AN ELEGIAE POEM

In BLANK VERSE, 10.

ON THE DEATH

OF THE

Rev. Mr. A. M. TOPLADY, A.B,

Late Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon,

By JOHN FELLOWS, K

AUTHOR OF GRACE TRIUMPHANT, AND THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE IN VERSE.

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A N

ELEGIAE POEM, &c.

DESCEND ye shining seraphs from on high!
Ye, who with wonder and with praise survey
The great Redeemer's love to fallen man;
Ye, who with ceaseless songs surround the throne
Of filial godhead, basking in the blaze
Of boundless glory; ye, who burn with love
To all the saints; and have, at Christ's command,
Oft join'd in bright assembly, and came down
From heaven's high summit thro' these lower skies,
To bear his sons triumphant to his throne.
Descend! and in full legion aid the flight
Of a fair saint, who now rejoicing lies
On death's cold verge: who, in his God's embrace,
Smiling resigns his mortal breath, and stands
On love's strong pinions ready to ascend.

Salvation
Salvation to the Lamb who once was slain!
Dominion, glory, majesty, and praise!
Unerring wisdom shines, and boundless might
In all his deeds. By his almighty power
He hath disarm’d the monster of his sting,
And tyrant death is now a conquer’d foe.
Wide as the sound of mighty seas, let all
The heavenly multitudes begin the song,
Let all the skies with hallelujahs ring:
And each angelic harp resound his praise.

Thus as Augustus yielded up his breath
And smiling sunk into his Saviour’s arms,
His guardian angel sang. Meanwhile a train
Of mighty cherubs, by heaven’s King’s command,
Assembled, wait the signal to descend,
And bring the saint in triumph thro’ the skies.
Michael, the chief of the angelic hosts,
With Gabriel, the fast friend of all the heirs
Of glory, now commanded: The glad chiefs
Prepare their trophies, and with heavenly pomp
Worthy the great occasion, swift descend
Thro’ the pure æther. All the shining train
With strong immortal pinions cleave the skies.

Michael
Michael the prince, before the troop descends,
Exulting thus to friendly Gabriel spake.

MICHAEL.

Gabriel behold with what extatic joy
Our favour’d train receive the high command
To fetch Augustus to the climes of bliss!
With eager haste each cherubim proceeds;
Fix’d to the chariot stand the steeds of fire,
Which beat with burning hoofs the sounding plain,
And snorting toss on high their beamy heads
Reluctant to the rein. The servid wheels
Instinct with spirit, and with love inspir’d
Burn for the course. Each cherub waves his shield,
And claps his wings impatient of delay.

GABRIEL.

If any thing can add to heavenly bliss,
Or give new relish to the boundless joys
We feel in doing our great Maker’s will,
It is the holy pleasure which expands
Our glowing hearts, when from the lower world
We
We bear on high Immanuel’s ransom’d sons,
The chosen objects of his early love:
But when we bring to his eternal hill
Those who have labour’d in his righteous cause,
And have each glorious gospel truth maintain’d
Against the rage of Sion’s numerous foes,
Our joys are greater: And these earthly stars
We bear to heavenly heights, and set to shine
In brighter skies. But see, the signal made
For our departure! Down the steep of heaven
As swift as light, ye legions bear away!

MICHAEL.

Here! this way lies our course! Behold yon star
Which feebly glimmers thro’ the distant void;
And scarce to angels’ sight appears in view.
This is the sun that fills the lower skies
With light and heat; and hath successive years
Pour’d from his burning throne the blazing day
Which clears the world where the Redeemer bled.
A world where horrid guilt, outrageous reigns,
And black rebellion seeks to storm the skies:
Where haughty man, the lord of all the globe,
Presents

PRELIMINARY
Presumes with daring insolence t'arraign
The conduct of his Maker; break his law,
And disbelieve his word. A world where hell's
Black horrid king in ceaseless tumult reigns,
Fomenting rage, and cruelty, and war
In all their horrid forms; and every vice
So hateful and abhor'd, that heavenly lips
Disdain to mention. But for this devote
To ample vengeance, at th' appointed day
When she shall burn by heaven's awakened ire,
And God in thunder vindicate his law.

GABRIEL.

Yet in this world, such is the sovereign will
Of heaven's dread Monarch, and his high decree,
The sons of grace and heirs of glory dwell.
Here they are kept at distance from his throne,
And from surrounding evils safe preserv'd
By powerful grace; and here they undergo
Such discipline as trains them for the skies,
On their account it is that vengeance stays,
And heaven's rich blessings crown this wicked world
In wide profusion. When the last of all
The ransom'd race hath pass'd the gates of death,
Almighty vengeance, like a flood, will burst
From heaven's high throne, and wrap the world in fire.

MICHAEL.

These are the objects of his choice regard
Whom the bright natives of the sky adore,
Who once was dead, but lives and reigns for ever.
He keeps them in his eye; his power supports
In every trouble. At the hour of death
His arms receive them; and his guards he sends
In shining squadrons; his cherubic guards
To fetch them to his throne.

GABRIEL.

This is the cause,
The joyful cause which wings our present flight.
Nor is a common saint our precious charge;
But one whose love and labours well are known
On heavenly ground. How often have his prayers
Ardent ascended thro' thick night, and burn'd
Like grateful incense, which heaven's King receiv'd.
With pleasing smiles which bright'ned all the sky.

MICHAEL.
MICHAEL.

How oft, amongst the happy sons of light,
Hath the Redeemer spoke his servant’s praise;
And, smiling, held him up to heavenly view
As a defender of his righteous cause?
Mention’d his labours, and his holy zeal
With approbation: and enjoin’d the throng
Of listening cherubs to adorn their harps
With flowery garlands, and prepare new songs
Against the joyful, the appointed day
Which brings him to the skies.

GABRIEL.

How oft with joy
And holy wonder hath the ardent train
Of warrior angels, when from earth’s low plains
They brought some precious saint to heavenly heights,
And taught their unsledg’d wings to scale the skies;
Heard them relate, how from their native night
And heavy slumber on the brink of hell,
They were awoke to see their dreadful state.

B 2

And
And sue for mercy, by the mighty power
Of sovereign grace, which to their hearts apply'd
Some powerful portion dropping from the lips
Of that dear servant of the Lord, who now
Demands the care of our surrounding shields,
Our swiftest pinions and our sweetest songs.

MICHAEL.

And with what transport have we often heard,
As we ascended thro' the trackless void
With some fair charge, how the Redeemer's love
Was first display'd to cheer their drooping hearts
By some sweet words, which heavenly power apply'd,
Warm from the heart and flowing from the lips
Of this dear man! How have the saints been warn'd
Not to erect their building on the sand,
But on th' Eternal Rock, which all hell's powers
Can never shake! How have their doubts been clear'd
By the full blaze of heavenly truth! How were
Their minds enlighten'd, comforted, upheld
By his instructions! With what fervent praise
Have they approach'd the great Redeemer's throne,
And, safe on heavenly ground, have bless'd the day

When
When first they sat attentive at his feet
And heard his words!

G A B R I E L.

'Tis true, he was indeed
A burning and a shining light; set up
By heavenly power to lead the ransomed race
Safe thro' the darkness which o'ershades the land.
The heights of science in his youth he gain'd,
And with a rapid course explor'd th' extent
Of learning's province. Then, by powerful grace,
Call'd out, and to his Saviour's vineyard sent,
His ardent soul, inspir'd with love divine,
Pour'd all her faculties and all her strength
Into the noble work: and all her powers
Burn'd to display a bleeding Saviour's love,
And teach a wondering world Immanuel's praise.

M I C H A E L.

The great Redeemer's glories to reveal,
And make the saints more ready to embrace
A free salvation, 'twas his constant care
To shew the wretched state of native man,
How from the bitter fountain of the fall,
In every stream, the dire pollution runs.
Corrupt and wicked all the rising race
Of Adam stands. Not one but in his heart
Dares to withstand his Maker’s sovereign will,
And all his father in his soul rebels.
For this devote to death each sinner stands
And heavy vengeance hangs o’er all the race;
Which none escape but thro’ a Saviour’s blood.

**Gabriel.**

But with what holy exalt and joy
Did wondering crowds hang on the precious lips,
Of the dear saint for whom we now descend;
While in his powerful, soul-affecting strain
The great Redeemer in full glory rose!
How glow’d each heart with joy while he display’d
His glorious person, his amazing love,
His great salvation, his victorious deeds,
And pardon preach’d to sinners thro’ his blood.

**Michael.**
MICHAEL.

How did the skies with acclamations ring,
When new ascended souls on heavenly plains
Beneath the trees of life, were heard relate
To listening angels, in what powerful strain
He spake the glories of th' incarnate God;
And the exalted Lord of life display'd
In the full blaze of Deity supreme:
Ador'd, as such, by all the happy throng
Of saints and angels, while he fills the skies
With boundless glory.—Hence, ye impious throng!
Whose darken'd minds and eyes unus'd to light,
Ach at the glories of the Son of God.
Ye, whose bold pride presumes such daring heights
As would degrade the Sovereign of the skies;
And will not worship at the glorious throne
Where every bright archangel veils his face,
And falls with deepest reverence. But, vain man
Would fain be wise; and in his native filth
Boldly rush in where angels dare not tread,
And make a god himself can comprehend!

GABRIEL.
And with what clearness did the pious saint,
Whose voice on earth will now be heard no more,
Display the glories and the mighty power
Of Sovereign Grace! Not by the will of man,
He plainly shew'd, but the all-conquering might
Of God the Spirit, is each sinner call'd.
'Tis his resistless power that first begins,
Maintains, and thro' each stage he carries on
The noble work; prevailing o'er the filth
Of ruin'd nature, 'till it stand complete
In heavenly glory. All the ransom'd race,
Safe-guided thro' the wilderness, shall find
Their Father's house. Not one of all the train
Shall ever perish. All the powers of hell,
Tho' all their rage unite against one faint,
Can never pluck him from his Saviour's arms.
But sinful man, such is his native pride,
Would fain be sharer in this noble work;
Of his own doings a proud structure raise,
And from its summit boldly mount the skies.
But heaven, with anger, views the impious toil
Of all such builders; mocks their vain attempts,
O'erturns their boasted fabrics in his ire,
"And buries madmen in the heaps they raise."

MICHAEL.

How great the folly of mistaken man,
To think his works are worthy to appear
On heavenly ground! Who hopes to share the praise
Of his salvation; and with dirty feet
Would dare pollute the bright transparent stream
Of love divine; which, from th' eternal throne,
Flows pure and clear, and in this lower world
Streams like a fountain thro' a Saviour's blood.
But will not with the muddy waters mix
Which rise from nature's fountain.

GABRIEL.

Whether pride,
Or stupid folly in mistaken man,
Most calls for censure, is a puzzling question
No angel can resolve. How much of each
They all betray, when they presume to rise
Against
Against the glories of a sovereign God,
Who sits enthron'd, amidst the boundless blaze
Of uncreated brightness, and that light
No mortal can behold! He from his throne
At one vast comprehensive view beholds
The universe, and all created things,
Past, present, and to come. How oft have we,
And all the heavenly multitude, retir'd
With trembling awe, while the eternal King
Hath in surrounding darkness veil'd his throne;
And not the tall archangel durst presume
To pry into the secrets of his reign!
But man, vain man! can boldly dare to blame,
Oppose and contradict his high decree:
In his own narrow limits would confine
Eternal love, nor give heaven's Sovereign leave
To chuse amongst his creatures whom he will,
And bring the happy objects of his choice
Safe to his throne by his almighty power,
Because proud man can see no reason why.

Michaell.

But see the world to which we wing our way
Appears in view. Behold the clouded sphere.
Of earth and water form'd. The darker parts
Are spacious seas; the lighter solid land,
The seat of man. See, in triangular form
Great Britain rise, and swell upon the sight.
Here, in full peace, the heirs of glory dwell,
And sit beneath the gospel's joyful sound.
And from this favour'd land each day we bring
Numbers of shining saints, and bear on high
To people all the skies.

G a b r i e l.

What cause for praise
Hath every native of this happy land!
Happy! thrice happy! knew they how to prize
Each precious privilege which they enjoy,
Since their deliverance from th' oppressive power,
And purple tyranny of haughty Rome.
But, cold and careless grown, they fit supine,
And her ungrateful sons behold the place,
Without emotion, where their fathers bled:
And, fearles now, they with the serpent play,
By whose deceitful wiles, and bloody rage,
A world hath smarted.

C 2 M i c h a e l.
MICHAEL.

See, the tools of Rome
With demons join'd, how cunningly they hide
Their base designs! How, in the dark, they work,
And on unwary and unstable minds
Too much prevail; while, like a lamb they paint
The papal monarch! But if once he rear
His bloody standard, this revolted land
Will hear him like a dreadful lion roar:
And late, by sad experience, will be taught
That the old dragon has not loft his sting.

GABRIEL.

And now to bring about her base designs,
See, how the fraud of Rome hath undermin'd
The British counsels! for the land declines
In ftrength and glory, while the sword of war
She hath, by madness urg'd, and cruel rage,
In her own bowels plung'd.

MICHAEL.
MICHAEL.

But see, we stand
On earthly ground, and at our journey's end.
Just rising from the frozen arms of death,
And from the chains of matter now broke loose,
Our charge appears. His guardian angel smiles
To see our squadron. Not unknown he views
Each cherub's features; and presumes the cause
For which we left the skies.

GUARDIAN ANGEL.

Hail! ye bright train
Of happy angels! welcome to the land
Where great Immanuel trains his chosen sons
For boundless glory! And, when fit to rise,
Having perform'd his holy work and will,
Sends his bright guards to bear them to his throne.
Such is the cause which brings you now from heaven.
With ardent joy I your assembly join,
And to your care commit my precious charge,
Who burns with heavenly love, and longs to rise
With you to worship, and to join your songs.

GABRIEL.
Gabriel.

Sing, all ye seraphs, the deserved praise
Of our incarnate God! who reigns on high
And dwells amidst the unutterable blaze
Of uncreated light. Him all the skies,
With awful reverence, and with holy joy,
Adore and praise: and his immortal deeds
Will find fresh matter for our soaring songs,
When we, assembled, sit on heavenly hills;
Nor can eternal ages e’er exhaust
The boundless theme. Salvation to the Lamb!
Immortal glory, honour, power and praise,
Are justly his! He triumphs over death,
The yawning grave, and all the powers of hell.

Soul.

What songs are these which charm my wond’ring mind,
And fill with growing joy, unknown before!
What stream of heavenly harmony is this
Which breathes my welcome to the immortal shores!

And
And sings the triumphs of the mighty God
Whom all my ardent spirit burns to see.
Say, ye bright natives of the heavenly land,
Who in transcendent glory shine around;
Who cheer me with your condescending smiles,
And fire me with your songs! for I perceive
You also worship at Immanuel’s throne,
And all your heavenly harps resound his praise.
Tell me! Oh, tell me! for my vigorous powers
Burn to behold my Saviour and my God.
Where shall I find him! which way thro’ the sky
Lies my long journey! Or will you, blest’d train!
Permit me with your squadron to ascend,
And learn the way to the Redeemer’s throne?

MICHAEL.

Yes, happy faint! we come at the command
Of heaven’s Supreme, from his eternal hill;
And a bright chariot bring with steeds of fire,
To bear thee up in triumph thro’ the sky,
And lodge thee in thy dearest Lord’s embrace.
For know, thy labours and thy ardent love
Are not in heaven unknown: nor will they fail
To find their full reward. The heavy toil
Thou hast sustain'd, and now remains the rest,
Thine are the bliss, the glory, and the joy.

S O U L.

But say, bright armies of the heavenly King!
Whose condescending love brings you so far
From your bless'd home; for, strange it seems to me
You on such errand should forfake the sky;
What need is there of this amazing pomp?
Or why should your bright legions take such care
Of one that's most unworthy? while the praise
Of the Redeemer claims your ceaseless songs;
And the great King who fills th' eternal throne
Your constant worship.

M I C H A E L.

Think not heaven so thin
Of happy natives, or th' eternal throne
So slightly guarded, but the Lord of all
Can numbers spare to fetch his chosen sons.
Nor think the blessed objects of his choice
So little honoured by the sons of heaven
That we should be unwilling to bestow
Such tokens of respect as our great King
Commands. Nor would the brightness of our train
Employ thy wonder, had thine eyes beheld
The various beauties of the heavenly land,
The boundless glory of th' eternal throne,
And the transcendent grandeur of the courts
Of our exalted King!

Gabriel.

Blest soul! thy need
Of our cherubic guards, thou wilt perceive
Far greater than at present may appear.
Thro' the vast trackless void thy journey lies,
And great the distance from this world to heaven.
Thy unexperienc'd flight might miss the way,
And far aside explore with devious wing
The dreary waste. Besides, th' apostate crew
Of wicked spirits, whose dominion lies
Between the earthly and th' ethereal plains,—
These, tho' they could not wound, might much annoy,
And want not malice to attempt their worst.

D
They,
They, by their arts, might shake the trembling air
With mimic thunders; and their lightnings play
Full in thy face; while with delusive powers
They raise around thee various horrid forms
To shock thy peace and make thy courage fail.

MICHAEL.

Or if these airy terrors miss'd their end,
And still unmov'd thou couldst thy flight maintain;
They might assume the drapery of the skies,
Array'd in light, attract thy wondering view,
And seem bright cherubs to thy erring sight.
Then bold delusive scenes of pleasure draw,
Green shades and silver fountains might be seen,
And heavenly music seem to charm thine ear;
But all deceitful, tending to enslave,
And lead thee far away from real joy.

GABRIEL.

These are their arts; but, of our power afraid,
They tremble when our squadrons come in view.
For heavenly glories shock their aching sight,
And
And gloomy, murmuring, they in haste retire,  
Howl o'er the waste, and shelter in their dens.

Soul.

What reason have I then to love and praise  
The great Redeemer? who to guard me safe  
Thro' every danger, sends his winged train  
Of warrior angels to protect my flight.

And you, bright heavenly messengers, demand  
My warmest gratitude—But let's ascend!  
My spirit burns to mount the bless'd abodes,  
To join your praises, learn your noblest songs,

And worship with you at Immanuel's throne.

Adieu! my dearest brethren and my friends,  
Whom heavenly providence had made my charge;  
Whose souls I watch'd for with unceasing care  
Both day and night: And, to my utmost power,

As grace assist'd and occasion serv'd,  
Labour'd to fix you on the Rock of ages,  
And build you up in every gospel truth.

Mourn not for me! but rather lift your eyes  
To where the great Redeemer lives and reigns.

He can repair your every loss, and give  

D 2  Such
Such portions of his spirit as may fill
Your ardent souls with heavenly love and joy.
Your teachers die, but your Redeemer lives!
Shout, all ye saints! your Jesus lives for ever!

Guardian Angel.

Now happy soul thy painful labours end,
And thou art rising far above the reach
Of all that would disturb, or wound thy peace.
Thine, and the gospel's foes, may strive in vain
With falsehood and deceit to blast thy name,
They cannot hurt thy Master's cause, nor thee.

Chorus of Angels.

Now we ascend, and thro' the skies proclaim,
Glory to God! Salvation to the Lamb!
Him all the armies of the sky adore:
We sing his boundless goodness as we soar:
His glories shine thro' all the heavenly plains;
Thy God, O Israel! thy Redeemer reigns!

FINIS.