

# To the Christian Reader

by Michael Wigglesworth

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*The speaker, Michael Wigglesworth, humbly acknowledges his own weaknesses and limitations, yet finds comfort and strength in God, and encourages readers to stand on their guard against death and judgment.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:1, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 40:29, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, 1 Peter 5:7, Revelation 22:12

**Topics:** "Suffering And Faith", "Christian Discipleship"

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## Description

Michael Wigglesworth shares his struggles of being withheld from serving Christ due to physical limitations, yet finding true delight in serving the Lord. Despite feeling weak and imprisoned, he acknowledges God's comfort and strength sustaining him through over ten years of suffering. Wigglesworth expresses his desire to honor God and benefit others through his writings, even though his strength often fails him. He encourages readers to prepare for Death and Judgment by seeking a relationship with Christ, their true Friend and Savior.

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## Transcript

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 stonger 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 Melancholly;  
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.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-wigglesworth/to-the-christian-reader/>

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