

I'll put away the Guilt thereof,
 And purge its Filthiness clear off 35
 My Blood doth out the stain.

And though thy judgment was remiss
 Thy Headstrong Will too willful is.
 I will Renew the same.
 And though thou do too frequently 40
 Offend as heretofore hereby,
 I'll not severely blame.

And though thy senses do inveigle
 Thy Noble Soul to tend the Beagle,
 That t'hunt her games forth go, 45
 I'll Lure her back to me, and Change
 Those fond Affections that do range
 As yelping beagles do.

Although thy sins increase their race,
 And though when thou hast sought for Grace, 50
 Thou fallst more than before,
 If thou by true Repentance Rise,
 And Faith makes Me Thy Sacrifice,
 I'll pardon all, though more.

Though Satan strive to block thy way 55
 By all his Stratagems he may:
 Come, come though through the fire.
 For Hell that Gulf of fire for sins,
 Is not so hot as t'burn thy Shins.
 Then Credit not the Liar. 60

Those Cursed Vermin Sins that Crawl
 All o'er thy Soul, both Great and small,
 Are only Satan's own:
 Which he in his Malignity
 Unto thy Soul's true Sanctity 65
 In at the doors hath thrown.

And though they be Rebellion high,
 Ath'ism or Apostasy;
 Though blasphemy it be:
 Unto what Quality, or Size 70
 Excepting one, so e'er it rise.
 Repent, I'll pardon thee.

Although thy Soul was once a Stall⁶
 Rich hung with Satan's knick-knacks all;
 If thou Repent thy sin, 75
 A Tabernacle in't I'll place

6. A small booth in which things are sold.

Filled with God's Spirit, and His Grace.
Oh, Comfortable thing!

I dare the World therefore to show
A God like Me, to anger slow: 80
Whose wrath is full of Grace.
Doth hate all Sins both Great and small:
Yet when Repented, pardons all.
Frowns with a Smiling Face.

As for thy outward Postures each, 85
Thy Gestures, Actions, and thy Speech,
I Eye and Eying spare,
If thou repent. My Grace is more
Ten thousand times still trebled o'er
Than thou canst want, or wear. 90

As for the Wicked Charge he makes,
That he of Every Dish first takes
Of all thy holy things,
It's false, deny the same, and say,
That which he had he stole away 95
Out of thy Offerings.⁷

Though to thy Grief, poor Heart, thou find
In Prayer too oft a wandering mind,
In Sermons Spirits dull,
Though faith in fiery furnace flags, 100
And Zeal in Chilly Seasons lags,
Temptation's powerful.

These faults are his, and none of thine
So far as thou dost them decline.
Come, then receive My Grace. 105
And when he buffets thee therefore,
If thou My aid and Grace implore,
I'll show a pleasant face.

But still look for Temptations Deep,
Whilst that thy Noble Spark doth keep 110
Within a Mudwalled Cote.⁸
These White Frosts and the Showers that fall
Are but to whiten thee withal,
Not rot the Web they smote.

If in the fire where Gold is tried 115
Thy Soul is put, and purified,
Wilt thou lament thy loss?

7. Satan argues that humanity does nothing in a disinterested way for the love of God but only from the fear of hell. Christ argues that the soul

should affirm its generous impulses and put Satan in his place.

8. Cottage.

If silver-like this fire refine
 Thy Soul and make it brighter shine:
 Wilt thou bewail the Dross? 120

Oh! fight My Field: no Colors fear:
 I'll be thy Front, I'll be thy rear.
 Fail not: My Battles fight.
 Defy the Tempter, and his Mock.
 Anchor thy heart on Me thy Rock. 125
 I do in thee Delight.

c. 1685

1939

Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children¹

A Curious Knot² God made in Paradise,
 And drew it out enameled³ neatly Fresh.
 It was the True-Love Knot, more sweet than spice,
 And set with all the flowers of Grace's dress.
 It's Wedden's⁴ Knot, that ne're can be untied: 5
 No Alexander's Sword⁵ can it divide.

The slips⁶ here planted, gay and glorious grow:
 Unless an Hellish breath do singe their Plumes.
 Here Primrose, Cowslips, Roses, Lilies blow⁷
 With Violets and Pinks that void⁸ perfumes: 10
 Whose beauteous leaves o'erlaid with Honey Dew,
 And Chanting birds Chirp out sweet Music true.

When in this Knot I planted was, my Stock⁹
 Soon knotted, and a manly flower out brake.¹
 And after it, my branch again did knot, 15
 Brought out another Flower, its sweet-breathed mate.
 One knot gave one tother² the tother's place.
 Whence Chuckling smiles fought in each other's face.

But Oh! a glorious hand from glory came
 Guarded with Angels, soon did crop this flower³ 20
 Which almost tore the root up of the same,
 At that unlooked for, Dolesome, darksome hour.
 In Prayer to Christ perfumed it did ascend,
 And Angels bright did it to heaven 'tend.

1. The text here is from *Poems of Edward Taylor*, edited by Donald E. Stanford (1960).

2. Flower bed.

3. Polished, shining.

4. I.e., wedding's.

5. Alexander the Great cut the Gordian knot devised by the king of Phrygia when he learned that anyone who could undo it would rule Asia.

6. Cuttings.

7. Bloom.

8. Emit.

9. Stem, stalk.

1. Samuel Taylor was born on August 27, 1675, and lived to maturity.

2. To the other.

3. Elizabeth Taylor was born on December 27, 1676, and died on December 25, 1677.

But pausing on't, this sweet perfumed my thought: 25
 Christ would in Glory have a Flower, Choice, Prime,
 And having Choice, chose this my branch forth brought.
 Lord take't. I thank Thee, Thou tak'st ought of mine:
 It is my pledge in glory, part of me
 Is now in it, Lord, glorified with Thee. 30

But praying o're my branch, my branch did sprout,
 And bore another manly flower, and gay,⁴
 And after that another, sweet brake⁵ out,
 The which the former hand soon got away.
 But Oh! the tortures, Vomit, screechings, groans, 35
 and six week's Fever would pierce hearts like stones.⁶

Grief o'er doth flow: and nature fault would find
 Were not Thy Will, my Spell, Charm, Joy, and Gem:
 That as I said, I say, take, Lord, they're Thine.
 I piecemeal pass to Glory bright in them. 40
 In joy, may I sweet flowers for glory breed,
 Whether thou get'st them green, or lets them seed.

c. 1682

1939

Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold¹

The Bear that breathes the Northern blast²
 Did numb, Torpedo-like,³ a Wasp
 Whose stiffened limbs encramped, lay bathing
 In Sol's⁴ warm breath and shine as saving,
 Which with her hands she chafes and stands 5
 Rubbing her Legs, Shanks, Thighs, and hands.
 Her petty toes, and fingers' ends
 Nipped with this breath, she out extends
 Unto the Sun, in great desire
 To warm her digits at that fire. 10
 Doth hold her Temples in this state
 Where pulse doth beat, and head doth ache.
 Doth turn, and stretch her body small,
 Doth Comb her velvet Capital.⁵
 As if her little brain pan were 15
 A Volume of Choice precepts clear.
 As if her satin jacket hot

4. James Taylor was born on October 12, 1678, and lived to maturity.

5. I.e., broke out.

6. Abigail Taylor was born on August 6, 1681, and died on August 22, 1682.

1. The text used here is from *Poems of Edward Taylor*, edited by Donald E. Stanford (1960).

2. The northern constellation the Big Dipper,

also called Ursa Major, or the Great Bear.

3. The torpedo is a fish, like a stingray, that discharges a shock to one who touches it, causing numbness. Sir Thomas Browne writes: "Torpedoes deliver their opium at a distance and stupify beyond themselves" (1646).

4. The sun personified.

5. Head.