

Edward Taylor
(1645-1729)

I KENNING THROUGH ASTRONOMY DIVINE

I kenning through astronomy divine

 The world's bright battlement, wherein I spy
A golden path my pencil cannot line
 From that bright throne unto my threshold lie.
 And while my puzzled thoughts about it pore,
 I find the bread of life in't at my door.

When that this bird of paradise put in

 This wicker cage (my corpse) to tweedle praise
Had pecked the fruit forbid: and so did fling
 Away its food, and lost its golden days,
 It fell into celestial famine sore,
 And never could attain a morsel more.

Alas! alas! poor bird, what wilt thou do?

 This creature's field no food for souls e'er gave:
And if thou knock at angels' doors, they show
 An empty barrel: they no soul bread have.
 Alas! poor bird, the world's white loaf is done,
 And cannot yield thee here the smallest crumb.

In this sad state, God's tender bowels run
 Out streams of grace: and he to end all strife,
The purest wheat in heaven, his dear-dear Son
 Grinds, and kneads up into this bread of life:
 Which bread of life from heaven down came and stands
 Dished in thy table up by angels' hands.

Did God mold up this bread in heaven, and bake,
 Which from his table came, and to thine goeth?
Doth he bespeak thee thus: this soul bread take;
 Come, eat thy fill of this, thy God's white loaf?
 It's food too fine for angels; yet come, take
 And eat thy fill! it's heaven's sugar cake.

What grace is this knead in this loaf? This thing
 Souls are but petty things it to admire.
Ye angels, help: this fill would be to the brim
 Heaven's whelmed-down crystal meat bowl, yea and higher.
 This bread of life dropped in thy mouth doth cry:
 Eat, eat me, soul, and thou shalt never die.