

Edward Taylor
(1645-1729)

THE PREFACE

Infinity, when all things it beheld,
In nothing, and of nothing all did build,
Upon what base has fixed the lath, wherein
He turned this globe, and riggalled it so trim?
Who blew the bellows of his furnace vast? 5
Or held the mold wherein the world was cast?
Who laid its cornerstone? Or whose command?
Where stand the pillars upon which it stands?
Who laced and filleted the earth so fine,
With rivers like green ribbons smaragdine? 10
Who made the seas its selvage, and it locks
Likes a quilt ball within a silver box?
Who spread its canopy? Or curtains spun?
Who in this bowling alley bowled the sun?
Who made it always when it rises set: 15
To go at once both down, and up to get?
Who the curtain rods made for this tapestry?
Who hung the twinkling lanthorns in the sky?
Who? who did this? or who is he? Why, know
It's only Might Almighty this did do. 20
His hand hath made this noble work which stands
His glorious handiwork not made by hands.
Who spake all things from nothing; and with ease
Can speak all things to nothing, if he please.
Whose little finger at his pleasure can 25
Out mete ten thousand worlds with half a span:
Whose might almighty can by half a looks
Root up the rocks and rock the hills by the roots.
Can take this mighty world up in his hand,
And shake it like a squitchen or a wand. 30
Whose single frown will make the heavens shake
Like as an aspen leaf the wind makes quake.
Oh! what a might is this! Whose single frown
Doth shake the world as it would shake it down?
Which all from nothing fet, from nothing, all: 35
Hath all on nothing set, lets nothing fall.
Gave all to nothing man indeed, whereby
Through nothing man all might him glorify,
In nothing is embossed the brightest gem
More precious than all preciousness in them. 40
But nothing man did throw down all by sin:
And darkened that lighthouse gem in him,
That now his brightest diamond is grown
Darker by far than any coalpit stone.