

Introduction

Puritan Literature Extension of Metaphysics Movement

Puritan Poetry



The Puritans learned and practised many of ideas of the Swiss reformer, John Calvin. John Calvin was a French theologian (1509 - 1564) who lived and taught in Geneva, Switzerland. As a reformist besides Martin Luther (1483 - 1546), Calvin asserted that all men had the right, even the obligation to read and study the Bible, for it alone was the word of God (McMichael, 1980: 3). Through the Calvinist influence the Puritans emphasized the common belief that human beings were basically evil and could do nothing about it (McMichael, 1980: 4). Over the years the Puritans built a way of life that was in harmony with their somber religion, stressed hard work, piety and sobriety. These were puritans values that dominated much of the earliest American writing including the sermons, books and letters.

Among the colonists that could be found in the last half of the seventeenth century America, there were poets and essayists but not novelists. The absence of novelists were understandable as the novel form had not developed fully, even in England. The members of the Puritans believed that fiction ought not to be read as in its own definition was not true.

Michael Wigglesworth was one of an important group of colonial poets who achieved wide popularity among his contemporaries with his poem entitled *The Day of Doom*, published in 1662. Michael

Wigglesworth could be classified as a 'Puritan writer'. The Puritans were called 'people of the Book' or 'people of the Holy Scripture'. They believed that the Bible was the revealed words of God. Therefore, the Bible should rule the lives of men and women. Believers of every social class read and reread the Bible, argued about its meaning, used it as a guide to religion, civil government, business and commerce. It provided rules for welfare, courtship, marriages, births, deaths even rules for dress and table etiquette (McMichael, 1980: 4).

In this very situation lived a literary man, Michael Wigglesworth. It is understandable then, when we are able to grasp the same spirit in this poet's works. Amidst his poems, *The Day of Doom* is one which has a specific puritan theme, namely **Apocalyptic theme** (Holman, 1980: 30). It was believed that this tremendous poem, (224 stanzas) was very much influenced by Wigglesworth's experience on a mighty dream he had had (McMichael, 1980: 121). In the dream he saw God seated on His throne on the dreadful day of judgement separating the saved from the damned, the 'sheep' from the 'goats'. This dream moved Wigglesworth to swear he would forever follow God with tears and cries (McMichael, 1980: 121). The poem became the most popular literary work ever created by an American Puritan.

All basic theological doctrines of puritanism, those are: total depravity, limited atonement, irresistible grace and predestination (McMichael, 1980: 6) are found in this poem. The poem has a very specific structure, a sermon. The only difference is in the narrative style of a sermon. The structural elements of sermon, that is Biblical text, the doctrine, the explanatory reason using Bible as the main source and the suggested application are found in the poem. The poem is, in fact, a tremendous 'poetic Sermon'.

The Day of Doom consists of 224 stanzas, written in a ballad meter using internal rhymes. The whole stanzas structurally can be divided into five main parts. The parts are, the introduction (stanza 1 – 17); the saved separation from the damned (stanza 18 – 67); the pleas of the sinners and the judge's argument (stanza 68 – 181); the eternal punishment and the eternal happiness (stanza 182 – 220) and the conclusion, that is the eternal happiness and incomparable glory in Heaven (stanza 221 – 224). In its structure the poem was constructed in a simple style. Each stanza of the whole poem (224 stanzas) has 8 lines with interchangeable octameter and hexameter between the lines. Lines 1, 3, 5 and 7 have internal rhymes while line 2 rhymes with line 4, line 6 rhymes with line 8.

Some characteristics of Puritan poetry include:

- a tendency to **psychological analysis** of emotion of love and religion
- a penchant for **imagery** that is novel, "unpoetical" and sometimes shocking, drawn from the commonplace (actual life) or the remote (erudite sources), including the extended metaphor
- **simple diction** (compared to Elizabethan poetry) which echoes the cadences of everyday speech
- **form**: frequently a sermon, or idealistic viewpoint or is designed to depict a specific situation or instance (with the poet's lover; with God; with oneself)
- **meter**: often rugged, not "sweet" or smooth like Elizabethan verse. This ruggedness goes naturally with the Metaphysical poets' attitude and purpose: a belief in the perplexity of life, a spirit of revolt, and the putting of an argument in speech rather than song.
- The best Puritan poetry is honest, **unconventional**, and reveals the poet's sense of the complexities and contradictions of life or God. It is **intellectual, analytical, psychological**, and **bold**; frequently it is absorbed in thoughts of death, physical love, and religious devotion.

A "**metaphysical conceit**" is a far-fetched and ingenious extended comparison (or "conceit") used by metaphysical poets to explore all areas of knowledge. It finds telling and unusual analogies for the poet's ideas in the startlingly esoteric or the shockingly commonplace -- not the usual stuff of poetic metaphor.

It is often grotesque and extravagant, e.g. Crashaw's comparison of Mary Magdalene's tear-filled eyes as "Two walking baths; two weeping motions / Portable and compendious oceans." Donne's comparison of his union with his lover to the draftsman's compass in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" is more successful because it gives us a perception of a real but previously unsuspected similarity that is therefore enlightening.

Typical metaphysical conceits come from a wide variety of areas of knowledge: coins (mintage); alchemy; medieval philosophy and angelology (see e.g. Donne's "Air and Angels," NA 1243 [not assigned for this class]); meteorology (sighs are blasts, tears are floods); mythology (the Phoenix's riddle, the river Styx); government ("she is the state, he is the Prince" from Donne's "The Sun Rising"); travelling (Donne's "Go and Catch a Falling Star"); astronomy;

metallurgy ("gold to airy thinness beat"); geometry (the twin compasses); law; geography.

CONCEIT (also called a **metaphysical conceit**): An elaborate or unusual comparison--especially one using unlikely metaphors, simile, hyperbole, and contradiction. Before the beginning of the seventeenth century, the term *conceit* was a synonym for "thought" and roughly equivalent to "idea" or "concept." It gradually came to denote a fanciful idea or a particularly clever remark. In literary terms, the word denotes a fairly elaborate figure of speech, especially an extended comparison involving unlikely [metaphors](#), [similes](#), [imagery](#), [hyperbole](#), and [oxymora](#). One of the most famous conceits is John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," a poem in which Donne compares two souls in love to the points on a geometer's compass. Shakespeare also uses conceits regularly in his poetry. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare compares two kings competing for power to two buckets in a well, for instance. A conceit is usually classified as a subtype of [metaphor](#). Contrast with [epic simile](#) and [dyfalu](#).

EPIC SIMILE: A formal and sustained [simile](#) (see under [tropes](#)). Like a regular simile, an epic simile makes a comparison between one object and another using "like" or "as." However, unlike a regular simile, which often appears in a single sentence, the epic simile appears in the [genre](#) of the epic and it may be developed at great length, often up to fifty or a hundred lines. Examples include Homer's comparison between Odysseus clinging to the rocks and an octopus with pebbles stuck in its tentacles, or Virgil's comparison between the city of Carthage and a bee-hive. For an example of a Homeric epic simile from *The Odyssey*, [click here](#). See [epic](#), above.

DYFALU: A Welsh term for a form of fanciful [conceit](#) in which a string of sequential metaphors compares an object to a number of diverse things--often using compound words in a manner similar to the Anglo-Saxon or Old Norse [kenning](#). The 14th century Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym is particularly known for this poetic technique. Cf. [cataloging](#).

The main and consuming difference between the metaphysics and the Puritan poetry is that while the metaphysical poet is all about rebellion to conventional ideas, themes, forms, meter etc.. the Puritan poet is not a rebellion as much as an embracement of the Puritan faith and the American

experience unfolding in the unconventional realm created by the metaphysics. In essence, the Puritan poet embraced change and tradition while searching for a truly unique identity and voice enhanced by metaphysics instead of being subject to it.

Puritan poetry therefore is characterized into the following categories:

- religious experience (sermon)
- apocalyptic
- personal experience
- personal information
- storytelling

For the Puritan, their entire existence centered on spirituality. Everything was explained by their faith and in the context of their beliefs. One of the strongest beliefs was that they would be the chosen when Christ returned and that they should be ready for this event by purifying themselves and setting themselves apart. Most writing centers on this event and the recognition of the event.

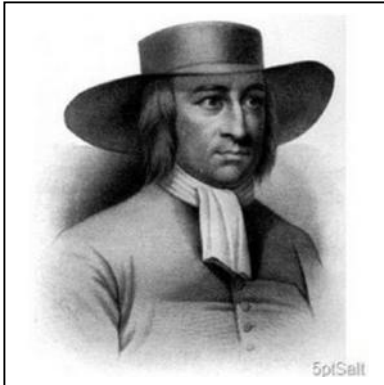


Additionally, they were concerned about chronicling events of the day for both posterity and scientific examination. These were the village people and in many cases unsophisticated who had only been in a position to learn to read and write for a short time so tradition called for recording events. The influence of the metaphysics may have had a serious impact on Early American writers because much was written in poetic form. Although there is still good deal of prose writing Americans embrace the poetic element in a unique and unapologetic way that will become one the greatest influences on future poets and in fact be found among American poets even unto today.

The Day of Doom, a poem written by Michael Wigglesworth is a poem with the central theme the Great and Last Judgement. Therefore the poem has an Apocalyptic theme. In 224 eight lines stanzas the

poet dramatized God's sudden appearance among wicked men, His summons of the living and the dead to judgement, His extension of grace to 'believers' and His punishment of the damned: hypocrites and apostates, heathers and infants, 'swearers shrewd', 'Sabbath polluters', and 'saints' persecutors'.

The Day Of Doom
by Michael Wigglesworth



[1]

Still was the night, Serene and Bright,
when all Men sleeping lay;
Calm was the season, and carnal reason
thought so 'twould last for ay.
Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease,
much good thou hast in store:
This was their Song, their Cups among,
the Evening before.

[2]

Wallowing in all kind of sin,
vile wretches lay secure:
The best of men had scarcely then
their Lamps kept in good ure.
Virgins unwise, who through disguise
amongst the best were number'd,
Had clos'd their eyes; yea, and the wise
through sloth and frailty slumber'd.

[3]

Like as of old, when Men grow bold
Gods' threatnings to contemn,
Who stopt their Ear, and would not hear,
when Mercy warned them:
But took their course, without remorse
till God began to powre
Destruction the World upon
in a tempestuous showre.

[4]

They put away the evil day,
And drown'd their care and fears,
Till drown'd were they, and swept away
by vengeance unawares:
So at the last, whilst Men sleep fast
in their security,
Surpriz'd they are in such a snare
as cometh suddenly.

[5]

For at midnight brake forth a Light,
which turn'd the night to day,
And speedily an hideous cry
did all the world dismay.
Sinners awake, their hearts do ake,
trembling their loynes surprizeth;
Amaz'd with fear, by what they hear,
each one of them ariseth.

[6]

They rush from Beds with giddy heads,
and to their windows run,
Viewing this light, which shines more bright
then doth the Noon-day Sun.
Straightway appears (they see't with tears)
the Son of God most dread;
Who with his Train comes on amain
To Judge both Quick and Dead.

[7]

Before his face the Heav'ns gave place,
and Skies are rent asunder,
With mighty voice, and hideous noise,
more terrible than Thunder.
His brightness damps hev'ns glorious lamps
and makes them hide their heads,
As if afraid and quite dismay'd,
they quit their wonted steads.

[8]

Ye sons of men that durst contemn
the Threatnings of Gods Word,
How cheer you now? your hearts, I trow,
are sthrill'd as with a sword.
Now Atheist blind, whose brutish mind
a God could never see,
Dost thou perceive, dost now believe,
that Christ thy Judge shall be?

[9]

Stout Courages, (whose hardiness
 Could Death and Hell out-face)
 Are you as bold now you behold
 your Judge draw near apace?
 They cry, no, no: Alas! and wo!
 our Courage all is gone:
 Our hardiness (fool hardiness)
 hath us undone, undone.

[10]

No heart so bold, but now grows cold
 and almost dead with fear:
 No eye so dry, but now can cry,
 and pour out many a tear.
 Earths Potentates and pw'ful States,
 Captains and Men of Might
 Are quite abasht, their courage dasht
 at this most dreadful sight.

[11]

Mean men lament, great men do rent
 their Robes, and tear their hair:
 They do not spare their flesh to tear
 through horrible despair.
 All Kindreds wait: all hearts do fail:
 horror the world doth fill
 With weeping eyes, and loud out-cries,
 yet knows not how to kill.

[12]

Some hide themselves in Caves and Delves,
 in places under ground:
 Some rashly leap into the Deap,
 to scape by being drown'd:
 Some to the Rocks (O senseless blocks!)
 and woody Mountains run,
 That there they might this fearful sight,
 and dreaded Presence shun.

[13]

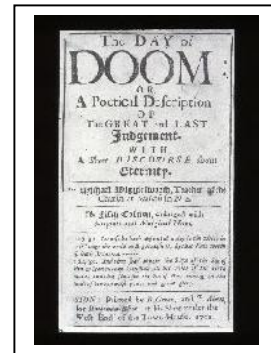
In vain do they to Mountains say,
 Fall on us, and us hide
 From Judges ire, more hot than fire,
 for who may it abide?
 No hiding place can from his Face,
 sinners at all conceal,
 Whose flaming Eyes hid things doth 'spy,
 and darkest things reveal.

[14]

The Judge draws nigh, exalted high
 upon a lofty Throne,
 Amidst the throng of Angels strong,
 lo, Israel's Holy One!
 The excellence of whose presence
 and awful Majesty,
 Amazeth Nature, and every Creature,
 doth more than terrify.

[15]

The Mountains smook, the Hills are shook,
 the Earth is rent and torn,
 As if she should be clean dissov'd,
 or from the Center born.
 The sea doth roar, forsakes the shore,
 and shrinks away for fear;
 The wild Beasts flee into the Sea,
 so soon as he draws near.



[16]

Whose Glory bright, whose wondrous might,
 whose Power Imperial,
 So far surpass whatever was
 in Realms Terrestrial;
 That tongues of men (nor Angels pen)
 cannot the same express,
 And therefore I must pass it by,
 lest speaking should transgress.

[17]

Before his Throne a Trump is blown,
 Proclaiming th' Day of Doom:
 Forthwith he cries, *Ye Dead arise,*
and unto Judgment come.
 No sooner said, but 'tis obey'd;
 Sepulchers open'd are:
 Dead Bodies all rise at his call,
 and's mighty power declare.

[18]

Both Sea and Land, at his Command,
 their Dead at once surrender:
 The Fire and Air constrained are
 also their dead to tender.
 The mighty word of this great Lord
 links Body and Soul together
 Both of the Just, and the unjust,
 to part no more for ever.

[19]

The same translates, from Mortal states
 to Immortality,
 All that survive, and be alive.
 i' th' twinkling of an eye:
 That so they may abide for ay
 to endless weal or woe;
 Both the Renate and Reprobate
 are made to dy no more.

[20]

His winged Hosts flie through all Coasts,
 together gathering
 Both good and bad, both quick and dead,
 and all to Judgment bring.
 Out of their holes those creeping Moles,
 that hid themselves for fear,
 By force they take, and quickly make
 before the Judge appear.

[21]

Thus every one before the Throne
 of Christ the Judge is brought,
 Both righteous and impious
 that good or ill had wrought.
 A separation, and diff'ring station
 by Christ appointed is
 (To sinners sad) 'twixst good and bad,
 'twixt Heirs of woe and bliss.

[22]

At Christ's right hand the Sheep do stand,
 his holy Martyrs, who
 For his dear Name suffering shame,
 calamity and woe,
 Like Champions stood, and with their Blood
 their testimony sealed;
 Whose innocence without offence,
 to Christ their Judge appealed.

[23]

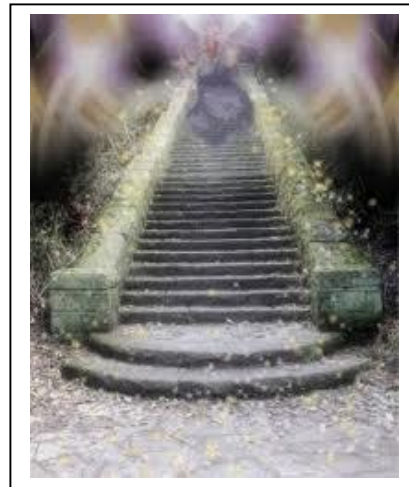
Next unto whom there find a room
 all Christ's afflicted sones,
 Who being chastised, neither despised
 nor sank amidst their groans:
 Who by the Rod were turn'd to God,
 and loved him the more,
 Not murmuring nor quarrelling
 when they were chast'ned sore.

[24]

Moreover, such as loved much,
 that had not such a tryal,
 As might constrain to so great pain,
 and such deep self deny:
 Yet ready were the Cross to bear,
 when Christ them call'd thereto,
 And did rejoyce to hear his voice,
 they're counted Sheep also.

[25]

Christ's Flock of Lambs there also stands,
 whose Faith was weak, yet true;
 All sound Believers (Gospel receivers)
 whose Grace was small, but grew:
 And them among an Infant throng
 of Babes, for whom Christ dy'd;
 Whom for his own, by wayes unknown
 to men, he sanctify'd.



[26]

All stand before their Saviour
 in long white Robes yclad,
 Their countenance full of pleasance,
 appearing wondrous glad.
 O glorious sight! Behold how bright
 dust heaps are made to shine,
 Conformed so their Lord unto,
 whose Glory is Divine.

[27]

At Christ's left hand the Goats do stand,
 all whining hypocrites,
 Who for self-ends did seem Christ's friends,
 but foster'd guileful sprites;
 Who Sheep resembled, but they dissembled
 (their hearts were not sincere);
 Who once did throng Christ's Lambs among,
 but now must not come near.

[28]

Apostates and Run-aways,
 such as have Christ forsaken,
 Of whom the Devil, with seven more evil,
 hath fresh possession taken:
 Sinners in grain, reserv'd to pain
 and torments most severe:
 Because 'gainst light they sinn'd with spight,
 are also placed there.



[29]

There also stand a num'rous band,
 that no Profession made
 Of godliness, nor to redress
 their ways at all essay'd:
 Who better knew, but (sinful Crew)
 Gospel and Law despised;
 Who all Christ's knocks withstood like blocks
 and would not be advised.

[30]

Moreover, there with them appear
 a number, numberless
 Of great and small, vile wretches all,
 that did Gods Law transgress:
 Idolaters, false worshippers,
 Prophaners of Gods Name,
 Who not at all thereon did call,
 or took in vain the same.

[31]

Blasphemers lewd, and Swearers shrewd,
 Scoffers at Purity,
 That hated God, contemn'd his Rod,
 and lov'd Security:
 Sabbath-polluters, Saints persecuters,
 Presumptuous men and Proud,
 Who never lov'd those that reprov'd;
 all stand amongst this Crowd.

[32]

Adulterers and Whoremongers
 were there, with all unchast:
 There Covetous, and Revenous,
 that Riches got too fast:
 Who us'd vile ways themselves to raise
 t'Estates and worldly wealth,
 Oppression by, or Knavery,
 by force, or fraud, or stealth.

[33]

Moreover, there together were
 Children flagitious,
 And Parents who did them undo
 by Nurture vicious.
 False-witness-bearers, and self-forswearers,
 Murd'ers, and Men of blood,
 Witches, Inchanters, and Ale-house-haunters,
 beyond account there stood.

[34]

Their place there find all Heathen blind,
 that Natures light abused,
 Although they had no tydings glad,
 of Gospel-grace refused.
 There stands all Nations and Generations
 of Adam's Progeny,
 Whom Christ redeem'd not, who Christ
 esteem'd not,
 through Infidelity.

[35]

Who no Peace-maker, no Undertaker,
to shrow'd them from Gods ire,
Ever obtain'd; they must be pained
with everlasting fire.
These num'rous bands, wringing their hands
and weeping, all stand there,
Filled with anguish, whose hearts do languish
through self-tormenting fear.

[36]

Fast by them stand at Christ's left hand
the Lion fierce and fell,
The Dragon bold, that Serpent old,
that hurried Souls to Hell.
There also stand, under command,
Legions of Sprights unclean,
And hellish Fiends, that are no friends
to God, nor unto Men.

[37]

With dismal chains, and strngest reins,
like Prisoners of Hell,
They're held in place before Christ's face,
till He their Doom shall tell.
These void of tears, but fill'd with fears,
and dreadful expectation
Of endless pains, and scalding flames,
stand waiting for Damnation.

[38]

All silence keep, both Goats and Sheep,
before the Judge's Throne;
With mild aspect to his Elect
then spake the Holy One:
My Sheep draw near, your Sentence hear,
which is to you no dread,
Who clearly now discern, and know
Your sins are pardoned.

[39]

'Twas meet that ye should judged be,
that so the world may spy
No cause of grudge, when as I Judge
and deal impartially.
Know therefore all, both great and small,
the ground and reason why
These Men do stand at my right hand,
and look so chearfully.

[40]

These Men be those my Father chose
before the worlds foundation,
And to me gave, that I should save
from Death and Dondemnation.
For whose dear sake I flesh did take,
was of a Woman born,
And did inure my self t'indure,
unjust reproach and scorn.

[41]

For them it was that I did pass
through sorrows many one:
That I drank up that bitter Cup,
which made me sigh and groan.
The Cross his pain I did sustain;
yea more, my Fathers ire
I underwent, my Blood I spent
to save them from Hell fire.

[42]

Thus I esteem'd, thus I redeem'd
all these from every Nation,
That they may be (as now you see)
a chosen Generation.
What if ere-while they were as vile,
and bad as any be,
And yet from all their guilt and thrall
at once I set them free?



[43]

My grace to one is wrong to none:
none can Election claim,
Amongst all those their souls that lose,
none can Rejection blame.
He that may chuse, or else refuse,
all men to save or spill,
May this Man chuse, and that refuse,
redeeming whom he will.

[44]

But as for those whom I have chose
 Salvations heirs to be,
 I underwent their punishment,
 and therefore set them free;
 I bore their grief, and their relief
 by suffering procur'd,
 That they of bliss and happiness
 might firmly be assur'd.

[45]

And this my grace they did imbrace,
 believing on my Name;
 Which Faith was true, the fruits do shew
 proceeding from the same:
 Their Penitence, their Patience,
 their Love and Self-denial
 In suffering losses, and bearing Crosses,
 when put upon the tryal.

[46]

Their sin forsaking, their chearful taking
 my yoke, their Charity
 Unto the Saints in all their wants,
 and in them unto me,
 These things do clear, and make appear
 their Faith to be unfaigned,
 And that a part in my desert
 and purchase they have gained.

[47]

Their debts are paid, their peace is made,
 their sins remitted are;
 Therefore at once I do pronounce,
 and openly declare
 That Heav'n is theirs, that they be Heirs
 of Life and of Salvation!
 Not ever shall they come at all
 to Death or to Damnation.

[48]

Come, Blessed Ones, and sit on Thrones,
 Judging the World with me:
 Come, and possess your happiness,
 and bought felicitie.
 Henceforth no fears, no care, no tears,
 no sin shall you annoy,
 Nor any thing that grief doth bring:
 Eternal Rest enjoy.

[49]

You bore the Cross, you suffered loss
 of all for my Names sake:
 Receive the Crown that's now your own;
 come, and a Kingdom take.
 Thus spake the Judge; the wicked grudge,
 and grind their teeth in vain;
 They see with groans these plac't on Thrones
 which addeth to their pain:

[50]

That those whom they did wrong and slay,
 must now their judgment see!
 Such whom they slighted, and once
 despighted,
 must now their Judges be!
 Thus 'tis decreed, such is their meed,
 and guerdon glorious!
 With Christ they sit, Judging is fit
 to plague the Impious.

[51]

The wicked are brought to the Bar,
 like quilty Malefactors,
 That oftentimes of bloody Crimes
 and Treasons have been Actors.
 Of wicked Men, none are so mean
 as there to be neglected:
 Nor none so high in dignity,
 as there to be respected.

[52]

The glorious Judge will priviledge
 nor Emperour, nor King:
 But every one that hath mis-done
 doth into Judgment bring.
 And every one that hath mis-done,
 the Judge impartially
 Condemneth to eternal wo,
 and endless misery.

[53]

Thus one and all, thus great and small,
 the Rich as well as Poor,
 And those of place as the most base,
 do stand the Judge before.
 They are arraign'd, and there detain'd,
 before Christ's Judgment-seat
 With trembling fear, their Doom to hear,
 and feel his angers heat.

[54]

There Christ demands at all their hands
 a strict and strait account
 Of all things done under the Sun,
 whose number far surmount
 Man's wit and thought: yet all are brought
 unto this solemn Tryal;
 And each offence with evidence,
 so that there's no denial.

[55]

There's no excuses for their abuses,
 since their own Consciences
 More proof give in of each Man's sin,
 than thousand Witnesses,
 Though formerly this faculty
 had grosly been abused,
 Men could it stifle, or with it trifle,
 when as it them accused.

[56]

Now it comes in, and every sin
 unto Mens charge doth lay:
 It judgeth them, and doth condemn,
 though all the world say nay.
 It so stingeth and tortureth,
 it worketh such distress,
 That each Man's self against himself,
 is forced to confess.

[57]

It's vain, moreover, for Men to cover
 the least iniquity:
 The Judge hath seen, and privy been
 to all their villany.
 He unto light, and open sight
 the works of darkness brings:
 He doth unfold both new and old,
 both known and hidden things.

[58]

All filthy facts, and secret acts,
 however closely done,
 And long conceal'd, are there reveal'd
 before the mid-day Sun.
 Deeds of the night shunning the light,
 which darkest corners sought,
 To fearful blame, and endless shame,
 are there most justly brought.

[59]

And as all facts and grosser acts,
 so every word and thought,
 Erroneous notion, and lustful motion,
 are unto judgment brought,
 No sin so small and trivial
 but hither it must come:
 Nor so long past, but now at last
 it must receive a doom.

[60]

At this sad season, Christ asks a Reason
 (with just Austerity)
 Of Grace refused, of light abus'd
 so oft, so wilfully:
 Of Talents lent by them mispent,
 and on their Lust bestown;
 Which if improv'd, as it behov'd,
 Heav'n might have been their own!

[61]

Of times neglected, of means rejected,
 of God's long-suffering,
 And Patience, to Penitence
 that sought hard hearts to bring.
 Why Cords of love did nothing move
 to shame or to remorse?
 Why warnings grave, and counsels, have
 nought chang'd their sinful course?

[62]

Why chastenings, and evil things,
 why judgments so severe
 Prevailed not with them a jot,
 nor wrought an awful fear?
 Why Promises of Holiness,
 and new Obedience,
 They oft did make, but always brake
 the same, to God's offence?

[63]

Why still Hell-ward, without regard,
 they boldly ventured,
 And chose Damnation before Salvation,
 when it was offered:
 Why sinful pleasures, and earthly treasures,
 like folls, they prized more
 Than heav'nly wealth, Eternal health,
 and all Christ's Royal store.

[64]

Why, when he stood offering his Blood
to wash them from their sin,
They would embrace no saving Grace,
but liv'd and dy'd therein?
Such aggravations, where no evasions,
nor false pretences hold,
Exaggerate and cumulate
guilt more than can be told.

[65]

They multiply and magnify
mens gross iniquities,
They draw down wrath (as Scripture saith)
out of Gods treasures.
Thus all their ways Christ open lays
to men and Angels view,
And, as they were, makes them appear
in their own proper hew.

[66]

Thus he doth find of all Mankind,
that stand at his left hand,
No Mothers Son, but hath mis-done,
and broken God's Command.
All have transgress, even the best,
and merited God's wrath
Unto their own perdition,
and everlasting scath.

[67]

Earths dwellers all, both great and small,
have wrought iniquity,
And suffer must, for it is just,
Eternal misery.
Amongst the many there come not any,
before the Judge's face,
That able are themselves to clear,
of all this cursed race.

[68]

Nevertheless, they all express,
Christ granting liberty,
What for their way they have to say,
how they have liv'd, and why.
They all draw near, and seek to clear
themselves by making pleas;
There Hypocrites, false hearted wights,
do make such pleas as these:

[69]

Lord, in they Name, and by the same,
we Devils dispossesst,
We rais'd the dead, and ministred
succour to the distrest.
Our painful teaching, and pow'rful preaching
by thine own wondrous might,
Did throughly win to God from sin
many a wretched wight.

[70]

All this, quoth he, may granted by,
and your case little better'd,
Who still remain under a chain,
and many irons fetter'd.
You that the dead have quickened,
and rescu'd from the grave,
Your selves were dead, yet never ned,
a Christ your Souls to save.

[71]

You that could preach, and others teach
what way to life doth lead;
Why were you slack to find that track,
and in that way to tread?
How could you bear to see or hear
of others freed at last,
From Satan's pawes, whilst in his jawes
your selves were held more fast?

[72]

Who though you knew Prepentance true,
and Faith in my great Name,
The only mean to quit you clean,
from punishment and blame,
Yet took no pain true Faith to gain,
such as might not deceive,
Nor would repent, with true intent,
your evil deeds to leave.

[73]

His Masters will how to fulfill
the servant that well knew,
Yet left undone his duty known,
more plagues to him are due.
You against light perverted right;
wherefore it shall be now
For *Sidon* and for *Sodoms* Land
more easie than for you.

[74]

But we have in thy presence been,
 say some, and eaten there.
 Did we not eat thy Flesh for meat,
 and feed on heavenly Cheer?
 Whereon who feed shall never need,
 as thou thy self dost say,
 Nor shall they dy eternally,
 but live with Christ for ay.

[75]

We may alledge, thou gav'st a pledge
 of thy dear love to us
 In Wine and Bread, which figured
 thy Grace bestowed thus.
 Of strengthening Seals, of sweetest Meals,
 have we so oft partaken;
 And shall we be cast off by thee,
 and utterly forsaken?

[76]

To whom the Lord thus in a word
 returns a short reply,
 I never knew any of you
 that wrought iniquity.
 You say y'have been my Presence in;
 but friends, how came you there
 With Raiment vile that did defile
 and quite disgrace my Cheer?

[77]

Durst you draw near without due fear
 unto my holy Table?
 Durst you prophane, and render vain
 so far as you were able,
 Those Mysteries? which whoso prize
 and carefully improve
 Shall saved be undoubtedly,
 and nothing shall them move.

[78]

How durst you venture, bold guests, to enter
 in such a sordid hew,
 Amongst my guests, unto those Feasts
 that were not made for you?
 How durst you eat for spiritual meat
 your bane, and drink damnation,
 Whilst by your guile you rendred vile
 so rare and great Salvation?

[79]

Your fancies fed on heav'nly Bread,
 your hearts fed on some Lust:
 You lov'd the Creature more than th' Creator,
 your Souls clave to the dust.
 And think you by Hypocrisie,
 and cloaked Wickedness,
 To enter in, laden with sin,
 to lasting happiness?

[80]

This your excuse shews your abuse
 of things ordain'd for good;
 And doth declare you guilty are
 of my dear Flesh and Blood.
 Wherefore those Seals and precious Meals
 you put so much upon
 As things divine, they seal and sign
 you to Perdition.

[81]

Then forth issue another Crew
 (those being silenced)
 Who drawing nigh to the most High
 adventure thus to plead:
 We sinners were, say they, it's clear,
 deserving Condemnation:
 But did not we rely on thee,
 O Christ, for whole Salvation?

[82]

We did believe and oft receive
 thy gracious promises:
 We took great care to get a share
 in endless happiness.
 We pray'd and wept, we Fast-dayes kept,
 lewd ways we did eschew:
 We joyful were they Word to hear;
 we form'd our lives anew.

[83]

We thought our sin had pard'ned been;
 that our Estate was good,
 Our debts all paid, our peace well made,
 our Souls wash'd with thy Blood.
 Lord, why dost thou reject us now,
 who have not thee rejected,
 Nor utterly true sanctity
 and holy life neglected.

[85]

The Judge incensed at their pretenced
 self-vanting Piety,
 With such a look as trembling strook
 into them, made reply;
 O impudent, impenitent,
 and guileful generation!
 Think you that I cannot descry
 your hearts abomination?

[85]

You nor receiv'd, nor yet believ'd
 my Promises of Grace;
 Nor were you wise enough to prize
 my reconciled Face:
 But did presume that to assume
 which was not yours to take,
 And challenged the Childrens bread,
 yet would not sin forsake.

[86]

Being too bold you laid fast hold,
 where int'rest you had none,
 Your selves deceiving by your believing,
 all which you might have known,
 You ran away, but ran astray,
 with Gospel-promises,
 And perished; being still dead
 in sins and trespasses.

[87]

How oft did I Hypocrisie
 and Hearts deceit unmask
 Before your sight, giving you light
 to know a Christians task?
 But you held fast unto the last
 your own Conceits so vain;
 No warning could prevail, you would
 your own Deceits retain.

[88]

As for your care to get a share
 in bliss; the fear of Hell,
 And of a part in endless smart,
 did thereunto compel.
 Your holiness and ways redress,
 such as it was, did spring
 From no true love to things above,
 but from some other thing.

[89]

You pray'd and wept, you Fast-days kept;
 but did you this to me?
 No, but for sin, you sought to win,
 the greater libertie.
 For all your vaunts, you had vile haunts,
 for which your Consciences
 Did you alarm, whose voice to charm
 you us'd these practices.

[90]

Your Penitence, your diligence
 to Read, to Pray, to Hear,
 Were but to drown'd the clamorous sound
 of Conscience in your ear.
 If light you lov'd, vain glory mov'd
 your selves therewith to store,
 That seeming wise, men might you prize,
 and honour you the more.

[91]

Thus from your selves unto your selves,
 your duties all do tend:
 And as self-love the wheels doth move,
 so in self-love they end.
 Thus Christ detects their vain projects,
 and close Impiety,
 And plainly shews that all their shows
 were but Hypocrisy.

[92]

Then were brought nigh a Company
 of Civil honest Men,
 That lov'd true dealing, and hated stealing,
 ne'r wrong'd their Bretheren;
 Who pleaded thus, Thou knowest us
 that we were blameless livers;
 No Whoremongers, no Murderers,
 no quarrellers nor stivers.

[93]

Idolatoers, Adulterers,
 Church-robbers we were none,
 Nor false-dealers, no couzeners,
 but paid each man his own.
 Our way was fair, our dealing square,
 we were no wastful spenders,
 No lewd toss-pots, no drunken sots,
 no scandalous offenders.

[94]

We hated vice, and set great price,
 by vertuous conversation:
 And by the same we got a name,
 and no small commendation.
 Gods Laws express that righteousness,
 is that which he doth prize;
 And to obey, as he doth say,
 is more than sacrifice.

[95]

Thus to obey, hath been our way;
 let our good deeds, we pray,
 Find some regard and some reward
 with thee, O Lord, this day.
 And whereas we transgressors be,
 of *Adam's* Race were none,
 No not the best, but have confest
 themselves to have mis-done.

[96]

Then answered unto their dread,
 the Judge: True Piety
 God doth desire and eke require
 no less than honesty.
 Justice demands at all your hands
 perfect Obedience:
 If but in part you have come short,
 that is a just offence.

[97]

On Earth below, where men did ow
 a thousand pounds and more,
 Could twenty pence it recompence?
 could that have clear'd the score?
 Think you to buy felicity
 with part of what's due debt?
 Or for desert of one small part,
 the whole should off be set?

[98]

And yet that part, whose great desert
 you think to reach so far
 For your excuse, doth you accuse,
 and will your boasting mar.
 However fair, however square,
 your way and work hath been,
 Before mens eyes, yet God espies
 iniquity therein.

[99]

God looks upon th' affection
 and temper of the heart;
 Not only on the action,
 and the external part.
 Whatever end vain men pretend,
 God knows the verity;
 And by the end which they intend
 their words and deeds doth try.

[100]

Without true Faith, the Scripture saith
 God cannot take delight
 In any deed, that doth proceed
 from any sinful wight.
 And without love all actions prove
 but barren empty things.
 Dead works they be, and vanitie,
 the which vexation brings.

[101]

Nor from true faith, which quencheth wrath,
 hath your obedience flown:
 Nor from true love, which wont to move
 Believers, hath it grown.
 Your argument shews your intent,
 in all that you have done:
 You thought to scale Heav'ns lofty Wall
 by Ladders of your own.

[102]

Your blinded spirit, hoping to merit
 by your own Righteousness,
 Needed no Saviour, but your behaviour,
 and blameless carriage;
 You trusted to what you could do,
 and in no need you stood:
 Your haughty pride laid me aside,
 and trampled on my Blood.

[103]

All men have gone astray, and done,
 that which Gods Laws condemn:
 But my Purchase and offered Grace
 all men did not contemn.
 The *Ninevites*, and *Sodomites*,
 had no such sin as this:
 Yet as if all your sins were small,
 you say, All did amiss.

[104]

Again you thought and mainly sought
 a name with men t'acquire;
 Pride bare the Bell, that made you swell,
 and your own selves admire.
 Mean fruit it is, and vile, I wiss,
 that springs from such a root:
 Vertue divine and genuine
 wonts not from pride to shoot.

[105]

Such deeds as your are worse than poor;
 they are but sins guilt over
 With silver dross, whose glistering gloss
 can them no longer cover.
 The best of them would you condemn,
 and ruine you alone,
 Although you were from faults so clear,
 that other you had none.

[106]

Your Gold is brass, your silver dross,
 your righteouness is sin:
 And think you by such honesty
 eternal life to win?
 You much mistake, if for its sake
 you dream of acceptation;
 Whereas the same deserveth shame,
 and meriteth Damnation.

[107]

A won'drous Crowd then 'gan aloud,
 thus for themselves to say,
 We did intend, Lord to amend,
 and to reform our way:
 Our true intent was to repent,
 and make our peace with thee;
 But sudden death stopping our breath,
 left us no libertie.

[108]

Short was our time, for in his prime
 our youthful flow'r was cropt:
 We dy'd in youth, before full growth,
 so was our purpose stopt.
 Let our good will to turn from ill,
 and sin to have forsaken,
 Accepted be, O Lord, by thee,
 and in good part be taken.

[109]

To whom the Judge: where you alledge
 the shortness of the space,
 That from your bith you liv'd on earth,
 to compass saving Grace:
 It was Free grace that any space
 was given you at all
 To turn from evil, defie the Devil,
 and upon God to call.

[110]

One day, one week, wherein to seek
 God's face with all your hearts,
 A favour was that far did pass
 the best of your deserts.
 You had a season, what was your reason
 such precious hours to waste?
 What could you find, what could you mind
 that was of greater haste?

[111]

Could you find time for vain pastime,
 for loose licentious mirth?
 For fruitless toyes, and fading joyes
 that perish in the birth?
 Had you good leasure for carnal Pleasure,
 in dayes of health and youth?
 And yet no space to seek God's face,
 and turn to him in truth?

[112]

In younger years, beyond your fears,
 what if you were surprised?
 You put away the evil day,
 and of long life devised.
 You oft were told, and might behold,
 that Death no Age doth spare;
 Why then did you your time foreslow,
 and slight your Souls welfare?

[113]

Had your intent been to repent,
 and had you it desir'd,
 There would have been endeavours seen,
 before your time expri'd.
 God makes no treasure, nor hath he pleasure,
 in idle purposes:
 Such fair pretences are foul offences,
 and cloaks for wickedness.

[114]

The were brought in, and charg'd with sin,
 another Company,
 Who by Petition obtain'd permission,
 to make Apology:
 They argued, We were misled
 as is well known to thee,
 By their Example, that had more ample
 abilities than we:

[115]

Such as profest they did detest,
 and hate each wicked way:
 Whose seeming grace whilst we did trace,
 our Souls were led astray.
 When men of Parts, Learning and Arts,
 Professing Piety,
 Did thus and thus, it seem'd to us
 we might take liberty.

[116]

The Judge relies, I gave you eyes,
 and light to see your way,
 Which had you lov'd, and well improv'd
 you had not gone astray.
 My Word was pure, the Rule was sure,
 why did you it forsake,
 Or thereon trample, and mens example
 your Directory make?

[117]

This you well knew, that God is true
 and that most men are liars,
 In word professing holiness,
 in deed thereof deniers.
 O simple fools! that having Rules
 your lives to regulate,
 Would then refuse, and rather chuse
 vile men to imitate.

[118]

But Lord, say they, we went astray,
 and did more wickedlie,
 By means of those whom thou hast chose
 Salvation heirs to be.
 To whom the Judge: What you alledge,
 doth nothing help the case;
 But makes appear how vile you were,
 and rend'reth you more base.

[119]

You understood that what was good,
 was to be followed,
 And that you ought that which was naught
 to have relinquished.
 Contrariwayes, it was your guise,
 only to imitate
 Good mens defects, and their neglects
 that were regenerate.

[120]

But to express their holiness,
 or imitate their grace,
 You little car'd, nor once prepar'd
 your hearts to seek my face.
 They did repent, and truly rent
 their hearts for all known sin:
 You did offend, but not amend,
 to follow them therein.

[121]

We had thy Word, say some, O Lord,
 but wiser men than we
 Could never yet interpret it,
 but always disagree.
 How could we fools be led by Rules,
 so far beyond our ken,
 Which to explain did so much pain,
 and puzzle wisest men?

[122]

Was all my word abstruse and hard?
 the Judge then answered:
 It did contain much truth so plain,
 you might have run and read,
 But what was hard you never car'd
 to know nor studied,
 And things that were most plain and clear
 you never practised.

[123]

The Mystery of Pietie
 God unto Babes reveals,
 When to the wise he it denies,
 and from the world conceals.
 If to fulfil Gods holy will
 had seemed good to you,
 You would have sought light as you ought,
 and done the good you knew.

[124]

Then came in view another Crew,
 and 'gan to make their pleas.
 Amongst the rest, some of the best
 had such poor shifts as these:
 Thou know'st right well, who all canst tell
 we liv'd amongst thy foes,
 Who the Renate did sorely hate,
 and goodness much oppose.

[125]

We holiness durst not profess,
 fearing to be forlorn
 Of all our friends, and for amends
 to be the wickeds scron.
 We know their anger would much endanger
 our lives, and our estates:
 Therefore for fear we durst appear
 no better than our mates.

[126]

To whom the Lord returns this word:
 O wonderful deceits!
 To cast off aw to Gods strict Law,
 and fear mens wrath and threats.
 To fear hell-fire and Gods fierce ire
 less than the rage of men,
 As if Gods wrath, could do less scath
 than wrath of bretheren.

[127]

To use such strife, a temporal life,
 to rescue and secure,
 And be so blind as not to mind
 that life that will endure:
 This was your case, who carnal peace
 more than true joyes did favour;
 Who fed on dust, clave to your lust,
 and spurned at my favour.

[128]

To please your kin, mens love to win,
 to flow in worldly wealth,
 To save your skin, these things have bin
 more than Eternal health.
 You had your choice, wherein rejoyce,
 it was your portion,
 For which you chose your Souls t'expose
 unto perdition.

[129]

Who did not hate friends, life, and state,
 with all things else for me,
 And all forsake, and's Cross up-take,
 shall never happy be.
 Well worthy they to dye for ay,
 Who death then life and rather:
 Death is their due, that so value
 the friendship of my Father.

[130]

Others Argue, and not a few,
 is not God gracious?
 His Equity and Clemency
 are they not marvellous?
 Thus we believ'd; are we deceiv'd?
 cannot his mercy great,
 (As hath been told to us of old)
 asswage his angers heat?

[131]

How can it be that God should see
 his Creatures endless pain,
 Or hear the groans and rueful moans,
 and still his wrath retain?
 Can it agree with Equitie?
 can mercy have the heart
 To recompence few years offence
 with Everlasting smart?

[132]

Can God delight in such a sight
 as sinners misery?
 Or what great good can this our blood
 bring unto the most High?
 Oh, thou that dost thy Glory most
 in pard'ning sin display!
 Lord, might it please thee to release,
 and pardon us this day?

[133]

Unto thy Name more glorious fame
 would not such mercy bring?
 Would not it raise thine endless praise,
 more than our suffering?
 With that they cease, holding their peace,
 but cease not still to weep;
 Grief ministers a flood of tears,
 in which their words do steep.

[134]

But all too late, grief's out of date,
 when life is at an end.
 The glorious King thus answering,
 all to his voice attend:
 God gracious is, quoth he, like his
 no mercy can be found;
 His Equity and Clemency
 to sinners do abound.

[135]

As may appear by those that here
 are plac'd at my right hand;
 Whose stripes I bore, and clear'd the score,
 that they might quitted stand.
 For surely none, but God alone,
 whose Grace transcends mens thought,
 For such as those that were his foes
 like wonders would have wrought.

[136]

And none but he such lenitee
 and patience would have shown
 To you so long, who did him wrong,
 and pull'd his judgments down.
 How long a space (O stiff neck'd race)
 did patience you afford?
 How oft did love you gently move,
 to turn unto the Lord?

[137]

With Cords of love God often strove
 your stubborn hearts to tame:
 Nevertheless your wickedness,
 did still resist the same.
 If now at last Mercy be past
 from you for evermore,
 And Justice come in Mercies room,
 yet grudge you not therefore.

[138]

If into wrath God turned hath
 his long long suffering,
 And now for love you vengeance prove,
 it is an equal thing.
 Your waxing worse, hath stopt the course
 of wonted Clemency:
 Mercy refus'd, and Grace misus'd,
 call for severity.

[139]

It's now high time that ev'ry Crime
 be brought to punishment:
 Wrath long contain'd, and oft restrain'd,
 at last must have a vent:
 Justice severe cannot forbear
 to plague sin any longer,
 But must inflict with hand most strict
 mischief upon the wronger.

[140]

In vain do they for Mercy pray,
 the season being past,
 Who had no care to get a share
 therein, while time did last.
 The man whose ear refus'd to hear
 the voice of Wisdoms cry,
 Earn'd this reward, that none regard
 him in his misery.

[141]

It doth agree with equity,
 and with Gods holy Law,
 That those should dye eternally
 that death upon them draw.
 The Soul that sins damnation wins,
 for so the Law ordains;
 Which Law is just, and therefore must
 such suffer endless pain.

[142]

Eternal smart is the desert,
 ev'n of the least offence;
 Then wonder not if I allot
 to you this Recompence:
 But wonder more, that since so sore
 and lasting plagues are due
 To every sin, you liv'd therein,
 who well the danger knew.

[143]

God hath no joy to crush or 'stroy,
 and ruine wretched wights,
 But to display the glorious Ray
 of Justice he delights.
 To manifest he doth detest,
 and throughly hate all sin,
 By plaguing it as is most fit,
 this shall him glory win.

[144]

Then at the Bar arraigned are
 an impudenter sort,
 Who to evade the guilt that's laid
 upon them, thus retort;
 How could we cease thus to transgress?
 how could we Hell avoid,
 Whom Gods Decree shut out from thee,
 and sign'd to be destroy'd?

[145]

Whom God ordains to endless pains,
 by Law unalterable,
 Repentance true, Obedience new,
 to save such are unable:
 Sorrow for sin, no good can win,
 to such as are rejected;
 Ne can they grieve, nor yet believe,
 that never were elected.

[146]

Of Man's fall'n Race, who can true Grace,
 or Holiness obtain?
 Who can convert or change his heart,
 if God withhold the same?
 Had we apply'd our selves, and try'd
 as much as who did most
 God's love to gain, our busie pain
 and labour had been lost.

[147]

Christ readily makes this Reply,
 I damn you not because
 You are rejected, or not elected,
 but you have broke my Laws:
 It is but vain your wits to strain,
 the end and means to sever:
 Men fondly seek to part or break
 what God hath link'd together.

[148]

Whom God will save, such he will have,
 the means of life to use:
 Whom he'll pass by, shall chuse to dy,
 and ways of life refuse.
 He that fore-sees, and foredecrees,
 in wisdom order'd has,
 That man's free-will electing ill,
 shall bring his will to pass.

[149]

High God's Decree, as it is free,
 so doth it none compel
 Against their will to good or ill,
 it forceth none to Hell.
 They have their wish whose Souls perish
 with Torments in Hell-fire,
 Who rather chose their Souls to lose,
 than leave a loose desire.

[150]

God did ordain sinners to pain
 and I to Hell send none,
 But such as swerv'd, and have deserv'd
 destruction as their own,
 His pleasure is, that none from bliss
 and endless happiness
 Be barr'd, but such as wrong'd him much
 by wilful wickedness.

[151]

You, sinful Crew, no other knew
 but you might be elect;
 Why did you then your selves condemn?
 why did you me reject?
 Where was your strife to gain that life
 which lasteth evermore?
 You never knock'd, yet say God Lock'd
 against you Heav'ns door.

[152]

'Twas vain task to knock, to ask,
 whilst life continued.
 Whoever sought heav'n as he ought,
 and seeking perished?
 The lowly meek who truly seek
 for Christ, and for Salvation,
 There's no Decree whereby such be
 ordain'd to Condemnation.

[153]

You argue then: But abject men,
 whom God resolves to spill,
 Cannot repent, nor their hearts rent;
 ne can they change their will.
 Not for his *Can* is any man
 adjudged unto Hell:
 But for his *Will* to do what's ill,
 and nilling to do well.

[154]

I often stood tend'ring my Blood
to wash away your Guilt:
And eke my Spright to frame you right,
lest your Souls should be spilt.
But you vile Race, rejected Grace,
when Grace was freely proffer'd:
No changed heart, no heav'nly part
would you, when it was offer'd.

[155]

Who wilfully the Remedy,
and means of life contemned,
Cause have the same themselves to blame,
if now they be condemned.
You have your selves, you and none else,
your selves have done to dy.
You chose the way to your decay,
and perisht wilfully.

[156]

These words appall and daunt them all;
dismai'd, and all amort,
Like stocks they stand at Christ's left-hand,
and dare no more retort.
Then were brought near with trembling fear,
a number numberless
Of blind Heathen, and brutish men,
that did Gods Laws transgress.

[157]

Whose wicked ways Christ open layes,
and makes their sins appear,
They making pleas their case to ease,
if not themselves to clear.
Thy written Word (say they) good Lord,
we never did enjoy:
We nor refus'd, nor it abus'd;
Oh, do not us destroy!

[158]

You ne'r abus'd, nor yet refus'd
my written Word, you plead,
That's true (quoth he) therefore shall ye
the less be punished.
You shall not smart for any part
of other mens offence,
But for your own transgression
receive due recompence.

[159]

But we were blind, say they, in mind,
to dim was Natures Light,
Our only guide, as hath been try'd
to bring us to the sight
Of our estate degenerate,
and curst by *Adam's* Fall;
How we were born and lay forlorn
in bondage and in thrall.

[160]

We did not know a Christ till now,
nor how faln man be saved,
Else would we not, right well we wot,
have so our selves behaved.
We should have mourn'd, we should have
turn'd
from sin at they Reproof,
And been more wise through thy advice,
for our own Souls behoof.

[161]

But Natures Light shin'd not so bright
to teach us the right way:
We might have lov'd it, and well improv'd
and yet have gone astray.
The Judge most High makes this Reply,
you ingorance pretend,
Dimness of sight, and want of light
your course Heav'nward to bend.

[162]

How came your mind to be so blind?
I once you knowledge gave,
Clearness of sight, and judgment right;
who did the same deprave?
If to your cost you have it lost,
and quite defac'd the same;
Your own desert hath caus'd the smart,
you ought not me to blame.

[163]

Your selves into a pit of woe,
your own transgression led:
If I to none my Grace had shown,
who had been injured?
If to a few, and not to you,
I shew'd a way of life,
My Grace so free, you clearly see,
gives you no ground of strife.

[164]

'Tis vain to tell, you wot full well,
 if you in time had known
 Your Misery and Remedy,
 your actions had it shown.
 You, sinful Crew, have not been true
 unto the Light of Nature,
 Nor done the good you understood,
 nor owned your Creator.

[165]

He that the Light, because 'tis Light,
 hath used to despize,
 Would not the Light shining more bright,
 be likely for to prize.
 If you had lov'd, and well improv'd
 your knowledge and dim sight,
 Herein your pain had not been vain,
 your plagues had been more light.

[166]

Then to the Bar, all they drew near
 who dy'd in Infancy,
 And never had or good or bad
 effected pers'nally,
 But from the womb unto the tomb
 were straightway carried,
 (Or at the last e're they transgress)
 who thus began to plead:

[167]

If for our own transgression,
 or disobedience,
 We here did stand at thy left-hand
 just were the Recompence:
 But *Adam's* guilt our souls hath spilt,
 his fault is charg'd on us;
 And that alone hath overthrown,
 and utterly undone us.

[168]

Not we, but he, ate of the Tree,
 whose fruit was interdicted:
 Yet on us all of his sad Fall,
 the punishment's inflicted.
 How could we sin that had not been,
 or how is his sin our,
 Without consent, which to prevent,
 we never had a pow'r?

[169]

O great Creator, why was our Nature
 depraved and forlorn?
 Why so defil'd, and made so vild
 whilst we were yet unborn?
 If it be just, and needs we must
 transgressors reck'ned be,
 Thy Mercy, Lord, to us afford
 which sinners hath set free.

[170]

Behold we see *Adam* set free,
 and sav'd from his trespass,
 Whose sinful Fall hath spilt us all,
 and brogght us to this pass.
 Canst thou deny us once to try,
 or Grace to us to tender,
 When he finds grace before thy face,
 that was the chief offender?

[171]

Then ansered the Judge most dread,
 God doth such doom forbid,
 That men should dye eternally
 for what they never did.
 But what you call old *Adam's* Fall,
 and only his Trespass,
 You call amiss to call it his,
 both his and yours it was.

[172]

He was design'd of all Mankind
 to be a publick Head,
 A common Root, whence all should shoot,
 and stood in all their stead.
 He stood and fell, did ill or well,
 not for himself alone,
 But for you all, who now his Fall,
 and trespass would disown.

[173]

If he had stood, then all his brood
 has been established
 In Gods true love, never to move,
 nor once awry to tread:
 Then all his Race, my Father's Grace,
 should have enjoy'd for ever,
 And wicked Sprights by subtile sleights
 could them have harmed never.

[174]

Would you have griev'd to have receiv'd
 through *Adam* so much good,
 As had been your for evermore,
 if he at first had stood?
 Would you have said, we ne'r obey'd,
 nor did thy Laws regard;
 It ill befits with benefits,
 us, Lord, so to reward?

[175]

Since then to share in his welfare,
 you could have been content,
 You may with reason share in his treason,
 and in the punishment.
 Hence you were born in state forlorn,
 with Natures so depraved:
 Death was your due, because that you
 had thus your selves behaved.

[176]

You think if we had been as he,
 whom God did so betrust,
 We to our cost would ne're have lost
 all for a paltry Lust.
 Had you been made in *Adam's* stead,
 you would like things have wrought,
 And so into the self-same wo,
 Your selves and yours have brought.

[177]

I May deny you once to try,
 or Grace to you to tender,
 Though he finds Grace before my face,
 who was the chief offender:
 Else should my Grace cease to be Grace;
 for it should not be free,
 If to release whom I should please,
 I have no libertee.

[178]

If upon one what's due to none
 I frankly shall bestow,
 And on the rest shall not think best,
 compassions skirts to throw,
 Whom injure I? will you envy,
 and grudge at others weal?
 Or me accuse, who do refuse
 your selves to help and heal?

[179]

Am I alone of what's my own,
 no Master or no Lord?
 Of if I am, how can you claim
 what I to some afford?
 Will you demand Grace at my hand,
 and challenge what is mine?
 Will you teach me whom to set free,
 and thus my Grace confine?

[180]

You sinners are, and such a share
 as sinners may expect,
 Such you shall have; for I do save
 none but mine own Elect.
 Yet to compare your sin with their,
 who liv'd a longer time,
 I do confess yours is much less,
 though every sins's a crime.



[181]

A crime it is, therefore in bliss
 you may not hope to dwell;
 But unto you I shall allow
 the easiest room in Hell.
 The glorious King thus answering,
 they cease, and plead no longer;
 Their Consciences must needs confess
 his Reasons are the stronger.

[182]

Thus all mens Pleas the Judge with ease
 doth answer and confute,
 Until that all, both great and small,
 are silenced and mute.
 Vain hopes are cropt, all mouths are stopt,
 sinners have nought to say,
 But that 'tis just, and equal most
 they should be damn'd for ay.

[183]

Now what remains, but that to pains
 and everlasting smart,
 Christ should condemn the Sons of men,
 which is their just desert;
 Oh, rueful plights of sinful wights!
 Oh wretches all forlorn:
 'T had happy been they ne're had seen
 the Sun, or not been born.

[184]

Yea, now it would be good they could
 themselves annihilate,
 And cease to be, themselves to free
 from such a fearful state.
 Oh happy Dogs, and Swine, and Frogs:
 yea Serpents generation,
 Who do not fear this doom to hear,
 and sentence of Damnation!

[185]

This is their state so desparate:
 their sins are fully known;
 Their vanities and villanies
 before the world are shown.
 As they are gross and impious,
 so are their numbers more
 Than motes i'th' Air, or then their hair,
 or sands upon the shore.

[186]

Divine Justice offended is
 and Satisfaction claimeth:
 God's wrathful ire kindled like fire,
 against them fiercely flameth.
 Their Judge severe doth quite cashier
 and all their Pleas off take,
 That never a man, or dare, or can
 a further Answer make.

[187]

Their mouths are shut, each man is put
 to silence and to shame:
 Nor have they ought within their thought,
 Christ's Justice for to blame.
 The Judge is just, and plague them must,
 nor will he mercy shew
 (For Mercies day is past away)
 to any of this Crew.

[188]

The Judge is strong, doers of wrong
 cannot his power withstand:
 None can by flight run out of sight,
 nor scape out of his hand.
 Sad is their state: for Advocate
 to plead their Cause there's none:
 None to prevent their punishment,
 or misery bemone.

[189]

O dismal day! whither shall they
 for help and succour flee?
 To God above, with hopes to move
 their greatest Enemee:
 His wrath is great, whose burning heat
 no floods of tears can slake:
 His word stands fast, that they be cast
 into the burning Lake.

[190]

To Christ their Judge, he doth adjudge
 them to the Pit of Sorrow;
 Nor will he hear, or cry, or tear,
 nor respite them one morrow.
 To Heav'n alas, they cannot pass,
 it is against them shut;
 To enter there (O heavy cheer)
 they out of hopes are put.

[191]

Unto their Treasures, or to their Pleasures,
 all these have them forsaken:
 Had they full Coffers to make large offers,
 their Gold would not be taken
 Unto the place where whilome was
 their Birth and Education?
 Lo! Christ begins for their great sins
 to fire the Earths Foundation:

[192]

And by and by the flaming Sky
 shall drop like molten Lead
 About their ears, t'increase their fears,
 and aggravate their dread.
 To Angels good that ever stood
 in their integrity,
 Should they betake themselves, and make
 their sute incessantly?

[193]

They neither skill, nor do they will
to work them any ease:
They will not mourn to see them burn,
nor beg for their release.
To wicked men, their bretheren
in sin and wickedness,
Should they make mone? their case is one,
they're in the same distress.

[194]

Ah, cold comfort, and mean support
from such like Comforters!
Ah, little joy of Company,
and fellow-sufferers!
Such shall increase their hearts disease,
and add unto their woe,
Because that they brought to decay
themselves and many moe.

[195]

Unto the Saints with sad complaints
should they themselves apply?
They're not dejected, nor ought affected
with all their misery.
Friends stand aloof, and make no proof
what Prayers or Tears can do:
Your godly friends are now more friends
to Christ than unto you.

[196]

Where tender love mens hearts did move
unto a sympathy,
And bearing part of others smart
in their anxiety;
Now such sompassion is out of fashion,
and wholly laid aside:
No Friends so near, but Saints to hear
their Sentence can abide.

[197]

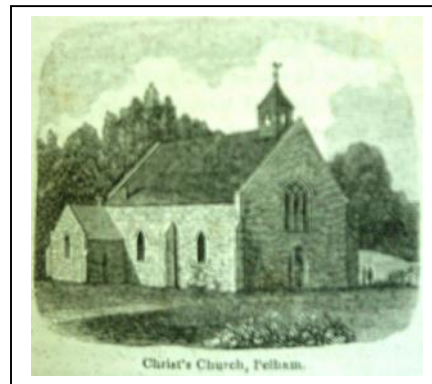
One natural Brother beholds another
in this astonied fit,
Yet sorrows not thereat a jot,
nor pitties him a whit.
The godly wife conceives no grief,
nor can she shed a tear
For the sad state of her dear Mate,
when she his doom doth hear.

[198]

He that was erst a Husband pierc't
with sense of Wives distress,
Whose tender heart did bear a part
of all her grievances,
Shall mourn no more as heretofore
because of her ill plight;
Although he see her now to be
a damn'd forsaken wight.

[199]

The tender Mother will own no other
of all her numerous brood,
But such as stand at Christ's right hand
acquitted through his Blood.
The pious Father had now much rather
his graceless Son should ly
In Hell with Devils, for all his evils
burning eternally,



[200]

Then God most high should injury,
by sparing him sustain;
And doth rejoyce to hear Christ's voice
adjudging him to pain;
Who having all, both great and small,
convinc'd and silenced,
Did then proceed their Doom to read,
and thus it uttered:

[201]

*Ye sinful wights, and cursed sprights,
that work Iniquity,
Depart together from me for ever
to endless Misery;
Your portion take in yonder Lake,
where Fire and Brimstone flameth:
Suffer the smart, which your desert
as it's due wages claimeth.*

[202]

Oh, piercing words more sharp than swords!
 what, to depart from *Thee*,
 Whose face before for evermore
 the best of Pleasures be!
 What? to depart (unto our smart)
 from thee *Eternally*:
 To be for aye banish'd away,
 with *Devils* company!

[203]

What? to be sent to *Punishment*,
 and flames of *Burning Fire*,
 To be surrounded, and eke confounded
 with Gods *Revengful ire*.
 What? to abide, not for a tide
 these Torments, but for *Ever*:
 To be released, or to be eased,
 not after years, but *Never*.



[204]

Oh, *fearful Doom*! now there's no room
 for hope or help at all:
 Sentence is past which aye shall last,
 Christ will not it recall.
 There might you hear them rent and tear
 the Air with their out-cries:
 The hideous noise of their sad voice
 ascendeth to the Skies.

[205]

They wring their hands, their caitiff-hands
 and gnash their teeth for terrour;
 They cry, they roar for anguish sore,
 and gnaw their tongues for horrour.
 But get away without delay,
 Christ pitties not your cry:
 Depart to Hell, there may you yell,
 and roar *Eternally*.

[206]

That word, *Depart*, maugre their heart,
 drives every wicked one,
 With mighty pow'r, the self-same hour,
 far from the Judge's Throne.
 Away they're chaste by the strong blast
 of this Death-threatening mouth:
 They flee full fast, as if in haste,
 although they be full loath.

[207]

As chaff that's dry, and dust doth fly
 before the Northern wind:
 Right so are they chased away,
 and can no Refuge find.
 They hasten to the Pit of Wo,
 guarded by Angels stout;
 Who to fulfil Christ's holy will,
 attend this wicked Rout.

[208]

Whom having brought, as they are taught,
 unto the brink of Hell,
 (That dismal place far from Christ's face,
 where Death and Darkness dwell:
 Where Gods fierce Ire kindleth the fire,
 and vengeance feeds the flame
 With piles of Wood, and Brimstone Flood,
 that none can quench the same,)

[209]

With Iron bands they bind their hands,
 and cursed feet together,
 And cast them all, both great and small,
 into that Lake for ever.
 Where day and night, without respite,
 they wail, and cry, and howl
 For tort'ring pain, which they sustain
 in Body and in Soul.

[210]

For day and night, in their despiht,
 their torments smoak ascendeth.
 Their pain and grief have no relief,
 their anguish never endeth.
 There must they ly, and never dy,
 though dying every day:
 There must they dying ever ly,
 and not consume away.

[211]

Dy fain they would, if dy they could,
 but Death will not be had;
 God's direful wrath their bodies hath
 for ev'r Immortal made.
 They live to ly in misery,
 and bear eternal wo;
 And live they must whilst God is just,
 that he may plague them so.

[212]

But who can tell the plagues of Hell,
 and torments exquisite?
 Who can relate their dismal state,
 and terrours infinite?
 Who fare the best, and feel the least,
 yet feel that punishment
 Whereby to nought they should be brought,
 if God did not prevent.

[213]

The least degree of miserie
 there felt's incomparable,
 The lightest pain they there sustain
 more than intolerable.
 But God's great pow'r from hour to hour
 upholds them in the fire,
 That they shall not consume a jot,
 nor by it's force expire.

[214]

But ah, the wo they undergo
 (they more than all besides)
 Who had the light, and knew the right,
 yet would not it abide.
 The sev'n-fold smart, which to their part,
 and portion doth fall,
 Who Christ his Grace would not imbrace,
 nor hearken to his call.

[215]

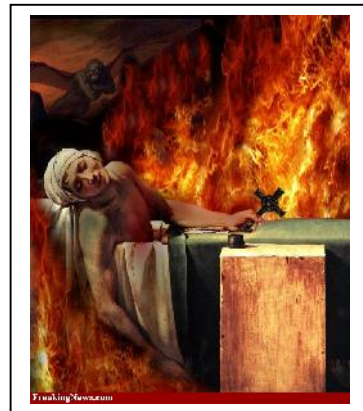
The *Amorites* and *Sodomites*
 although their plagues be sore,
 Yet find some ease, compar'd to these,
 who feel a great deal more.
 Almighty God, whose Iron Rod,
 to smite them never lins,
 Doth most declare his Justice rare
 in plaguing these mens sins.

[216]

The pain of loss their Souls doth toss,
 and wond'rously distress,
 To think what they have cast away
 by wilful wickedness.
 We might have been redeem'd from sin,
 think they, and liv'd above,
 Being possest of heav'nly rest,
 and joying in God's love.

[217]

But wo, wo, wo our Souls unto!
 we would not happy be;
 And therefore hear Gods Vengeance here
 to all Eternitee.
 Experience and woful sense
 must be our painful teachers
 Who n'ould believe, nor credit give,
 unto our faithful Preachers.



[218]

Thus shall they ly, and wail, and cry,
 tormented, and tormenting
 Their galled hearts with pois'ned darts
 but now too late repenting.
 There let them dwell i'the' Flames of Hell;
 there leave we them to burn,
 And back agen unto the men
 who Christ acquits, return.

[219]

The Saints behold with courage bold,
 and thankful wonderment,
 To see all those that were their foes
 thus sent to punishment:
 Then do they sing unto their King
 a Song of endless Praise:
 They praise his Name, and do proclaim
 that just are all his ways.

[220]

Thus with great joy and melody
 to Heav'n they all ascent,
 Him there to praise with sweetest layes,
 and Hymns that never end,
 Where with long Rest they shall be blest,
 and nought shall them annoy:
 Where they shall see as seen they be,
 and whom they love enjoy.

[221]

O Glorious Place! where face to face
 Jehovah may be seen,
 By such as were sinners whilere
 and no dark vail between.
 Where the Sun shine, and light Divine,
 of Gods bright Countenance,
 Doth rest upon them every one,
 with sweetest influence.

[222]

O blessed state of the Renate!
 O wondrous Happiness,
 To which they're brought, beyond what
 thought
 can reach, or words express!
 Griefs water-course, and sorrows sourse,
 are turn'd to joyful streams.
 Their old distress and heaviness
 are vanished like dreams.

[223]

For God above in arms of love
 doth dearly them embrace,
 And fills their sprights with such delights,
 and pleasures in his grace;
 As shall not fail, nor yet grow stale
 through frequency of use:
 Nor do they fear Gods favour there,
 to forfeit by abuse.

[224]

For there the Saints are perfect Saints,
 and holy ones indeed,
 From all the sin that dwelt within
 their mortal bodies freed:
 Made Kings and Priests to God through Christs
 dear loves transcendency,
 There to remain, and there to reign
 with him Eternally.



Phillis Wheatly

Slave Poetry of Colonial America

Critics have differed on the contribution of Phillis Wheatley's poetry to America's literary tradition. Most critics agree that the fact that a slave could write and publish poetry at that time and place is itself noteworthy in history. Some, including Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, wrote their positive assessments of her poetry. Others, like Thomas Jefferson, dismissed her poetry's quality. Critics through the decades have also been split on the quality and importance of her poems.

What can be said is that the poems of Phillis Wheatley display a classical quality and restrained emotion. Many deal with pietistic Christian sentiments. In many, Wheatley uses classical mythology and ancient history as allusions, including many references to the muses as inspiring her poetry. She speaks to the white establishment, not to fellow slaves nor, really, for them. Her references to her own situation of enslavement are restrained.

Was Phillis Wheatley's restraint simply a matter of imitating the style of poets popular in that time? Or was it in large part because, in her role as a slave, Phillis Wheatley could not express herself freely? Is there an undertone of critique of slavery as an institution -- beyond the simple reality that her own writing proved that Africans and slaves could be educated and could produce at least passable writings? Certainly her situation was used by later abolitionists and Benjamin Rush in an anti-slavery essay written in her own lifetime to prove their case that education and training could prove useful, contrary to allegations of others.

In the published volume of her poems, there is that attestation of many prominent men that they are acquainted with her and her work. On the one hand, this emphasizes how unusual was her accomplishment, and how suspicious most people would be about its possibility. But at the same time, it emphasizes that she is known by these people -- an accomplishment in itself, which many of her readers could not themselves share.

Also in this volume, an engraving of Phillis Wheatley is included as a frontispiece. This emphasizes her color and, by her clothing, her servitude and her refinement and comfort. But it also shows a slave and woman at her desk, emphasizing that she can read and write. She is caught in a pose of contemplation -- perhaps listening for her muses -- but this also shows that she can think -- an accomplishment which some of her contemporaries would find scandalous to contemplate.

A few observations about one poem may demonstrate how to find a subtle critique of slavery in Phillis Wheatley's poetry. In just eight lines, Wheatley describes her attitude towards her condition of enslavement -- both coming from Africa to America, and the culture that considers her color so negatively. Following the poem (from *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, 1773), are some observations about its treatment of the theme of slavery:

On Being brought From Africa to America

Tw'as mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour
Too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew,
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,
May be refin'd and join th' angelic train.

Observations:

Wheatley begins by crediting her slavery as a positive, because it has brought her to Christianity. While her Christian faith was surely genuine, it was also a "safe" subject for a slave poet. Expressing gratitude for her enslavement may be unexpected to most readers.

The word "benighted" is an interesting one: it means "overtaken by night or darkness" or "being in a state of moral or intellectual darkness." Thus, she makes her skin color and her original state of ignorance of Christian redemption parallel situations.

She also uses the phrase "mercy brought me" and the title "on being brought" -- deftly down-playing the violence of the kidnapping of a child and the voyage on a slave ship, so as to not seem a dangerous critic of slavery, but at the same time crediting not the slave trade, but (divine) mercy with the act. This could be read as denying the power to those human beings who kidnapped her and subjected her to the voyage and to her subsequent sale and submission.

She credits "mercy" with her voyage -- but also with her education in Christianity. Both were actually at the hands of human beings. In turning both to God, she reminds her audience that there is a force more powerful than they are -- a force that has acted directly in her life.

She cleverly distances her reader from those who "view our sable race with scornful eye" -- perhaps thus nudging the reader to a more critical view of slavery or at least a more positive view of those who are slaves.

"Sable" as a self-description of her color is a very interesting choice of words. Sable is very valuable and desirable. This characterization contrasts sharply to the "diabolic die" of the next line.

"Diabolic die" may also be a subtle reference to another side of the "triangle" trade which includes slaves. At about that same time, the Quaker leader John Woolman is boycotting dyes in order to protest slavery.

In the second-to-last line, the word "Christian" is placed ambiguously. She may either be addressing her last sentence to Christians -- or she may be including Christians in those who "may be refined" and find salvation.

She reminds her reader that Negroes may be saved.

The implication of her last sentence is also this: the "angelic train" will include both white and black.

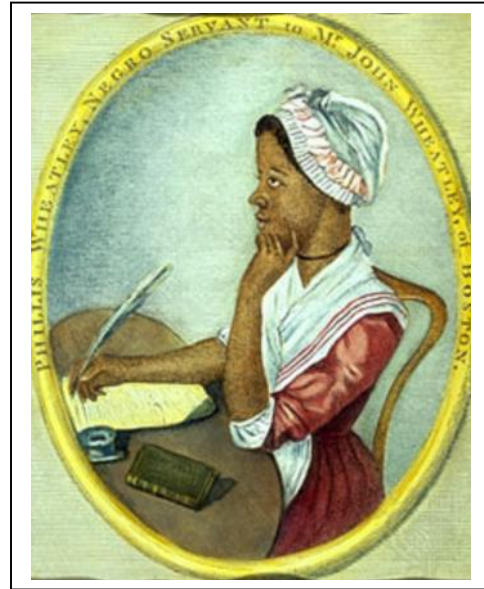
In the last sentence, she uses the verb "remember" -- implying that the reader is already with her and just needs the reminder to agree with her point.

She uses the verb "remember" in the form of a direct command. While echoing Puritan preachers in using this style, Phillis Wheatley is also taking on the role of one who has the right to command: a teacher, a preacher, even perhaps a master or mistress.

In looking at Wheatley's attitude towards slavery in her poetry, it's also important to note that most of Phillis Wheatley's poems do not refer to her "condition of servitude" at all. Most are occasional pieces, written on the death of some notable or on some special occasion. Few refer directly -- and certainly not this directly -- to her personal story or status.

On Imagination

By Phillis Wheatly



Thy various works, imperial queen, we see, 1
 How bright their forms! how deck'd with pomp by thee!
 Thy wond'rous acts in beauteous order stand,
 And all attest how potent is thine hand.
 From Helicon's refulgent heights attend,
 Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend: 6
 To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,
 Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.
 Now here, now there, the roving *Fancy* flies,
 Till some lov'd objects strikes her wand'ring eyes,
 Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,
 And soft captivity involves the mind. 12

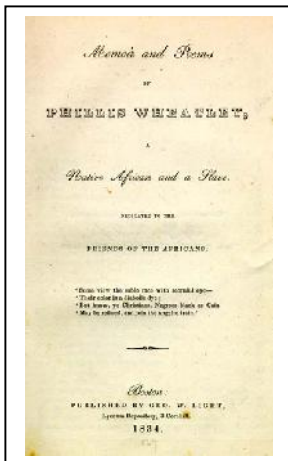
Imagination! who can sing thy force?
 Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
 Soaring though air to find the bright abode,
 Th' empyreal palace of the thund'ring God,
 We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
 And leave the rolling universe behind;
 From star to star the mental optics rove,
 Measure the skies, and range the realms above.
 There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
 Or with new worlds amaze th' unbounded soul. 22

Winter frowns to *Fancy's* raptur'd eyes
 The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;
 The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,
 And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands.
 Fair *Flora* may resume her fragrant reign,
 And with her flow'ry riches deck the plain;
Sylvanus may diffuse his honours round,

And all the forest may with leaves be crown'd;
 Show'rs may descend, and dews their gems
 disclose,
 And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose. 32

Such is thy pow'r, nor are thine orders vain,
 O thou the leader of the mental train:
 In full perfection all thy works are wrought,
 And thine the sceptre o'er the realms of thought.
 Before thy throne the subject-passions bow,
 Of subject-passions sov'reign ruler Thou,
 At thy command joy rushes on the heart,
 And through the glowing veins the spirits dart. 40

Fancy might now her silken pinions try
 To rise from earth, and sweep th' expanse on high;
 From *Tithon's* bed now might *Aurora* rise,
 Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,
 While a pure stream of light o'erflows the skies.
 The monarch of the day I might behold,
 And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,
 But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,
 Which Fancy dresses to delight the Muse;
Winter austere forbids me to aspire, 50
 And northern tempests damp the rising fire;
 They chill the tides of Fancy's flowing sea,
 Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.



Anne Bradstreet: First Lady of American Poetry

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) is one of the most important figures in the history of American Literature. She is considered by many to be the first American poet, and her first collection of poems, "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America, By a Gentlewoman of Those Parts", doesn't contain any of her best known poems, it was the first book written by a woman to be published in the United States. Mrs. Bradstreet's work also serves as a document of the struggles of a Puritan wife against the hardships of New England colonial life, and in some way is a testament to plight of the women of the age. Anne's life was a constant struggle, from her difficult adaptation to the rigors of the new land, to her constant battle with illness.

It is clear to see that Anne's faith was exemplary, and so was her love for children and her husband, Governor Simon Bradstreet. Anne's poems were written mainly during the long periods of loneliness while Simon was away on political errands. Anne, who was a well educated woman, also spent much time with her children, reading to them and teaching them as her father had taught her when she was young. While it is rather easy for us to view Puritan ideology in a bad light because of its attitude towards women and strict moral code, her indifference to material wealth, her humility and her spirituality, regardless of religion, made her into a positive, inspirational role model for any of us.

Another one of Anne's most important qualities was her strong intuition, although only subtly hinted at in her work, probably for fear of reprisal from the deeply religious Puritan community, one cannot help but feel her constant fascination with the human mind, and spirit, and inner guidance.

Her style is deceptively simple, yet speaks of a woman of high intelligence and ideals who was very much in love, and had unconditional faith. While it was difficult for women to air their views in the 17th Century, Anne Bradstreet did so with ease, as her rich vocabulary and polyvalent knowledge brought a lyrical, yet logical quality to her work which made it pleasant for anyone to read.

It is readily apparent that Anne Bradstreet represents the first truly American metaphysical poet. However, simply in writing poetry and publishing it she sets herself against the norms of her day and gives women their first voice in the new world much to the disdain and ridicule of her male constituents. She will however always be considered the first lady of American poetry.

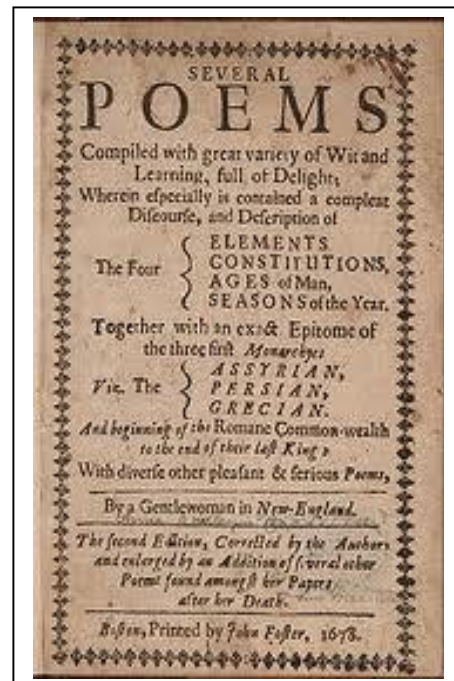
Versus Upon the Burning of Hour House

By Anne Bradstreet



In silent night when rest I took, 1
 For sorrow near I did not look,
 I waken'd was with thund'ring noise
 And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.
 That fearful sound of "fire" and "fire," 5
 Let no man know is my Desire.
 I starting up, the light did spy,
 And to my God my heart did cry
 To straighten me in my Distress
 And not to leave me succourless. 10
 Then coming out, behold a space
 The flame consume my dwelling place.
 And when I could no longer look,
 I blest his grace that gave and took,
 That laid my goods now in the dust. 15
 Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.
 It was his own; it was not mine.
 Far be it that I should repine,
 He might of all justly bereft
 But yet sufficient for us left. 20
 When by the Ruins oft I past
 My sorrowing eyes aside did cast
 And here and there the places spy
 Where oft I sate and long did lie.
 Here stood that Trunk, and there 25
 that chest,
 There lay that store I counted best,
 My pleasant things in ashes lie
 And them behold no more shall I.
 Under the roof no guest shall sit,
 Nor at thy Table eat a bit. 30
 No pleasant talk shall 'ere be told
 Nor things recounted done of old.
 No Candle 'ere shall shine in Thee,
 Nor bridegroom's voice ere heard shall

bee.
 In silence ever shalt thou lie. 35
 Adieu, Adieu, All's Vanity.
 Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide:
 And did thy wealth on earth abide,
 Didst fix thy hope on mouldring dust,
 The arm of flesh didst make thy trust? 40
 Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
 That dunghill mists away may fly.
 Thou hast a house on high erect
 Fram'd by that mighty Architect,
 With glory richly furnished 45
 Stands permanent, though this be fled.
 It's purchased and paid for too
 By him who hath enough to do.
 A price so vast as is unknown,
 Yet by his gift is made thine own. 50
 There's wealth enough; I need no more.
 Farewell, my pelf; farewell, my store.
 The world no longer let me love;
 My hope and Treasure lies above.



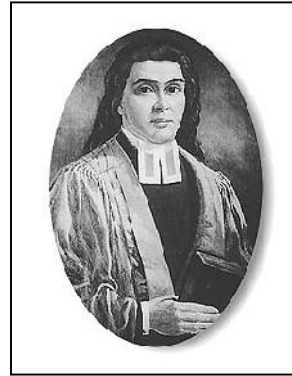
Samuel Danforth: America's First Historian/Scientist

Samuel Danforth's poems from the *Almanacks* for 1647–1649 are some of the earliest examples of “secular” poetry published in New England. Danforth (1626–1674) was a fellow of Harvard College and an astronomer and mathematician as well as a poet. Although these were not the first almanacs printed in America (the first was by William Peirce, printed at Cambridge in 1639), they are the earliest surviving examples. Danforth's first printed almanac, for the year 1646 (which survives only in one partial copy), contained no poetry; instead the foot of each month's page held a running essay on astronomy and the calendar. In 1647, he began to use the 8 to 10 lines at the bottom of each month's page for his original poems, ostensibly on natural and historical topics (pigeons, caterpillars, earthquakes, and hurricanes), but being a good Puritan, the religious element was never far removed; and it is especially noteworthy how many of the poems refer specifically to the history of the Massachusetts colony—at that time not quite twenty years old. Because of these references, the “chronological tables” printed on the last two pages of each of these almanacs are also included here. These tables are among the earliest published histories of the Puritan enterprise in New England and give a fascinating glimpse of the colony's self-image in its veritable infancy.

The Almanacks run from March through February, reflecting the seventeenth-century calendar. The page for each month shows the weeks and days, the times of sunrise and sunset, the court sessions, the fairs, the quarters of the moon, the places of the planets, the sign of the zodiac where the moon is at noon, the lunar syzygies, and the mutual aspects of the planets, calculated for 42° 30 m. latitude and 315° longitude.

In 1650, Danforth handed over the preparation of the almanac to Urian Oakes and left Harvard and Cambridge to take up the post of pastor at Roxbury, where he joined John Eliot. He later published *An Astronomical Description of the Late Comet or Blazing Star* (1665), an election sermon *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness* (1671), and an execution sermon *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into* (1674), as well as a catechism (1650, now lost).

Samuel Danforth's Almanack Poems



[March]

In Englands armes, an Orphan once did sit: 1
The question was, what should be done with it ?
Its Step-dame mercilesse would have it sent
To th' wildernes; the rest all said, content.
But when the Fathers Bowels did foresee, 5
What sorrows in the wildernes should bee,
He went with it: and when through scarcity
It cry'd, he heard, & streight-way sent supply.

[April]

A four-horn'd Beast this Orphan spying here,
Threatned forthwith in peices it to teare. 10
Whose homes not able for to tosse & gore,
This Hand shall reach, said he, the Ocean o're.
A kennell of stout hounds awakened then,
And scar'd this little creature to his den.
But lest the Orphan should it alway dread, 15
The hunters hand cut off his horned head.

[May]

No sooner was an house here built, to keep
This Out-cast dry, where it might rest & sleep,
But now an Airy thing above all men
Would have roofs, walls, foundations down agen, 20
(And shook them sore) that so by rents & strife
Without all house-room, it might end its life.
Which when the Builders saw, they drave it hence:
Wherein appear'd a special providence.

[June]

But by & by, grave Monanattock rose, 25
Grim Sasacus with swarms of Pequottoes,
Who smote our hindermost, whose arrows stung,
Who vow'd with English blood their ground to dung.
But Mistick flames & th' English sword soon damp.
This rampant crue; pursues them In their swamps, 30
And makes them fly their land with fear & shame:
That th' Indians dread is now the English name.

[July]

Just when these hounds first bit, Truth suffers scorne,
 Strange errors bark, the devil winds his horne
 And blows men almost wilde; Opinion 35
 Within the house would mistresse it alone.
 The poyson kills, makes light, loose, high, divides,
 And would have broke to factions, fractions, sides.
 The Thrones were therfore set, and in that day
 When Pequots fly, Opinion hasts away. 40

[August]

Great Earth-quakes frequently (as one relates)
 Forerun strange plagues, dearths, wars & change of
 states,
 Earths shaking fits by venemous vapours here,
 How is it that they hurt not, as elsewhere !
 Succeeding ages may interpret well, 45
 What those mutations are, which these foretell.
 Some think that now they hurt not any men:
 But only those who were not shaken then.

[September]

In times of yore, (some say, it is no ly)
 There was a tree that brought forth UNITY. 50
 It grew a little while, a year or twain,
 But since 'twas nipt, 't hath scarce been seen again,
 Till some here sought it, & they finde it now
 With trembling for to hang on every bough.
 At this faire fruit, no wonder, if there shall 55
 Be cudgells flung sometimes, but 't will not fall.

[October]

Forsaken TRUTH, Times daughter, groweth here.
 (More pretious fruit, what tree did ever beare ?)
 Whose pleasant sight aloft hath many fed,
 And what falls down knocks Error on the head. 60
 Blinde Novio sayes, that nothing here is True,
 Because (thinks he) no old thing can be new.
 Alas poor smoaky Times, that can't yet see,
 Where Truth doth grow, on this or on that Tree.

[November]

Few think, who only hear, but doe not see, 65
 That PLENTY groweth much upon this tree.
 That since the mighty COW her crown hath lost,
 In every place shee's made to rule the rost:
 That heaps of Wheat, Pork, Bisket, Beef & Beer,
 Masts, Pipe-staves, Fish should store both farre & 70
 neer:
 Which fetch in Wines, Cloth, Sweets & good Tobacc-
 O be contented then, you cannot lack.