Cotton Mather's Verse in English

EDITED BY
Denise D. Knight

Newark: University of Delaware Press
London and Toronto: Associated University Presses
1989
A POEM
Dedicated to the Memory
OF
The Reverend and Excellent
MR. URIAN OAKES,
the late Pastor to Christ's Flock,
and Præsident of Harvard-Colledge,
in Cambridge,
Who was gathered to his People on 25th 5mo 1681.
In the fifty'th Year of his Age.¹

TO THE
READER.

Worthies to Praise is a Praise-worthy thing;
Christ did it; and will do it! And to Sing
The Elogyes of Saints departed in
The Rhythm of Elegyes, has always been
Esteemed Reason! David bids me go
My Christian Reader! and like him do so.

Cotton Embalms great Hooker; Norton Him;
And Norton's Herse do's Poet-Wilson trim
With Verses: Mitchel writes a poem on
The Death of Wilson; And when Mitchel's gone,
Shepard with fun'ral Lamentations gives
Honour to Him: and at his Death receives
The like from the [like-Maro]² Lofty Strain
Of admirable Oakes!³ I should be vain
To thrust into that gallant Chorus: Pride
Ne'er made mee such an Icharus:⁴ I cry'd
Of good Exemples [Ahimaazel⁵ his Thought]
How if I should run after them? And brought
These as a Pattern, and a Plea for what
I do; that my cross Reader blame me not. 
But why so late? my Nænia's some will deem 
Both out of Time, and Tune! To some I seem 
Grief's Resurrection to essay; and bee 
Just like the Trojans who came late to see 
And sorrow with Tiberius—Only this 
Shall be Reply'd! The fond Bookseller is 
Now guilty of this Paper's Ravishment 
When long supprest: Give him thy Discontent! 
Since Oakes (as Homer) has all Places Claim; 
Let Boston too forget its Anagram!

Memoirs 
of the Life and Worth: 
Lamentations 
for the Death, and Loss 
of the every way admirable 
Mr. URIAN OAKES.

Weep with me, Reader! Never Poet had 
His Quill employ'd upon a Theme so sad 
As what just Providence (Grief grumble not) 
Do's with black Warrant Press mee to! O what? 
This! OAKES is dead! One of the bittrest Pills 
(Compounded of three Monosyllables) 
That could have been dispensed! Absalom? 
Sure felt not more Distress, Death, Danger, come 
With the three Darts of Joab!———
Blest Shade! an Universal Tax of Sorrow 
Thy Country ows thee! Ah! we need not borrow 
The Prasica's: Say, Oakes is dead! and there! 
There is enough to squeeze a briny Tear 
From the most flinty Flint: Once at the Blow 
Of Moses, from a Rock a Stream did flow; 
But look! th' Almighty's Rod now Smites us home 
Oh! what Man won't a Mourner now become? 
Dear Saint! I cannot but thy Herse bedew 
With dropping of some Fun'ral Tears! I Rue

Thy Death! I must, My Father! Father! say, 
Our Chariots and our Horsemen where are they? 
I the dumb son of Crasus 'fore mine Eyes 
Have sett, and will cry when my Father dyes. 
Oh! but a Verse to wait upon thy Grave, 
A Verse our Custome, and thy Friends will have: 
And must I brue my Tears? ah! shall I jetter 
My Grief, by studying for to mourn in Metre? 
Must too my cloudy Sorrows rain in Tune, 
Distilling like the softly Showrs of June? 
Alas! My Ephialtes takes me! See't! 
I strive to run, but then I want my feet. 
What shall I do? Shall I go invoke 
The Muses to mine aid? No, That I hate! 
The Sweet New England-Poet rightly said, 
It is a most Unchristian Use and Trade 
Of Some that Christians would be thought. If I 
Call'd Help, the Muses mother Memory 
Would be enough: He that remembers well 
The Use and Loss of Oakes, will grieve his fill. 
It'd rather pray, that Hee, in whose just Eyes 
The Death of his dear Saints most precious is, 
And Hee who helped David to bewail 
His fon'than, would not my Endeavours fail. 
A sprightly Effort of Poetick Fire 
Would e'en Transport mee to a mad Desire: 
How could I wish, Oh! that the nimble Sun 
Of thy short Life before thy Day was done 
Might backward Ten Degrees have moved! or 
Oh! that thy Corps might but have chanced for 
To have been buried near Elisha's bones! 
Oh! that the Hand which rais'd the Widows Song 
Would give thee to thy Friends again! But, Fy! 
That Passion's vain! To sob, Why didst thou dy? 
Is but an Irish Note: Death won't Restore 
His Stolen Goods till Time shall be no more. 
Shall I take what a Prologue Homer hath 
Let mee Relate the Heavenly Powers Wrath? 
Or shall I rather join with Jeremie, 
And o're our great and good Josiah sigh, 
O that my Head were waters, and mine Eyes 
A fountain were, that Hadadrimmon's Æres 
Might bubble from mee! O that Day and Night
For the Slain of my People weep I might!
   Ah! Why delay I? Reader, step with mee,
And what is for thee on Grief’s Table see
   The Dish I call thee to: Come taste of this.
Oakes was! Ah! miserable word! But what
   Hee was. Let Never, Never be forgot.
Beleeve mee once, It were a worthy thing
Of Life and Worth a large Account to bring
To publick View, for general Benefit.
   I would essay (with Leave, Good Reader) it,
So far as feet will carry mee; but know it
From first to last, Grief never made good Poet.
   Hee that lasht with a Rod could versify,
Attain’d, and could pretend far more than I!
   Short was thy Life! Sweet Saint! & quickly run
Thy Race! Thy Work was, oh! how quickly done!
Thy Days were (David’s measure) but a Span;
   Five Tens of Years roll’d since thy Life began.
Thus I remember a Greek Poet Rhimes,
   They whom God Loves are wont to dy betimes,
Thus Whitt’ker, Perkins, Preston, Men of Note,
   Ay! many such, Never to fifty got.
And thus (Rachel New-England!) many Seers
Have left us in the akme of their Years.
   Good Soul! Thy Jesus who did for thee dy,
In Heaven longed for thy Company.
And let thy Life be measured by thy Deeds,
   Not by thy Years; Thy Age strait nothing needs.
Divert, My Pen! Run through the Zodiac
Of Oakes his Life: And cause I knowledge lack
Of most Occurrents, let mee now and then
   Snatch at a Passage worthy of a Pen.
   Our Mother England, ev’n a Village there
(Fuller, insert it!) did this Worthy bear.
   Over the Ocean in his Infancy
His Friends with him into New-England fly:
   Here, while a lad, almost a miracle
(Ass I have heard his Aged Father tell)
Saw’d him from drowning in a River: Hee
Would (guess) a Miracle and Moses bee.
   Now did Sweet Nature in him so appear
   A Gentlewoman once cry’d out, If ere

Good Nature could bring unto Heaven, then
   Those wings would thither carry Urian.
Prompt Parts, and early Piety now made
   Men say of him, what once observers said
Of great John Baptist, and of Ambrose too,
   To what an one will this strange Infant grow?
Her Light and Cup did happy Harward give
Unto him; and from her he did receive
   His Two Degrees: (A double Honour to
Thee (Harward! Own it!) did by this accrue!) So being furnishd with due burnish’d Tools
The Armour and the Treasure of the Schools,
   To Temple-work he goes: I need not tell
How he an Hiram, or Bezaaleel did
   Did there approve himself; I e only add
Roxbury his first-fruits (first Sermon) had.

Some things invite: Hee back to England goes;
   With God and Man hee there in favour growes:
But whilst he lives in that Land, Tichfield cryes
   Come over, Sir, and help us! He complies:
The Starr moves thither! There the Orator
   Continu’d charming sinful mortals for
To close with a sweet Jesus: Oh! hee wou’d,
   He Thundred: Oh! for their eternal good
How did he bring the Promises, and how
   Did he discharge flashes of Ebal?
Now Hee held Love’s golden Scepter out before
The Humble Soul; Now made the Trumpet roar
Fire, Death, and Hell against Impenitent
   Desp’rates, untill hee made their hearts relent.
There did hee merit Sibs Motto, I
   Just like a Lamp, with lighting others dy.
Ah! like a Silk-worm, his own bowels went
To serve his Hearers, while he soundly spent
   His Spirits in his Labours. O but there
He must not dy (except Death Civil) Here
(Why maynt we Sigh it! here) dark Bartholomew
   This gallant and heroic Witness slew.
Silenc’t he was! not buried out of sight!
A worthy Gentlemen do’s him invite
Unto him; and like Obadiah, hide
   Him, dear to them with whom he did reside,
Finding his Prayers and Presence to produce
An Obed-Edom's blessing on the House.
A Spirit of great Life from God do's enter
Within a while into him: Hee do's venture
To stand upon his feet: Hee prophesy's;
And to a Congregation Preacher is,
Join'd with a loving Colleague; who will not
Be buried, till Symmons be forgot.

But our New-England-Cambridge wants him, and
Sighs, "Of my Sons none takes me by the hand,
"Now Mitchel's gone! Oh! where's his parallel?
"Call my Child Uriah! Friendly Strangers tell
"An OAKE of my own breed in England is,
"That will support mee Pillar-like; and this
"Must be resolv'd; I'll Pray and Send! Agreed!
Messengers go! and calling Council, speed!
The good Stork over the Atlantic came.
To nourish and cherish his Aged Dam.

Welcome! great Prophet! to New-England shore!
Thy feet are beautiful! A number more
Of Men like thee with us would make us say,
The Moral of More's fam'd Utopia
Is in New-England! yea, (far greater!) wee
Should think wee Twisse's guess accomplisht see,
When New Jerusalem comes down, the Seat
Of it, the wast America will bee.
Cambridge! thy Neighbours must congratulat
Thy Fate! Oh! where can thy Triumphate
Meet with its Mate? A Shepherd! Mitchell then
An Oakes! These Chrysostoms, these golden Men,
Have made thy golden Age! That fate is thine
(To bee blest with the Sun's perpetual Shine)
What Sylvius sais of Rhodes. Sure thou mayst call
Thy Name Capernaum But oh! the fall
Of that enlightened Place wee! humbly pray
Dear Lord! Keep Cambridge from it——
But Quill! where fly'st thou? Let the Reader know
Cambridge some years could this brite Jewel show,
Yet here a Quartane Ague does arrest
The Churches Comfort, & the Countryes Rest.
But this (Praise Mercy) found some Ague-frighter,
A Look to him who dy'd and ever lives;  
The great Redeemer do's disarm the Snake;  
And by the Hand his faithful Servant take,  
Leading him thorow Death's black Valley, till  
Hee brings him in his arms to Zion's Hill.  
Fall'n Pillar of the Church! This Thy Translation!  
Has turn'd our Joys into this Lamentation!  
Sweet Soul! Disdaining any more to trade  
With fleshly Organs, that a Prison made.  
Thou'rt flown into the World of Souls, and wee  
Poor, stupid Mortals lose thy Companie.  
Thou join'st in Consort with the Happy gone,  
Who (happ'rer than Servants of Solomon)  
Are standing round the Lamb's illustrious Throne  
Conversing with great Isr'el's-Holy-One.  
Now could I with good old Grynaeus46 say  
"Oh! that will be a bright and glorious Day,  
When I to that Assembly come; and am  
"Gone from a world of guilt, filth, sorrow, shame!47  
I read how Swan-like Cotton joy'd in Thought,  
That unto Dod, 46 and such he should be brought.  
How Bullinger49 deaths grim looks could not fright  
Because twould bring him to the Patriarchs Sight.  
(Well might it be so! Heathen Socrates  
In hopes of Homer, Death undaunted sees.)  
Who knows but the Third Heaven may sweeter be  
Thou Citizen of it! (dear Oakes!) for thee?  
Sure what of Calvin Beza56 said; and, what  
Of thy forerunner Mitchel, Mather wrote,  
I'lle truly add, Now Oakes is dead, to mee  
Life will less sweet, and Death less bitter bee.  
Lord! Let us follow!—

Nay! Then, Good Reader! Thou and I must try  
To Read his Steps! Hee walk't Exemplar'ly!  
Plato would have none to be prais'd, but those  
Whose Praises profitable wee suppose:  
Oh! that I had a ready Writer's Pen,  
(If not Briareus51, hundred Hands!) and then  
I might limn forth a Pattern. Ah! his own  
Fine Tongue can his own worth Describe alone  
That's it I want; and poor I! Shan't I show  
Like the man, whom an Hero hired to

Forbear his Verses on him!52 Yet a lame  
Mephiboshoth53 will scape a David's blame.

Well! Reader! Wipe thine Eyes! & see the Man  
(Almost too small a word!) which Cambridge can  
Say, I have lost! In Name a Drusius,54  
And Nature too! yea a compendious  
Both Magazine of worth, and Follower  
Of all that ever great and famous were.  
A great Soul in a little Body. (Add!  
In a small Nutshell Graces Iliad.)  
How many Angels on a Needle's point  
Can stand, is thought, perhaps, a needless Point:  
Oakes Vertues too I'm at a loss to tell:55  
In short, Hee was New-England's SAMUEL;  
And had as many gallant Properties  
As ere an Oak had Leaves; or Argus Eyes.  
A better Christian would a miracle  
Be thought! From most he bore away the Bell!  
Grace and good Nature were so purely mett  
In him, wee saw in Gold a Jewel sett.  
His very Name spake Heavenly; and Hee  
Vir sui Nomini56 would aways bee.57  
For a Converse with God; and holy frame,  
A Noah, and an Enoch hee became.  
Urian and George are Names equivalent;  
Wee had Saint George, though other Places han't.  
Should I say more, like him that would extol  
Huge Hercules, my Reader! on me fall  
With such a check; Who does dispraise him? I  
Shall say enough, if his Humility  
Might be described. Witty Austin58 meant  
This is the First, Second, and Third Ornament,  
Of a Right Soul, should be esteem'd. And so  
Our Second Moses,59 Humble Dod, cry'd, Know,  
Just as Humility mens Grace will bee,  
And so much Grace so much Humilitie.  
Ah! gracioso Oakes, wee saw thee stoop; wee saw  
In thee the Moral of good Nature's Law,  
That the full Ears of Corn should bend, and grow  
Down to the ground: Worth would sit alwayes low.  
And for a Gospel Minister, wee had  
In him a Pattern for our Tyro's,60 Sad!
Their Head is gone: Who ever knew a greater
Student and Scholar? or beheld a better
Preacher and President? Wee look't on him
As Jerom in our (Hungry) Bethlehem;
A perfect Critic in Philology;
And in Theology a Canaan's Spy.
His Gen'ral Learning had no fewer Parts
Than the Encyclopaedia of Arts:
The old Say, Hee that something is in all,61
Nothing's in any; Now goes to the wall.
But when the Pulpit had him! there hee spent
Himself as in his onely Element:
And there hee was an Orpheus;62 Hee'd e'en draw
The Stones, and Trees: Austin cryes, If I saw
Paul in the Pulpit, of my Three Desires
None of the least (to which my Soul aspirces)
Would gratify'd and granted bee. Hee might
Have come and seen't, when OAKES gave Cambridge Light.
Oakes an Uncomfortable Preacher was
I must confess! Hee made us cry, Alass!
In sad Despair! Of what? Of ever seeing
A better Preacher while wee have a being.
Hee! oh! Hee was, in Doctrine, Life, and all
Angelical, and Evangelical.
A Benedict and Boniface to boot,
Commending of the Tree by noble Fruit.
All said, Our Oakes the Double Power has
Of Boanerges,63 and of Barnabas;64
Hee is a Christian Nestor!65 Oh! that wee
Might him among us for three Ages see!
But ah! Hee's gone to Sinus Abraham.66
What shall I say? Never did any spitt
Gall at this Gall-less, Guile-less Dove; nor yet
Did any Envy with a cankred breath
Blast him: It was I'me sure the gen'r'al Faith,
Lett Oakes Bee, Say, or Do what e're he wou'd,
If it were OAKES, it must be wise, true, good.
Except the Sect'reyes Hammer might a blow
Or two, receive from Anabaptisists, who
Never lovd any Man, that wrote a Line
Their naught, Church-rending Cause to undermine.
Yett after my Encomiastick Ink
Is all run out, I must conclude (I think)
With a Dicebam,67 not a Dix! Yea,68

Such a course will exceeding proper bee:
The Jesu, whene're they build an House, do leave
Some part Imperfect, as a call to grieve
For their destroy'd Jerus'lem! I'le do so!
I do'!

And now let sable Cambridge broach her Tears!
(They forfeit their own Eyes that don't; for
(here's
Occasion sad enough! Your Sons pray call
All Ichabod,69 and Daughters, Marah!70 Fall
Down into Sack-cloth, Dust, and Ashes! (To
Bee senseless Now, Friends, Now! will be to show
A CRIME & BADG71 of Sin and Folly!) Try
Your fruitfulness under the Ministry
Of that kind Pelican, who spent his Blood
To feed you! Dear Saints! Have ye got the Good
You might? And let a Verse too find the Men
Who fly'd a Sermon! Oh! Remember when
Sirs! Your Ezekiel was like unto
A lovely Song of (Been't deaf Adders you)
One with a pleasant Voice! and that could play
Well on an Instrument! And i'n the Day,
The glorious Day, to dawn (ah! yet!) wherein
You are drawn from the Egypt-graves of Sin
Compelled to come in? For shame come in!
Nay! Join you all! Strive with a noble Strife,
To publish both in Print (as well as Life)
Your precious Pastor's Works! Bring them to view
That wee may Honey tast, as well as you.
But, Lord! What has thy Vineyard done, that thou
Command'st the Clouds to rain no more? O shew
Thy favour to thy Candlestick! Thy Rod
Hath almost broke it: Lett a Gift of God,
Or a sincerely Heaven-touch't Israelite
Become a Teacher in thy Peoples sight.

At last I with License Poetical
(Reader! and thy good leave) address to all
The children of thy People! Oh! the Name
Of Urian Oakes, New-England! does proclaim
SURE I AN OAK72 was to thee! Feel thy Loss!
Cry, (Why forsaken, Lord!) Under the Cross!
Learn for to prize Survivors! Kings destroy
The People that Embassadors annoy.
The Council of God's Herald, and thy Friend,
[Be wise! Consider well thy latter End]?
O lay to heart! Pray to the heavenly Lord
Of th' Harvest, that (according to his Word)
Hee would thrust forth his Labourers: For why
Should all thy Glory go, and Beauty dy
Through thy default?

———Lord! from they lofty Throne
Look down upon thy Heritage! Lett none
Of all our Breaches bee unhealed! Lett
This dear, poor Land be our Immanuel's yet!
Lett's be a Goshen still! Restrain the Boar
That makes Incursions! Give us daily more
Of thy All-curing Spirit from on High!
Lett all thy Churches flourish! And supply
The almost Twenty Ones, that thy Just Ire
Has left without Help that their Needs require!
Lett not the Colledge droop, and dy! O Lett
The Fountain run! A Doctor give to it!
Moses's are to th' upper Canaan gone!
Lett Joshua's Succeed them! goes when one
Elijah, raise Elisha's! Pauls become
Dissolv'd! with Christ! Send Tim'thes in their room!
Avert the Omen, that when Teeth apace
Fall out, No new ones should supply their place!

Lord! Lett us Peace on this our Israel see!
And still both Hephssibah, and Beulah bee!
Then will thy People Grace! and Glory! Sing,
And every Wood with Hallelujah's ring.

N. R.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed illachrymabies
Urgentur ignotiq; longa
Nocte; carent quia Vate sacro.

Hor.

Non ego cuncta meis amplecti Versibus opto. Virg.

———Ingens laudato Poema:
Exiguum legito!——— Call.

Qui legis ista, tuam reprehendo si mea laudes
Omnia, Stultitiam: Si nihil, Invidiam. Owen.

Non possunt, Lector, multae emendare Lituræ
47. Tried and Coming forth as Gold. Boston, 1712. 16 lines. (I)
48. His lip dropt language, than sweet Honey, sweeter abundance. Letter, to Samuel Penhallow, Boston, 1713. One line of English hexameter. (O)
   One line verse and couplets are not included in this edition.
49. Instructions for Children. Boston, 1713. 104 lines. (I)
50. Epitaphium (on Wait Winthrop). Boston, 1717. 69 lines. (O) Verse entirely in Latin is not included in this edition.
52. [On my dear Liss I this Book bestow]. Hand-inscribed in a copy of Coelastinus. Boston, 1723. 6 lines. (I, N)
53. Epitaphium (on Increase Mather). Boston, 1724. 137 lines. (O) Verse entirely in Latin is not included in this edition.
54. [O Glorious Christ of God; I live]. Diary, 1724. 12 lines. (I)
55. Singing at the Plow. Boston, 1727. 20 lines. (I)
56. The Sower & Sinner. Boston, 1727. 36 lines. (I)
57. The Rain gasped for. Boston, 1727. 28 lines. (I)
58. The Song of the Siste. Boston, 1727. 28 lines. (I)
59. The Sons of God. Singing among the Trees of God; Full of Sap, and of Songs before Him. Boston, 1727. 32 lines. (I)
60. The Songs of Harvest. Boston, 1727. 28 lines. (I)
61. Flere si scire unum tua tempora Mensem. Boston, 1727. Two-line verse in Latin, followed by a paraphrase in English. (O) Couplets and verse primarily in Latin are not included in this edition.
62. What was conceale'ed from thee, O Saint below. Boston, 1728. 2 lines. (O)

Notes

“My Satisfaction.”

1. Occasioned by the death of Mather’s infant son, Samuel (born 1700, died 1701). Mather had a premonition that his son would die: “[I] live in a continual apprehension that the Child, (tho’ a lusty and hearty Infant) will die in its Infancy.” (Diary, January, 1700/01, 1:380.)

“Go then, my Dove”

1. Occasioned by the death of Mather’s first wife, Abigail, in 1702, after sixteen years of marriage. It was originally published as an epigram in a book distributed to mourners at her funeral. Mather incorporated his wife’s last words into the final line of the poem: “Heav’n, Heav’n will make amends for all.” (Diary, December, 1702, 1:449–50.)

“A Poem Dedicated to... Urian Oakes.”

1. Urian Oakes, one-time minister of Cambridge, became president of Harvard College during Mather’s sophomore year in 1679; he continued to serve until his death in 1681. Mather’s elegy on Oakes, composed at the age of nineteen, was his first published work.
2. Vergilius Maro (Virgil), Roman poet (70–19 B.C.).
4. Icharus, in Greek mythology, son of Daedalus who flew so close to the sun that he melted his wax wings, causing him to fall to his death.
5. Ahimaaz, son of Ahinoam, wife of Saul (1 Sam. 14:50).
7. Absalorn, third son of David.
8. Mather may be alluding to Lucius Licinius Crassus, Roman orator and politician (140–91 B.C.).
9. Ephraïm, traitor who reputedly guided a Persian detachment up mountain paths to the Pass of Thermopylae in 480 B.C.
10. Mr. M. Wigglesworth, In Pref. to D. D. [Mather’s note].
11. Elisha, son of Shaphat, successor to Elijah, and prophet of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
13. Josiah, son of Amon, King of Judah, and Jedidiah, daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. He became king at the age of eight, succeeding his father who had been murdered by his henchmen.
14. Hadad-Rammon, the combination of Syrian Gods Hadad (a rain god dwelling in the North Syrian mountains) and Rimmon (a storm god symbolized by a thunderbolt).
15. Memories.
16. the Past.
17. Probably an allusion to the following: Alexander Whitaker (1585–1617), minister who baptized Pocahontas and drowned in 1617 while crossing the James River in Virginia; William Perkins (1556–1602), English Puritan theologian; and John Preston (1587–1628), master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and author of A Treatise on the Covenant.
18. On man’s, sed Factis vivent mortales. [Mather’s note]. Not with years, but with deeds do mortals live.
20. Saint Ambrose (340?–397), served as Bishop of Milan and worked for relief of the poor.
22. Bezaleel, divinely inspired craftsman, teacher, and architect, (Ex. 31:1–5, 35:34, and 36, 37, 38).
23. Roxbury, Massachusetts, Oakes’s first pastorate.
24. Oakes returned to Tichfield, England, in 1654 to assume a ministry there.
25. Probably an allusion to Mt. Ebal, where Joshua built a stone altar inscribed with a pronouncement to Israel of curses that would befall it if breaches of covenant law were made; henceforth, it was known as the Mount of Cursing.
27. Pratunence pereum. [Mather’s note]. By lighting the way I am lost.
28. Possibly a reference to one of the twelve apostles.
29. Col. N. [Mather’s note]. The cryptic nature of Mather’s note makes his reference nearly impossible to identify.
30. Obadiah, minor Hebrew prophet of uncertain date whose judgment on Edom, for siding with Israel’s enemy, is recorded in the Old Testament.
31. Obad-Edom, a man from Gath in whose care David left the ark for three months before transporting it to Jerusalem.
33. Jonathan Mitchell (1624–68), influential Puritan minister who served for eighteen years as pastor of the church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
34. Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) sketched a Latin description of the imaginary island of Utopia, (Utopia, [1516]), which advocated communal ownership of land, education for both men and women, and religious toleration.
35. Probably an allusion to William Twiss (1578–1646), English nonconformist divine.
36. An allusion to St. John Chrysostom (347–407), known for his eloquence. Mather routinely compared the subjects in his writings to well-known historical figures. His purpose in doing so was two-fold: to emphasize the greatness of the subjects about whom he wrote and to remind his readers of the importance of their mission in the New World. For a fine discussion of this device, see William R. Manierre’s “Cotton Mather and the Biographical Parallel” in American Quarterly 13 (Spring 1961): 153–60.
37. Pope Pius II (1405–64), eminent historian and scholar.
38. Capernaum, a small lake port on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.
39. An intermittent fever that recurs at approximately 72-hour intervals.
40. Orestes, son of Agamemnon who murdered his mother and her lover, thus avenging the murder of his father.
41. Mr. Charles Chauncey, B. D. [Mather’s note]. Chauncey (1592–1672) was president of Harvard College from 1654 until his death.
42. Possibly meaning barren or dry; from the word gast.
43. of sorrows.
44. Probably an allusion to Baron Arthur Capel, member of the British Parliament, who was executed in 1649.
45. Hinc ille Lachrymae! [Mather’s note]. Hence These Tears!
46. Probably an allusion to Johann Jacob Grynaeus (1540–1617), Swiss theologian and author.
47. O faelicens Dies! quom ad illud Animarum Concilium proficiscer; et ex hac Turba & Collusiones diff. edam. [Mather’s note].
49. Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75), Swiss reformer and disciple of Zwingli.
50. Theodorus Beza (1519–1605), French Protestant theologian, who with Calvin became leader of the French Reformation.
51. Briareus, a giant monster with (traditionally) a hundred arms, the offspring of Uranus and Gaia.
52. Cic. pro hic Pete. [Mather’s note]. Cicero on behalf of this poet.
53. Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul, lamed as a child (II Sam. 4:4).
54. Both Jan Drusius (1550–1616), and his son Jan Drusius (1588–1609) excelled in Hebrew. The elder Drusius was a professor of oriental languages at Oxford, England from 1572–77. He wrote commentaries on Scripture and several treatises on grammar. The younger Drusius addressed the King of England in a Latin oration at the age of seventeen.
55. See the parallel in Mr. Mather’s Epistle before a late Sermon of Mr. Oakes. [Mather’s note].
56. A man of his name.
57. Urianus quasi [unreadable in original]. [Mather’s note].
58. In his youth St. Augustine studied at Carthage, devoting his time to Latin poets.
60. Mr. Mather presents Oakes as a model worthy of emulation for a tyro (a beginner).
61. Aliquis in Omnibus, Nullus in Singulis. [Mather’s note]. Someone in
everyone, no one in each of them.
62. Orpheus, famous musician and son (or pupil) of Apollo.
63. Cf. Collins note 78 below.
64. Cf. Collins note 77 below.
65. A wise old counselor who fought with the Greeks at Troy.
66. The bosom of Abraham.
67. I shall speak.
68. I have spoken.
69. Ichabod, son of Phinehas and grandson of Eli, born during the capture of the Ark by the Philistines.
70. An allusion to the first oasis reached by the Children of Israel, after they crossed the Sea of Reeds.
71. ANAGR. [Mather's note].
72. ANAGR. [Mather's note].
73. Mr. OAKES's Elect. Serm. [Mather's note]. In 1673, Oakes preached a sermon entitled "New-England Pleased with."
74. The name of a child whose birth Isaiah predicted to Ahaz during the Syro-Ephraimitic war as a sign meaning "God is with us."
75. The fertile land assigned to the Israelites in northeast Egypt.
76. Hephzibah, another name for Jerusalem.
77. Name given to Palestine after the exile when it repopulated and was restored to God's favor.
78. The Latin may be translated:
Many brave men lived before Agamemnon; but all, unlamented and unknown, are weighed down by a long night, because they lack a sacred poet. (Horace)
1 do not desire to embrace all things in my verses. (Virgil)
I shall praise the long poem: He shall read the short! (Calliope)
You who read those things if you praise everything of mine improve your stupidity: if nothing, your envy. (Owen)
Many erasures cannot. Reader, improve these our verses. One erasure can. (Martial)

"An Elegy on . . . the Reverend Mr. Nathanael Collins"

1. Nathanael Collins, pastor of the church of Middletown, Connecticut, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 7 March 1643. He earned both his B.A. and M.A. from Harvard College. He was a close friend of Mather's, who mourned his early death on 28 December 1684.
2. Isai. 57.1 [Mather's note].
3. allusion to the poetical fancy of Ajax [Mather's note]. Ajax, powerful Greek warrior, famous for the great shield he carried.
5. Psa. 112.6 [Mather's note].
6. whom the Roman conspirotors [followed by several unreadable words] [Mather's note].
7. Gen. 50.2. [Mather's note].
8. all. to 2. King. 2.12. [Mather's note].
9. so some render the Garden of Nuts, Cant. 6.11. in a phrase very accommodable to America. [Mather's note].
10. Cant. 1.7. [Mather's note].
11. some (tho' groundlesly though) suppose a Church intended by that name in 2. Joh. 1. [Mather's note].
12. all. to the figure thereof in B. K.'s ingenious poem. [Mather's note]. The cryptic nature of Mather's note makes the poet nearly impossible to identify.
13. Mat. 2.18. [Mather's note].
14. vit. the Canticles. [Mather's note].
15. all. to such a metamorphosis celebrated in Ouid. [Mather's note].
16. Hinc illa lacrymae. [Mather's note]. Hence these tears.
17. fiuimus Tros. [Mather's note]. We were Trojans.
18. Possibly an allusion to Cornelius Loos (1545–95), a Dutch theologian who was persecuted for condemning the practice of burning witches.
19. Lam. 1.1. [Mather's note].
20. Eccles. 7.1. [Mather's note].
21. from whose corpse 'tis said there went a smell surprizingly fragrant. [Mather's note].
22. praised by Pichenerus, [Mather's note]. The identity of Mather's source is unclear.
23. praised by Huttenu, [Mather's note]. Probably an allusion to Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), humanist and writer who supported Luther's cause in the Reformation. Attacked by Rome and abandoned by Erasmus, his writings became more threatening and inflammatory. Hutten took refuge in Zurich, where Zwingli took care of him until his early death.
24. praised by Glauces, [Mather's note]. Probably an allusion to the mythological son of Sisyphus, who leaped into the sea in griеt.
25. praised by Erasmus, [Mather's note]. An allusion to Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), Dutch scholar and theologian who taught Greek at Cambridge and was regarded as a leader of the Renaissance in northern Europe.
26. praised by Pterius, all in set poems, or orations. [Mather's note]. An allusion to Pierius, the martyr, who appears to have headed the catechetical school at Alexandria.
27. as once a humoursome person did. [Mather's note].
28. Socrates, who spent 15 year in framing of one Panegyric, one oration. [Mather's note].
29. Apelles, Greek painter of fourth century B.C., often regarded as the greatest painter of antiquity.
30. as that painter did upon his Minerva's. [Mather's note].
31. of which I can with my microscope see incredible hundreds playing about in one drop of water. [Mather's note].
32. which speaking Trumpet may be heard a vast way off [Mather's note].
33. all to ye Acrout of Mors Mordens Omnium Restro Suo. [Mather's note]. Death devouring everything.
34. Tit. Vesp. who was termed, Deliciae humani generis. [Mather's note]. Titus Vespasianus (A.D. 39–91), Roman emperor and general who was termed delightful of the human race.
35. v. the glorious catalogue 2 Pet. 1.5,7. [Mather's note].
36. 2. Cor. 4.18 [Mather's note].
37. whose saying often was, Amor meus est crucifixus [Mather's note]. My love has been crucified.
38. which is greatly and fabulously reported of another. [Mather's note].
39. two glores of the heathen, the one for Justice, the other for Fidelity. [Mather's note].