

Polemical Poetry

O thou thy self dost say to vs¹ (1658)

[285]	<i>O thou thy self</i> dost say to vs: <i>Thou wilt not sinners death,</i>	
[286]	<i>But that we do conuert and liue²</i> euen while our souls haue breath, And no more then to cease to be canst thou (O <i>God</i>) refuse To pardon humble penitents that do themselues accuse, Being no accepter of persons al hauing cost <i>thee</i> deare, Yea euen <i>thy</i> very life; it-self how can I therefor fear? If euer yet <i>he</i> did disdain sinners that fled to him, Then had I little cause of hope but this was neuer seen. For if they doe return to <i>thee</i> , <i>thy</i> hart thou wilt not close, As witnes can my wretched soul, who was so like to lose Al grace and goodnes (if thou hadst not me with helpe preuented) By sins that would with bloody teares, be while I live lamented, If I as grateful were to <i>thee</i> , as <i>thou</i> deseruest I should, Or as another in my case vnto <i>thy</i> mercy would. But <i>thou</i> whiles that thou liuedst heer, by tokens plain didst shew, That none should be refused by <i>thee</i> , <i>who</i> dost in mercy flow. And that my wicked hart did proue, who after sins so many Hath found much fauour in <i>thine</i> eys, without deseruing any. O blessed euer be my <i>God</i> ,	5 10 15 20 25 30 35

¹ This poem is a fragment of “Amor Ordinem Nescit,” lines 237-288.

² “Say to them: As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: and why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezechiel 33:11, Douay-Rheims Bible).

for this preuenting grace,³
Which I vnworthy have receaud
in this most happy place. 40
I fled from *thee* by many sins,
and *thou* didst follow me,
As if my ruin would haue causd
some detriment to *thee*.
How can this choose but wound my hart, 45
when I remember it,
And ever serue to humble me,
while at *thy* feet I sit?⁴
From whence my *Lord*, my *God*, and al,
permit me not to rise, 50
til I do *love thee* as thou wouldst,
the which doth al comprise.

³ A reference to the doctrine of prevenient grace, in which God's grace occurs before a human being takes any action.

⁴ "And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word" (Luke 10:39, Douay-Rheims Bible).