

The Burning of Master John Rogers

POEM BY JOHN ROGERS TO HIS WIFE AND 11 CHILDREN

Give ear my children to my words, Whom God hath dearly bought,
Lay up his laws within your heart, and print them in your thoughts.
I leave you here a little book for you to look upon,
That you may see your father's face when he is dead and gone:
Who for the hope of heavenly things, While he did here remain,
Gave over all his golden years to prison and to pain.
Where I, among my iron bands, inclosed in the dark,
Not many days before my death, I did compose this work:
And for example to your youth, to whom I wish all good,
I send you here God's perfect truth, and seal it with my blood. ...
Abhor that arrant whore of ROME, and all her blasphemies,
And drink not of her cursed cup, obey not her decrees.
Give honor to your mother dear, remember well her pain,
And recompence her in her age, with the like love again. ...
Beware of foul and filthy lust, let such things have no place,
Keep clean your vessels in the LORD, that he may you embrace.
Ye are the temples of the LORD, for you are dearly bought,
And they that do defile the same, shall surely come to nought.
Be never proud by any means, build not your house too high,
But always have before your eyes, that you are born to die. ...
Seek first, I say, the living GOD, and always him adore,
And then be sure that he will bless, your basket and your store.
And I beseech Almighty GOD, replenish you with grace,
That I may meet you in the heavens, and see you face to face. ...
Though here my body be adjudg'd in flaming fire to fry,
My soul I trust, will straight ascend to live with GOD on high.
What though this carcase smart awhile what though this life decay,
My soul I hope will be with GOD, and live with him for aye.
I know I am a sinner born, from the original,
And that I do deserve to die by my fore-father's fall:
But by our SAVIOUR'S precious blood, which on the cross was spilt,

Who freely offer'd up his life, to save our souls from guilt;
I hope redemption I shall have, and all who in him trust,
When I shall see him face to face, and live among the just.
Why then should I fear death's grim look since CHRIST for me did die,
For King and Caesar, rich and poor, the force of death must try.
When I am chained to the stake, and fagots girt me round,
Then pray the LORD my soul in heaven may be with glory crown'd.
Come welcome death the end of fears, I am prepar'd to die:
Those earthly flames will send my soul up to the Lord on high.
Farewell my children to the world, where you must yet remain;
The LORD of hosts be your defence, 'till we do meet again.
Farewell my true and loving wife, my children and my friends,
I hope in heaven to see you all, when all things have their end.
If you go on to serve the LORD, as you have now begun,
You shall walk safely all your days, until your life be done.
GOD grant you so to end your days, as he shall think it best,
That I may meet you in the heavens, where I do hope to rest.

