

Edward Taylor
(1645-1729)

THE ACCUSATION OF THE INWARD MAN

You want clear spectacles: your eyes are dim:
Turn inside out, and turn your eyes within.
Your sins like motes in the sun do swim: nay, see
Your mites are molehills, molehills mountains be.
Your mountain sins do magnitude transcend: 5
Whose number's numberless, and doth want end.
The understanding's dark, and therefore will
Account of ill for good, and good for ill.
As to a purblind man men oft appear
Like walking trees within the hemisphere, 10
So in the judgment carnal things excel:
Pleasures and profits bear away the bell.
The will is hereupon perverted so,
It lackeys after ill; doth good forgo.
The reasonable soul doth much delight 15
A pickpack t' ride o' the sensual appetite.
And hence the heart is hardened, and toys
With love, delight, and joy, yea vanities.

Make but a thorough search, and you may spy
 Your soul a trudging hard, though secretly 20
 Upon the feet of your affections mute,
 And hankering after all forbidden fruit.
 Ask but yourself in secret, laying near
 Thy head thereto: 'twill whisper in thine ear
 That it is tickled much, though secretly. 25
 And greatly itches after villainy.
 'Twill mock thee in thy face, and though it say
 It must not tell, it scorns to tell thee nay.
 But slack the reins, and come a loophole lower:
 You'll find it was but pen-cooped up before. 30
 Nay, muster up your thoughts, and take the pole
 Of what walk in the entry of your soul:
 Which if you do, you certainly will find
 With robbers, cutthroats, thieves it's mostly lined.
 And hundred rogues you'll find lie gaming there: 35
 For one true man, that in that path appears.
 Your true man too's oft footsore, seldom is
 Sound wind and limb: and still to add to this,
 He's but a traveler within that way:
 Whereas the rest there pitch their tents, and stay. 40
 Nay, nay, what thoughts unclean? lascivious?
 Blasphemous? murderous? and malicious?
 Tyrannic? wrathful? atheistic rise
 Of evils new and old, of every size?
 These bed and board here; make the heart a sty 45
 Then is it pure? is this the fruit of grace?
 If so, how do ye: you and I embrace!