

## ***Protestant Association (1781)***<sup>1</sup>

[Baker list, #419]

### **Editorial Introduction:**

While Roman Catholics were officially tolerated, or allowed to hold their own worship, after the Elizabethan settlement, they suffered under a number of economic and political restrictions. These restrictions were based on the fear that Catholics were bound to follow the direction of the Pope in civil matters, as well as the connection of Catholicism to the deposed Stuart line and to France and Spain, long-time enemies of England.

The Catholic Relief Act of 1778 was one of the first moves to set aside these restrictions. It allowed Roman Catholics to purchase and inherit land, and to join the army, if they swore an oath against the Stuart claim to the throne and the papal claim to civil jurisdiction. This move came as Britain was enmeshed in battle with their colonists in North America, who were supported by the French. There were also growing strains with Spain. The British army was stretched thin and one purpose of the act was to provide a new source for recruits.

Many Protestants had misgivings about the Catholic Relief Act, which were heightened when Spain declared war on Britain in June 1779 and began to plan a naval invasion. Lord George Gordon (1751–93) took the lead in organizing this concern, forming the “Protestant Association” in late 1779, with the explicit purpose of repealing the Relief Act. On June 2, 1780, he led nearly 60,000 persons to petition Parliament against the Act. As Gordon was presenting their petition, the crowd outside became riotous. Over the course of a week they burned many Roman Catholic chapels and homes in London. They attacked several prisons and freed the inmates. They stormed the Bank of England and burned the house of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield (an old school friend of Charles Wesley), destroying his vast library. Order was restored by the army only after arresting 450 persons and hanging at least another 25. Lord Gordon was tried for high treason, but gained an acquittal through the efforts of his lawyer, Thomas Erskine.

While Charles Wesley was an ardent Protestant, and shared concern about the loyalty of Roman Catholics in Britain to the Hanoverian throne, he was even more committed to the rule of law and respect for public property. His outrage against the mob and its leaders, as well as his gratitude when peace was restored, are captured well in this set of sarcastic poems. See also his *Tumult Hymns* (1780). For a manuscript draft of this set of poems, which supplies some of the missing names, see MS Protestant Association.

### **Edition:**

[Charles Wesley.] *The Protestant Association*. London: Paramore, 1781.

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<sup>1</sup>This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: 17 March 2010.

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**THE  
PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION,  
WRITTEN  
IN THE MIDST OF THE TUMULTS,  
JUNE 1780.**

**Canto I.**

Arms, and the good old cause I sing,  
Which threaten'd vengeance on our king,  
Brought down the storm so long a brewing,  
And Britain to the brink of ruin,  
While all her foes intestine join  
To execute the dark DESIGN,  
And glut the patriotic zeal  
Of France, America, and hell.

An army of Associators,  
Of rebels, regicides, and traitors,  
(With here and there a warm Dissenter,  
Geneva Jack, and John the painter)  
Of real, or pretended zealots,  
Of Scots, sworn enemies to prelates,  
Of patriots a countless throng  
Their banners rear, and pour along;

[10]

Russians and Frenchmen in disguise,  
Americans, their sworn allies,  
And all the friends of Congress meet,  
To make th' infernal host compleat. [20]

See, where the Protestant crusade,  
With Masaniello\* at their head,  
March from the fields with mild intent,  
T' address, and purge the Parliament!  
With loud huzzas their friends they greet,  
And safe escort them thro' the street:  
But woe to those they can't *confide in!*  
Unfit their carriages to ride in,  
They drag 'em out, and thrust, and bruise 'em,  
And most *papistically* use 'em. [30]  
Commons and lords alike they shake,  
Compel'd the *Covenant* to take;  
Judges, and ministers of state,  
On these they wreck their keenest hate;  
Or roll with Oliverian<sup>2</sup> sport  
Their legislators in the dirt,  
Or bishops† o'er the houses fright,  
Right glad to save their lives by flight.

Less fierce the saints of forty-one  
With 'prentices their work begun, [40]  
And carrying on the Reformation,  
O'erturn'd at last both church and nation.

But now the dupes of meek condition,  
Who blindly follow'd their petition,  
Shock'd at the madness of their fellows,  
(While Masaniello blows the bellows)

\* Of Naples.<sup>3</sup>

† B[isho]p of L[ondon].

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<sup>2</sup>Reference to Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Puritan forces in the civil war of the last century.

<sup>3</sup>Masaniello of Naples, whose original name was Tommaso Aniello, was a fisherman who led a revolt in 1647 of the lower classes, burdened by high taxes, against the Spanish Habsburg's rule.

Wisely escape from hell broke loose,  
And slip their necks out of the noose.

Meantime the resolute crusaders,  
(No longer psalm-singing paraders) [50]  
From outrag'd senators returning,  
Begin their work of chapel-burning;  
The choicest imps of hell employ  
To tear, demolish, and destroy,  
(Themselves at a convenient distance  
To give their instruments assistance.)  
"Courage, my lads! 'Tis now, or never:  
Down with the mass-houses for ever!"  
'Tis said: 'tis done; in half a minute  
The chapel's storm'd: the foe within it, [60]  
With Gothic, or with Scottish feelings,  
Batter the walls, or mar the cielings,  
Compassionate as stones and stocks,  
And gentle as reforming Knox;\*  
Altar and cross their fury feel,  
On pictures they let loose their zeal,  
On organs they discharge their rage,  
On books; nor spare the sacred page:  
Bibles must aid to feed the fire,  
Till Popery all in smoke expire. [70]

Flush'd with success, without their head  
The sons of anarchy proceed,  
Satan anew their violence rouses  
To gut, and then to burn the houses.

\*In Scotland.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>I.e., John Knox (1514–72).

And first they an example make,  
And vengeance on the wretches take,  
(All vile informers to deter)  
Who durst against their comrades swear.  
And next the men that dared commit them,  
And like atrocious villains treat them, [80]  
They justly to destruction doom,  
And burn them out of house and home.

Of neither evidence nor warrant  
Afraid, as an outrageous current,  
They now the dams and banks o'erflow,  
And menace every Popish foe;  
"Down with the mass-houses," they cry:  
And Walworth's\* successor stands by:  
The city's meek administrator, [90]  
A tame, not *unconcern'd*, spectator,  
Quakes, as the conflagration rages,  
And pays the devil's slaves their wages,  
With "Come, my lads, enough is done;  
Take this—and quietly be gone!"  
The aldermen in corners hide,  
And wisely for themselves provide;  
The shrieves<sup>5</sup> an awful distance keep,  
Or—sometimes—venture at a peep!  
The justices with dread look on, [100]  
Till their own houses are pull'd down,  
Content the mob shall burn their hives,  
If they will only spare their lives.

\* Wat Tyler's Mayor.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>I.e., sheriffs.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, who struck Wat Tyler, leader of a peasant revolt in 1381. Wesley is criticizing the current Lord Mayor of London (Brackley Kennett) for not similarly resisting the revolt.

The generous mob, too brave to martyr  
Meek citizens who beg for quarter,  
Or storm the houses mark'd for burning  
Without a fair, sufficient warning,  
Seeing the gallant city yield,  
Th' acknowledg'd masters of the field  
To all their victims send advice,  
And scorn to take them by surprize. [110]

### Canto II.

And now from street to street they roam,  
And ruin spread where'er they come;  
The tutor'd boys, without dismay,  
Pursue their work in open day,  
As lords of the surrender'd town,  
As hir'd to pull old houses down.  
Young Allen's\* fate untaught to fear  
From men inur'd to massacre,  
They smile to see the troops draw nigher  
With no authority to fire, [120]  
As sent to mark how they go on,  
And guard them, till their work is done.

When nothing can their force resist,  
Allow'd to do whate'er they list,  
They next the welcome word obey,  
And to the prisons march away.

\* A rioter killed in St. George's Fields.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>William Allen was killed by a soldier while participating in a protest in St. George's field in 1768, calling for the release of John Wilkes from prison. The incident became symbolic of military response to popular uprisings.

But promise first at morning-light  
To burn and pillage them at night,  
Set all the lawful captives free,  
And make a jail-delivery. [130]  
A principle of self-compassion,  
Of self-defence, and preservation,  
To loose th' opprest, their heart engages,  
Let the birds fly, and burn the cages,  
Desp'rate, in case of a defeat,  
Thus to cut off their last retreat.

The keepers warn'd, in time prepare,  
And send for succour to the mayor.  
But is the aid they ask refus'd?  
He only begs to be excus'd [140]  
"From raising the combustion higher,  
From pouring oil upon the fire,  
Provoking a mad multitude,  
And rashly shedding Christian blood."

As lovers at th' appointed hour,  
True to their word, with wasteful power,  
Dread executioners of fate  
They fire the house, and burst the gate,  
The fortress storm'd, their fellows seize,  
And with triumphant joy release. [150]  
Who can describe the mutual greeting  
Of friends, at such a happy meeting!  
As brethren and companions dear  
Redeem'd from bonds and death so near,  
They gladly their deliv'ers join  
To carry on th' humane design,

The business of Association,  
And break the shackles of the nation.

Behold them rush from jail to jail,  
Resolv'd their promise shall not fail [160]  
To set imprison'd *virtue* free,  
Erase the marks of tyranny,  
Afford the frailer sex protection,  
Burn all the houses of correction,  
Destroy the *scourges* of mankind,  
Nor leave one whipping-post behind.

The threaten'd jails, an hour before,  
The magisterial aid implore;  
But cannot gain what they require;  
But sink, like Newgate,<sup>8</sup> in the fire, [170]  
While issuing from their burning hives,  
The vermin that by plunder thrives,  
Augment the gang of public spoilers  
With a fresh regiment of Tylers.

One glorious enterprize remains,  
To recompense the heroes' pains,  
Th' unguarded bank by storm to take,  
A bonfire of the books to make,  
Assist the insufficient state,  
And pay at once the nation's debt. [180]

Fir'd with the hope so rich a treasure  
To seize, and then to take their pleasure,  
They run, they fly, where booty calls,  
And force the gate, and scale the walls,

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<sup>8</sup>A London prison that was burned by the rioters.

Ready th' important fort to win,  
When answer'd by a guard within,  
Repuls'd, o'erthrown, on heaps they lie,  
And in the bed of honor die!

(Yet, on the point of being sack'd,  
The bank, they say, was ne'er attack'd: [190]  
And three months hence, the Cits will tell us,  
No accident at all befel us,  
No Popish chapel was pull'd down,  
And not a house was burnt in town.)

### **Canto III.**

Baffled for once, the mob retreat,  
Yet conq'rors still in every street,  
The prostrate citizens they see,  
And haste t' improve their victory;  
The list of the proscib'd make known,  
For lives and fortunes are their own. [200]

“The chapels were a good beginning,  
An hint to signify our meaning;  
But Protestants, or Papists all  
Shall now without distinction fall:  
Whether of high or low condition,  
Whoever sign'd not the petition:  
The foreigners by labour fed,  
Who rob the people of their bread,

“Bishops, and lords, and gentlemen,  
Who proudly o’er the people reign, [210]  
And all the men on gain intent,  
And all the tools of government,  
The government o’erturn’d shall see,  
And mourn its sad catastrophe.

“But O! What death doth he require,  
Who cast our names into the fire,  
Repuls’d, and treated us with scorn?  
He, and his house, and church shall burn.  
That rogue Romaine<sup>9</sup> we soon shall have him;  
Nor Mence’s<sup>10</sup> tuneful voice shall save him,” [220]  
(Who would not the Associates join,  
Or list beneath a madman’s sign.)  
“Old Wesley too, to Papists kind,  
Who wrote against them for a blind,  
Himself a Papist still in heart,  
He, and his followers shall smart.  
Not one of his fraternity  
We here beneath our standard see,  
To which whole regiments resort  
Both from the Lock<sup>11</sup> and Tottenham-Court,”<sup>12</sup> [230]  
(Who rave, like patriots disappointed,  
And roar, and curse the Lord’s anointed.)

The rabble speak, and spread their bands,  
To execute their own commands,  
Impetuous, as the torrent pours,  
Resistless, as the flame devours,  
And scatt’ring ruin far and wide,  
While terror is on every side,

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<sup>9</sup>William Romaine, a prominent evangelical Anglican clergy person in London, who was sympathetic to the Calvinist Methodists.

<sup>10</sup>The Rev. Benjamin Mence, supposed to be the finest counter-tenor in England. He was Minor Canon at St. Paul’s.

<sup>11</sup>The Lock hospital chapel was served by Martin Madan, a Calvinist Methodist.

<sup>12</sup>Chapel built by George Whitefield, belonging to the Calvinist Methodists.

With blasphemies they rend the sky,  
And both their king and God defy. [240]

But chiefly those they hate and fear  
Who bear the noblest character;  
The hoary guardian of our laws,  
Most adverse to rebellion's cause,  
Most faithful to his king and true,  
Most zealous for his country too,  
On him with keenest rage they fly,  
As justice would with Mansfield<sup>13</sup> die.  
The feeble guards stand by and see  
The basest tools of anarchy, [250]  
Our age and nation's foul disgrace,  
Who set his mansion in a blaze:  
Pictures, and monuments of art,  
The utmost genius could exert,  
Compilers of th' historic page,  
The bard, and lawgiver, and sage,  
Writings for gen'ral use, design'd  
To teach, and to improve mankind,  
With manuscripts of price unknown, [260]  
Upon the flaming heap are thrown,  
More than a Vatican contains  
Is lost, and not a wreck remains.

So when ferocious Omar comes,  
And learning to destruction dooms;  
Ptolemy's stores\* erect the pyre,  
His volumes all in smoke expire,

\* The Alexandrian library.

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<sup>13</sup>William Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Mansfield (1705–93), currently Lord Chief Justice. His house was destroyed in the riots, including his immense library. Murray had been a fellow student of Charles at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford.

And the barbaric flames devour  
The work of ages in an hour.

What hinders now the fell banditti  
From plund'ring the devoted city? [270]  
Boldly they cast the mask away,  
And stand confest in open day;  
Hourly with fresh recruits increas'd;  
The cry of Popery now is ceas'd:  
They threaten gen'ral desolation,  
A fire to purify the nation;  
A fire impartial to consume  
The friends and enemies of Rome,  
"Thoroughly to purge is our intent,  
Is—to blow up the Parliament, [280]  
The rich to level with the poor,  
Unbounded freedom to restore,  
To pull the courts and churches down,  
And all the palaces in town,  
Demolish every public place,  
Set all your records in a blaze,  
And warm you with the glorious sight—  
Expect a specimen to night!"

O what a night was that! The crowd  
As congregated waters loud, [290]  
Tremendous as the sea in storm,  
Their promise terribly perform!  
Fierce flames on every side aspire,  
And vault the firmament with fire!  
The clash of arms, the thund'ring sound,  
The pierc'd, who fall and bite the ground,

The roaring of Abaddon's sons,  
The shoutings, and the dying groans,  
The shrieks of anguish and dismay,  
(A picture of that final day) [300]  
Horrible sympathy impart,  
And thrill with fear the boldest heart!

Where'er we turn our blasted eyes,  
The torrent roars, the flames arise:  
The old, the sick, the women fear,  
Or die thro' dread of death so near!  
Swiftly the catching fire proceeds,  
From house to house destruction spreads,  
And streets\* entire are doom'd to fall,  
And vengeance vows t' o'erwhelm us all. [310]

Unhappy Langdale!<sup>14</sup> Who could see  
Unmov'd his mournful tragedy,  
Enough to mollify the nature  
Of the most stern Associator!  
His num'rous babes, an helpless throng,  
They deprecate the cruel wrong;  
The father sad, with fruitless prayer,  
Intreats the savages to spare,  
(Whom wine inflames, and fury blinds)  
Talks to the waves, and courts the winds; [320]  
In vain to magistrates applies,  
Before his house in ashes lies,  
To aldermen most humbly suing,  
While trembling on the verge of ruin,  
He instantaneous aid requires,  
Or to prevent, or quench the fires.

\* Newgate-Street, &c.

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<sup>14</sup>Roman Catholic owner of a large distillery in Holborn that was destroyed in the riot.

Compassion steals into their breast,  
And W—<sup>15</sup> assents to his request,  
(That hero in tumultuous fights,  
That champion for the city's rights!) [330]  
“Let's save him then,” he cries, “from murder—  
But all things must be done in order,—  
Let's save him from the mob so curst—  
But let us call a council first!”

Vain help, alas, which never came!  
Consum'd by the voracious flame  
His all is lost! And numbers more  
His ruin, and their own deplore,  
Recalling oft with fresh affright  
The havock of that dreadful night! [340]

At morn we see the fiery void,  
And glorying o'er their foes destroy'd,  
We shrink from the assassin band,  
Possess of absolute command:  
The nation's scum together rise,  
To swell their host with new supplies,  
From smoking gaols<sup>16</sup> a desp'rate crew,  
Who rob the gibbet of its due,  
Vile instruments of depredation [350]  
Let loose on an abandon'd nation,  
Incendiaries from every side  
Heighten the wild tumultuous tide:  
Hibernians join to rend and tear,  
And Papists last, the spoils to share,  
(As vultures to the carcase fly,  
Smelling the bloody banquet nigh)

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<sup>15</sup>MS Protestant Association reads “Wilkes”; i.e., John Wilkes (1725–97).

<sup>16</sup>Ori., “goals.”

Flock to the city of confusion  
Giv'n up to mobbish execution.

Who can against the ruffians stand,  
Or dare deny their just demand? [360]  
Religion's friends, our faith's protectors,  
Our guards—an army of collectors,  
May they not maintenance require,  
As workmen worthy of their hire,  
And lay us under contribution,  
And bring us to a good conclusion?

“That good and full conclusion's come,  
Your sure, inevitable doom:  
Th' exterminating word is past,  
And the next night shall be your last: [370]  
'Tis fixt (the hellish murth'rer cries)  
A thousand fires at once shall rise;  
Your aqueducts cut off shall fail,  
And flames unquenchable prevail,  
(Strange flames that never can expire,  
A compound of Tartarian fire)  
Destruction shall your city sweep,  
Burnt down into a ruinous heap  
Your proud metropolis shall lie,  
And London's boast for ever die.” [380]

What can their purpose fell defeat,  
Or snatch us from the gaping pit?  
We shudder on the brink of fate,  
And for our sure excision wait:  
Let but another night pass o'er,  
And England's glory is no more,  
Triumph the Luciferian host,  
Abaddon reigns, and all is lost!

**Canto IV.**

But lo! At the appointed time,  
On his eternal throne sublime, [390]  
The Lord, who o'er all nature reigns,  
And holds rebellious powers in chains,  
Who sets the raging sea its bounds,  
HE looks—and all our foes confounds!

He calls the man of his right-hand,  
His image, in the gap to stand,  
Inspir'd with wisdom from above,  
Cloth'd with authority and love,  
Deputed by the Lord most high  
To deal the vengeance of the sky, [400]  
Root out the sons of wickedness,  
And save a most unthankful race.

His faithful troops from every side  
Are brought to turn the rapid tide,  
To scatter the wild beasts of prey,  
The felons and destroyers slay,  
To seize th' appointed heirs of death,  
And pluck the prey out of their teeth,  
The brands half-burnt out of the fire,  
And pay th' incendiaries their hire. [410]

Compel'd at last the loyal bands  
To execute their king's commands,  
(Their king by heaven's Almighty Lord  
Intrusted with the nation's sword)  
No more they *tenderly forbear*,  
No more with *cruel* pity spare,

Nor slaughter *all* with fury blind,  
But where the *active* fiends they find  
In their infernal work *employ'd*,  
The hell-hounds are at once destroy'd! [420]

The pale, remaining sons of riot,  
Atrocious foes to public quiet,  
Quaking before their swift pursuers,  
(A terror now to evil-doers)  
Into remotest corners fly,  
(Their badges and their arms thrown by)  
Or wish in the deep dungeon's gloom  
To skreen them from the death to come,  
Or long to hide their guilty head  
In ruins which their hands have made. [430]

But vain your hope of a reprieve,  
Ye see the sad alternative,  
Mercy itself is forc'd to cry,  
The innocent or you must die.

What streams of blood already shed!  
Heaps of intoxicated dead,  
Beneath the flaming ashes found,  
And carcases without a wound!  
(While many a slaughter'd parricide  
Is dragg'd away, their names to hide) [440]  
Patricians here in rags remain,  
There female fiends and furies slain,  
To every shock'd spectator show  
"There is a God that reigns below!"  
But now fulfill'd his dread design,  
The ministers of wrath divine

Behold the public peace restor'd,  
And gladly sheath the vengeful sword.

Extinct we see the fatal blaze,  
Sav'd by a miracle of grace, [450]  
The national escape we view,  
And scarcely dare believe it true.  
Yet now beginning to respire,  
We anxiously the cause inquire  
Whence our calamities began,  
Or who contriv'd the burning plan.  
Too evident th' accurst design  
We see; but where's the Catiline?<sup>17</sup>  
The wisest grant, we are not got  
To the dark bottom of the plot; [460]  
The least acute, methinks, might smell  
The counsel<sup>18</sup> of Ahithophel.<sup>19</sup>  
Or is there no resentment rankling  
In the unnatural heart of Franklyn?<sup>20</sup>  
Does nothing treasonable lurk,  
Nothing American in ——?<sup>21</sup>  
No depths of Luciferian art  
In F—'s<sup>22</sup> foul, infernal heart?  
(That son of vice and dissipation,  
Implung'd in debt and desperation, [470]  
For each flagitious purpose fit,  
A fiend in malice and in wit!)  
No hope in the ejected race?  
No mischief hatching in His Grace—  
So forward to defend the crown,  
And turn the soldiers out of town,  
So willing, in our last extreme,  
Our safety should be left to him!

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<sup>17</sup>Reference to Lucius Sergius Catilina (108–62 BC), a Roman politician who led a conspiracy to overthrow the republic.

<sup>18</sup>Ori., “council.”

<sup>19</sup>A counselor who deserted King David to support his rebellious son Absalom (see 2 Sam 15).

<sup>20</sup>Benjamin Franklin, whom some accused of encouraging the riot.

<sup>21</sup>MS Protestant Association reads B—; surely a reference to Edmund Burke (1729–97).

<sup>22</sup>Charles James Fox (1749–1806), supporter in Parliament of American independence.

How came Mynheer our doom to know,  
 And publish it two months ago? [480]  
 French prophets—whence could they foresee  
 Our swift-approaching destiny?  
 Or Congress, from across th' Atlantic,  
 Behold th' Associate mob so frantic,  
 And *promise* the destruction near  
 Of London and of Westminster?

In answer to these choaking questions,  
 Or ministerial suggestions,  
 The patriots say, "No harm was *meant*,  
 No plot; but all was accident!" [490]  
 By *accident* the rabble came  
 Together, in religion's name;  
 By *accident*, without a *plan*,  
 They with the mass-houses began;  
 They next suppress'd all evidence,  
 And all who justice could dispense;  
 The statesmen to destruction doom'd;  
 By *accident* the jails consum'd;  
 (While water we in vain require  
 To quench the hell-compounded fire) [500]  
 By accident the people's leas  
 Concurr'd our wealth and arms to seize;  
 From step to step, by measures just  
 To lay our cities in the dust,  
 Our name and nation to erase,  
 And build their empire in its place;  
 To reign—yet still with no *intent*  
 To reign—"for all was *accident*!"

So, as the sons of Epicurus  
With modest confidence assure us, [510]  
Atoms did into order dance  
And formed an universe;—by *chance*!

“But why is no discovery made?  
We see the tail, without the head.”  
Our rulers may know more, and see  
Farther, perhaps, than you or me;  
And at the time that best befits  
To bring the nation to their wits,  
Unravel the compleat DESIGN,  
And shew the face of CATILINE! [520]

Meantime in spite of all your covers,  
And sly, political manoeuvres,  
This inference the public draws,  
Th’ effect must pre-suppose a cause,  
The mischief point at the contrivers,  
The headlong herd detect the drivers.

**Address to the City,  
Written in June, 1780.**

Ye citizens of London, why  
So coy, and diffident, and shy,  
Who should with open arms receive  
The instruments, thro' whom ye live;  
Why shun the soldiers' company,  
And wish the valiant city free,  
And call for arms yourselves at last?  
Is it, because the danger's past?

Should bloody arms entrusted be  
With men of your *temerity*, [10]  
Who, when ye in the ground assemble  
Your bands, bid all the council tremble?  
Who, firing but with powder, make  
Yourselves, and the whole city quake?  
What would become of us, if all  
The liverymen should fire with ball?  
The fright we never could endure;  
Nor would his lordship be secure  
Within the wind of such commotion,  
But death again might be his *portion*! [20]

Can ye so suddenly forget  
Those ragged ministers of fate,  
All law and order's over-turners,  
The furious mob of chapel-burners;

The scum and refuse of the nation,  
The panic-dread, and devastation,  
The ravage and the flames they spread,  
With king Apollyon at their head!

Aghast ye stood, nor dar'd oppose  
Your feeble, despicable foes, [30]  
Boys, women, chimney-sweeps, collected  
To act, as wiser heads directed,  
With horror every heart t' inspire,  
To burn your stately domes with fire,  
Your shackled felons to release,  
Your wealth and arsenals to seize,  
And gall you with the triple chain  
Of France, America and Spain.  
No need of hostile *fleets combin'd*  
To execute what hell design'd, [40]  
Suffice the miscreants most base  
Your proud metropolis to rase.

So, if almighty wisdom will,  
The meanest instruments of ill,  
Vermin out of the dust shall rise,  
To deal the vengeance of the skies.

What angel in that darkest hour  
Sav'd you from the destroyer's power?  
Whose arm did the deliverance bring?  
Was it the patriots or the king? [50]  
From George the timely rescue came,  
And pluck'd the brands out of the flame:  
Swift to your help his legions flew,  
And crush'd the desolating crew,

The authors of your woes and fears,  
Your slaves—and executioners.

But do ye king and soldiers thank  
Or for the mansion-house or bank?  
With joy the kind preservers see  
Both of your lives and property? [60]  
Rather the benefit to own  
Ye scorn, and urge them to be gone,  
Your friends impatient to exclude:  
Such is the city's gratitude!

After the fight, ye breathe anew,  
And who so valiant now as you?  
Recover'd from the recent squall  
Which threaten'd to o'erwhelm us all,  
Ye plead your right to guide the helm,  
(The city is your proper realm) [70]  
And but your own militia need,  
With dauntless K—<sup>23</sup> at their head.

So sailors when the storm is o'er,  
Look up, and think of it no more,  
Forget their fears, and what is stranger,  
They swear they never were in danger.

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<sup>23</sup>Kennett; i.e., Brackley Kennett Lord Mayor of London.

**Advice to the City,  
Written in June, 1780.**

What means this melancholy ditty,  
Resounding through the ransom'd city?  
Why do our aldermen exclaim,  
So lately pluck'd out of the flame?  
“Because His Majesty defends  
Our lives, for his own private ends;  
For spite, his courtiers interpose  
Their help, to screen us from our foes:  
The arbitrary ministry  
Refuse to leave our city free, [10]  
And the officious soldiers kill,  
By saving us against our will.

“What need of government's assistance,  
When mob, and danger's at a distance;  
What need of military care  
To guard, when K—<sup>24</sup> is our mayor?  
When all the rioters in town  
Are govern'd by the scarlet gown,  
And see our livery in array  
Prepar'd to fight—another day? [20]

“Besides, ourselves the city guard,  
And hunt the rogues through every ward:  
Intrepid W—<sup>25</sup> appears our chief,  
And who so fit to catch a thief?

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<sup>24</sup>[Brackley] Kennett.

<sup>25</sup>[John] Wilkes.

His old vagaries he forgets,  
Lives honestly, and pays his debts,  
As bent immortal fame to win,  
And die a royalist, like Prynne.<sup>26</sup>

“Why send us troops who cannot need ’em?  
Only to rob us of our freedom, [30]  
Debar us of our native right,  
And dearest privilege, to fight,  
And standing on our own defence,  
*Again* to drive the rebels hence.

“Deny us arms? We cannot see  
The meaning of His Majesty:  
Does he suspect his faithful leiges,  
Because he knows our skill in sieges,  
In party-clubs, and coalitions,  
Address, remonstrance and petitions? [40]  
Our conduct past must have convinc’d him  
We cannot turn our arms against him;  
He knows our bold train-bands for valour  
As fam’d and dreadful—as a tailor!  
Nor are our aldermen such fools  
To meddle rashly with edg’d tools;  
Since not a crow that flies is shyer  
Of gunpowder, when soldiers fire,  
Which makes us first the redcoats\* order  
To shoot—and try them then for murder! [50]

“Unless the king his troops withdraw,  
He means to rule by martial law,  
And for our most unfeign’d affection  
Dragoon us into tame subjection,

\* In St. George’s Fields.

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<sup>26</sup>William Prynne (1600–1669).

At last to change the constitution;  
By military execution  
Accomplish his despotic plan,  
And as the Swedish monarch reign.

“How can we now preserve the nation,  
But by a new Association? [60]  
Put arms into our hands, and see  
If we can fight for liberty,  
If each will not his castle guard:  
Plenty of musquets be prepar’d,  
Let every householder have one,  
And teach him to let off his gun,  
Then when the bridle you withdraw,  
Which keeps the rioters in awe,  
No longer when the troops restrain,  
The rabble freed may rise again. [70]  
And let them rise, a desperate herd  
To take us lions by the beard!  
Let every boy—and girl—come on,  
And all the chimney-sweeps in town,  
They to their own destruction come,  
They rush upon their instant doom.

“Or if the beast will but be civil,  
Committing only *useful* evil,  
Let loose their prowess on our foes,  
Who all our patriot-schemes oppose, [80]  
Their rage on N<sup>—27</sup> and S<sup>—28</sup> vent,  
And the vile tools of government;  
Pity the troops should keep them under,  
Or rob them of their lawful plunder,

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<sup>27</sup>MS Protestant Association reads “North”; i.e., Lord Frederick North (1732–92).

<sup>28</sup>MS Protestant Association reads “Sandwich”; i.e., John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718–92).

Pity the troops should tear and rend them  
For want of arms—which we could lend them.

“If mob is totally suppress,  
How can a grievance be redrest?  
Or how reviv’d the good old cause?  
Or how supplied defective laws? [90]  
But rabble-government, we see,  
With soldiers never can agree;  
Unless we then the redcoats chace,  
The mob can hardly shew his face,  
Or pull a courtier’s mansion down,  
Or strip a bishop of his gown.  
But when the people’s reign is o’er,  
Freedom and property’s no more,  
With the mob’s power religion fails,  
And Popery over all prevails.” [100]

Ye gentle citizens, attend  
The cooler counsels of a friend:  
Let not your hasty courage rise,  
Or blind self-love put out your eyes;  
Let not a spirit of opposition  
Conceal from you your own condition,  
But learn in time yourselves to know,  
Nor triumph o’er an absent foe.  
Your fortitude, a reed so weak,  
Will play you still a slippery trick: [110]  
To fight ye never were intended,  
Only to be yourselves defended;  
Witness the absolute defeat  
Which now ye labour to forget,

When fearing goods and lives to lose,  
Your hearts sunk down into your hose!  
Ye did not then the mob defy,  
But piteously for mercy cry,  
Panting, and pale, and out of breath,  
And quash'd, as in the arms of death! [120]

But now your courage is return'd,  
The foe suppress, the danger scorn'd:  
Yet, if the army stand aloof,  
He still may put you to the proof;  
And when the rabble re-appears,  
O'erwhelm'd with stupefying fears,  
Ye may for help cry out again,  
And wish the soldiers back, in vain.

Be caution'd then by good advice,  
And learn your happiness to prize, [130]  
Your *rage* for liberty repress,  
Nor turn it to licentiousness;  
No more your gracious king mistrust  
So mild, and merciful, and just;  
No more by cruel insults wrong,  
Because he suffers you so long,  
With pity your perverseness sees,  
And saves you in your last distress.

And if you wish in peace to live, [140]  
No credence to your leaders give,  
But every demagogue dismiss,  
Those worst of all incendiaries,  
Who, foes to king and country, dare  
Usurp the patriot's character,

Pleaders for liberty and laws,  
Supporters of rebellion's cause,  
Who set the nation in a flame,  
And on their monarch cast the blame.

All counsels to sum up in one,  
Do, what so few of you have done,  
Poor, guilty worms, your Maker fear,  
And then ye *must* your king revere!

[150]

**Second  
Address to the City,  
Written in June, 1780.**

Ye Londoners, with smiles regard  
The homage of a nameless bard,  
(Ambitious, had he power, to raise  
A lasting monument to your praise)  
Who reads you with a lover's eye,  
Exalts your virtues to the sky,  
Admires your zeal and public spirit  
In strains unequal to your merit,  
And with astonish'd Europe sees  
Your truly wonderful police.

[10]

All-wise omnipotent creators  
Of senates, kings, and legislators,  
Creators, and deliv'ers too,  
Our safety we ascribe to you.

Whose magnanimity so late  
Redeem'd us on the edge of fate,  
And from a general conflagration  
Preserv'd the city and the nation.

Yet having your dear country freed,  
Ye lessen the heroic deed, [20]  
The plot your valour has defeated  
By you is as a nothing treated,  
Who now with confidence maintain  
“The mob had no concerted plan,  
No thought, or previous consultation  
For burning, or for desolation.  
But simply meant to do no more  
Than all the mischief in their power:  
No counsel was in the destroyers,”  
But was there none in their employers? [30]  
Here, gentlemen, we issue join:  
The mob, *you* say, had no DESIGN:  
The mob had no design, *we* say,  
Only for plunder and for pay:  
The instruments ostensible,  
*Actors* howe'er of every ill,  
*Contrivers* they were not, that's certain:  
But were there none behind the curtain?  
No heads, or counsellors, more able  
To influence the thoughtless rabble? [40]  
To teach them what, and how perform?  
To manage and direct the storm?  
Were none of the Associators  
American or English traitors?

It cannot now be doubted whether  
They help'd to bring the mob together:  
But could it not be once suspected  
The rabble might be ill-directed?  
Or would the multitude increase  
To myriads, and then part in peace? [50]

We grant it, the Associate host,  
The bulk of them were dupes at most:  
But might not *some be hir'd t'* advance  
The cause of Congress, and of France?  
A knave behind a madman lurk?  
A G<sup>29</sup> be the tool of ———?<sup>30</sup>  
America might seize th' occasion,  
And use the blind Association,  
Amidst our national confusion,  
To put their scheme in execution, [60]  
To perpetrate their hellish plan,  
And kings by our excision reign?

Why would ye then, ah, tell us why,  
Thro' modesty the truth deny,  
Ye rulers of the gallant town  
That still subsists, to your renown?  
Your fame, which fears no more eclipses  
From boys, or chimney-sweeps, or gipsies,  
In spite of all your foes' designs,  
Illustrious, and immortal shines. [70]

If bards on those who greatly dare  
Can immortality confer,

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<sup>29</sup>MS Protestant Association reads "Gordon"; i.e., Lord George Gordon.

<sup>30</sup>[Edmund] Burke.

Your patriotic deeds shall blaze,  
Brilliant, in everlasting lays.  
But stand it, far above the rest,  
In England's chronicles confest,  
That when our foes had laid the train,  
And ripen'd their pernicious plan,  
Rebels with regicides conspir'd,  
And London was already fir'd; [80]  
Then all who wore the scarlet gown  
Stood up—and trod the ruffians down:  
A W—<sup>31</sup> did on our side appear  
And charg'd the faction—in the rear;  
A B—<sup>32</sup> preserv'd the city's right,  
And put the soldiery to flight,  
A second Walworth<sup>33</sup> grac'd the chair,  
And KENNETT<sup>34</sup> was our GLORIOUS MAYOR!

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<sup>31</sup>[John] Wilkes.

<sup>32</sup>MS Protestant Association reads “Bull”; likely short for “John Bull,” which was colloquial in Wesley’s day for “a typical Englishman.”

<sup>33</sup>See page 6, note 6, above.

<sup>34</sup>Ori., “KENNET”; i.e., Brackley Kennett.