law ;  
 He perfectly attain'd the copious tongue,  
 With which, in native pomp, old Athens rung.  
 Hence on his mind a flood of glory rose,  
 (The prospect brightens as he further goes)



Exploring ev'ry page and ev'ry line,  
 He saw eternal truth supremely shine;  
 The sacred sense deep from its fountain drew,  
 And brought each latent meaning to our view.

But on his mind still brighter glories rise,  
 He sees his GOD descending from the skies:  
 Wonder, ye angels! nations, all attend!  
 To save his foes, behold your GOD descend  
 In human form, to bring all Heav'n can give!  
 He bears our sins, and dies that we may live!  
 Full, on the stage, these Heav'nly glories stream,  
 This great salvation was his darling theme.  
 He dwelt amongst these wonders; all his soul  
 Was full of Heav'nly glory; and his whole,  
 His steady, fix'd, determin'd ardor strove  
 To publish to the world Redeeming Love.

How vast his labours!—Where can Zion find  
 An arm so strong, so resolute a mind  
 In her defence? Where is the mighty hand  
 That holds such wide, such absolute command

In learning's province? Where, amongst the dead,  
Lies the much fam'd, the learn'd, the rev'rend  
head,

Renown'd for equal labours? Where, alas,  
What distant climes and kingdoms must we pass  
To find his honour'd equal? Where, indeed,  
Can one be found that's worthy to succeed?

With unremitting zeal the prophet try'd  
To humble man, and bend his stubborn pride  
To God's salvation. Man, whose haughty soul  
Presumes th' eternal counsels to controul;  
To teach the mighty Ruler of the skies;  
And, more than Heav'nly wisdom, to be wise.  
He knew the task too hard for mortal might,  
And ever kept Almighty grace in fight.  
He knew that grace alone his work could bless,  
And, here depending for the whole success,  
He check'd the bold blasphemer; shew'd his mind  
To ev'ry Heav'nly precept disinclin'd,  
His strength but weakness, and his wisdom blind.

He taught proud man to reverence the nod,  
 And own the wisdom of a sov'reign God,  
 Who rules his people by his great decree;  
 Whose word shall stand, and what he will shall  
     be :

Who from his ancient purpose never moves,  
 But will pursue with goodness whom he loves:  
 Whose attributes unite with equal rays  
 To crown his name, and with full glory blaze  
 In man's salvation. This the learned fear  
 Largely display'd, and made, as noon-day, clear.

But, great IMMANUEL ! all his soul was thine,  
 And in his page thy awful glories shine  
 Frequent and full. He scorn'd to favour those  
 Who shade thy glory, and who dare oppose  
 Thy great salvation. We behold thee rise  
 Th' eternal God, the Sov'reign of the skies;  
 The Lord of Heaven and earth, with glory  
     crown'd ;  
 Whose Godhead brightens all the skies around :

Man's only hope and peace, by Heav'n assign'd,  
 The only rest the weary soul can find;  
 The only power which from our guilt can free,  
 And all our great salvation hangs on thee.

Is there a theme so forcible to move  
 As thy deep suff'rings, and thy wond'rous love?  
 We see thee undergo the bitter curse!  
 We hear thee groan! we see thee bleed for us!  
 We see thee steady stand th' avenging blow!  
 And rigid justice lets the sinner go!  
 We see thy righteousness supremely rise,  
 Thy people's cov'ring in thy Father's eyes,  
 And wear the robe that fits us for the skies. }  
 The more thy perfect righteousness is shewn,  
 The more we see the meanness of our own.  
 We see ourselves, how naked, and how blind,  
 Our guilt, enormous, rushes on our mind;  
 Nor can we hope to see thy smiling face  
 Without thy pow'rful, all-prevailing grace.  
 We see thee rise in GILL's extensive strain  
 Mighty to save, and able to maintain

The

The cause of all thy people. All thy sons  
 Shall come to glory, so thy promise runs :  
 Each, by thy aid, shall conquer all his foes,  
 And safe arrive, tho' earth and hell oppose.

Ye happy souls, that know the Lord, whose  
 mind

Is to his potent work and will resign'd,  
 Who have the wilds of conscious trouble trod,  
 But, taught by sov'reign grace, you know your  
 God ;

How burn your hearts within you! and what fire  
 Warms your glad breasts, when our esteemed fire  
 Explains the mighty grace of God, and shews  
 The way he takes to overcome his foes ;  
 To bend the haughty sinner to his throne,  
 And make him seek salvation thro' his Son?  
 How soft, how kind, how tender his address,  
 To the poor soul, o'erwhelm'd with deep distress!  
 And to what solid, what substantial joys,  
 In his bold strain, the faint was taught to rise!

How

How far above earth's empty joys to soar  
And feast on bliss, where sorrows are no more?

How clear his sense! his reasoning how strong!  
Against the strange perverseness of the throng,  
Who view the glorious Gospel's boundless blaze  
Thro' some false medium, which inverts its rays ;  
Who, bold and blind, the curs'd harangue begin,  
And tell the world that grace engenders sin.  
How warm his indignation! and how clear  
His copious page makes the reverse appear !

And thou, bright Faith! fair offspring of the  
skies !

In his extensive page art seen to rise  
All-glorious and divine. Parent of love,  
And truth, and purity, that soars above  
All filth and meanness. Whose diviner light,  
Where reason errs, is sure to lead us right.

These

These were the themes which fill'd the rev'rend  
page ;

They fir'd his youth, and they employ'd his age :  
A long, laborious life in these he spent,  
For half a cent'ry, his great master lent  
For useful labours\* ; yet could truly say  
“ That strength was giv'n him equal to his day.”  
With what a rapid course he pour'd along  
The Heav'nly road ! how steady and how strong  
In every Gospel truth ! Ah ! where's the hand  
That dare attempt such labours ? What command  
In every branch of science ! How profound  
In the whole learned, wide, historic round !  
Was not each ancient kingdom's hist'ry known,  
And every Father of the church his own ?

But tho' the most extensive learning crown'd  
His early youth ; and tho' he stood renown'd

\* As the time here referred to, does not give an exact account of his labours, it may be acceptable to the reader to be informed, that he was a Preacher near 55, and a Pastor near 52 years.

For all that's great in science ; yet how plain,  
How easy, pure, and simple was his strain !  
None of the flourish'd, fig'ring of the age,  
Nor what was puff'd, or swelling, fill'd his page.

Zion was his delight ; his whole design  
Was to adorn the church, and make her shine.  
For her he search'd the wilds of ancient song ;  
And the fair foliage in her temple hung :  
Her name, her health, her growth, and her affairs  
Employ'd his thoughts, and fill'd up all his cares.

E'en thou art witness to his zeal, O Thames !  
Oft has his morning lamp danc'd on thy streams,  
Before the rising dawn's first op'ning ray,  
Or the bright morning-star awoke the day.

The cause of God and truth employ'd his  
thought ;  
And his whole strength to its defence he brought.  
Say, all ye sons of Zion ! how he rose  
With potent arm against your num'rous foes ;

How



How bright his helmet, and how broad his shield,  
And with what mighty force he swept the field.

When, great IMMANUEL! crouds against thee  
came

To shade thy glory, and to blast thy name ;  
He pour'd, resistless, on the num'rous throng,  
And drove the daunted train in heaps along ;  
High on his helm celestial glories play,  
And Heav'n ordain'd him a triumphant day.  
And when, by dangers, call'd to closer fight,  
He stood unmov'd, collected in his might ;  
With ready hand his shining sword he draws,  
Assur'd of vict'ry in his Master's cause ;  
Fearless he turns indignant on the foe,  
Dares ev'ry arm, and wards off every blow.  
He stands unshaken, in himself an host,  
Nor can an army stir him from his post !

Nor was his vig'rous, vast, capacious mind  
To disputation's toilsome sphere confin'd.  
Say, for you best can tell, ye favour'd train  
Who long enjoy'd his labours ; in what strain,

With what unweari'd might he preach'd the word,  
 And labour'd in the vineyard of his Lord ?  
 What just rebuke the haughty scorner felt !  
 And how the finner trembled at his guilt !  
 How were the faints brought forward on their way,  
 And urg'd to all the duties of the day !  
 How did his counsel succour the distress'd,  
 And pour the balm in the afflicted breast !

When at the feast of rich, redeeming love  
 He dealt the sacred elements, and strove  
 To set before your eyes your dying Lord,  
 How soft, how sweet, how solemn ev'ry word !  
 How were your hearts affected ! and his own,  
 And how his sparkling eyes with glory shone !

And when, to spread fresh lustre on his name,  
 After a long, bright day the ev'ning came ;  
 When ebbing life, by slow degrees retir'd,  
 How was his soul with stronger raptures fir'd !  
 How were your hearts affected with his strain !  
 Say, did you hear with pleasure, or with pain ?

The springing tears fell copious from your eye,  
But were they tears of grief, or tears of joy?

When nature felt her vital pow'rs decay,  
And plainly pointed the approaching day  
Of dissolution, he was all resign'd,  
And greater wonders open'd on his mind.  
His ev'ning sun, all clear and cloudless goes,  
And sets in brighter glories than he rose.  
Clear was his prospect of the promis'd land,  
And in full view he saw his Saviour stand.  
If from good works could rise our last relief,  
Who more could boast than this renowned chief?  
But these afforded not the least delight,  
They vanish'd, like a vapour, out of sight.  
Not on his character, which stood renown'd  
For ev'ry moral virtue, and was crown'd  
With all the fruits of righteousness, which blaze  
Conspicuous forth to his great Master's praise;  
Not on his greater labours, or his less,  
On mortal's praises, or his great success;

Not on those works in which, above the rest,  
 A present God the composition blest,  
 He plac'd the least dependance ; from his soul  
 He did most steadily renounce the whole,  
 And fix'd on Christ's salvation. The rich blood  
 And righteousness of his incarnate God,  
 Were all his hope, his rest, his joy, his crown,  
 And at his feet he laid his burden down :  
 He on his everlasting love rely'd,  
 Sunk in his arms, and in full glory dy'd.

Oh may, like his, my spirit wing her way  
 From earth's dull clod to realms of endless day!  
 When on the utmost verge of time I stand,  
 And vast eternity is near at hand ;  
 When from my cold, pale lips the quiv'ring breath  
 Can scarce return, to 'scape the hand of death ;  
 Then may my smiling Saviour stand in fight,  
 And cheer the gloom with his celestial light.  
 When all my friends forsake me, false or true,  
 When earth's perplexing scenes depart from view ;

And

And in my dying eyes her objects swim,  
May all my ardent spirit burn for him.

How precious, Lord! How precious in thine  
eye!

How precious, in their death, thy people lie!  
With frequent tears the sacred seed they sow,  
And toil and trouble are their lot below.  
But when so near their journey's end they come,  
With what endearing smiles thou call'st them  
home!

How vast, how rich, how full, the joys they gain!  
An hour of these rewards an age of pain.

But hence! ye impious, unbelieving crew!  
Turn, turn your backs! these joys are not for you,  
If frowning death may tell you where you are,  
Confusion is your lot, and black despair!  
In vain your agonizing souls implore  
To sink in darkness, and to be no more!  
A fiery gulf receives you in her womb,  
And all your fate is big with woes to come!

A happier lot remains, a sweeter song,  
 Awaits the race which to the Lord belong.  
 Jesus descends in all his might to save,  
 Nor will he lose his servants in the grave.  
 The mortal part to native dust returns,  
 But all the soul with heav'nly brightness burns;  
 Without reluctance leaves the mould'ring clay,  
 And hails the dawning of eternal day.

How vast the joys which rush'd without controul  
 On our dear father's just emerging soul!  
 The cloud of flesh withdraws; he sees the ground  
 With long cherubic legions flaming round.  
 A blazing chariot stands—The steeds of fire,  
 Impatient of command, await the fire.  
 He mounts!—They fly, as light'ning swift and  
     strong,  
 Thro' the vast void they whirl the car along.  
 The guard attends—They leave the lower day,  
 And beat, with burning hoofs, the starry way.

The faint beholds the glory as they rise,  
 He fixes on his God his guiltless eyes;  
 Loud shouts the shining train, and bears him  
                   thro' the skies.

Where is the young Elisha, that has gain'd  
 His falling mantle? and has pow'r obtain'd,  
 (Like Jordan's rapid current) to divide  
 The waves of vice, and check her swelling tide?  
 Who shall stand forth a prophet in his room,  
 To guard the drooping church from foes to come?  
 'Tis not in man, or mortal strength to dare  
 So hard a task, or such unequal war:  
 But, great IMMANUEL! all the pow'r is thine,  
 To bring thy Zion forth, and make her shine.

You that have long been favour'd, as the charge  
 Of the bright faint whose soul is now at large,  
 Indulge not grief too far; 'tis vain to mourn;  
 Will your esteemed pastor e'er return?  
 Submit!—It is your heav'nly Father's will,  
 Your God is good, but is a sov'reign still:

Just are his counfels; all his ways are wife,  
 And in his hand your whole assistance lies.  
 Such means as yours have been, he gives to few;  
 Think what the King of Zion claims from you.  
 Present your ardent pray'rs before his throne;  
 He can repair your breach, and he alone.

And thou, blest faint! now from our scene re-  
 mov'd,

Welcom'd by angels, and by Jesus lov'd;  
 May thy fair page still in our view appear,  
 And be thy name to late rememb'rance dear!  
 May all the labours of thy love inspire  
 The sons of grace, to catch the sacred fire!  
 Oh may our souls to all thy words incline,  
 And may we light our dying lamps at thine!  
 May we, in heart and life, with thine agree,  
 And learn to live, and love, and die like thee!  
 Thy works before us lie; may he that reads  
 Pursue thy steps, and emulate thy deeds!