

THE VISION OF JUDGEMENT,
BY
QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED
BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAT TYLER"

"A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that "One fool makes many;" and it hath been poetically observed,

"That fools rush in where angels fear to tread." - *Pope*.

If M^r. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be worse. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegado intolerance and impious cant of the poem by the author of *Wat Tyler*, are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself - containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem - a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed "Satanic School," the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature, thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, except in his imagination, such a school, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom M^r. S. imagines, like *Scrub*, to have "talked of him; for they laughed consumedly."

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good in the charities of life to their fellow-creatures in any one year, than M^r. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1^{stly}. Is M^r. Southey the author of *Wat Tyler*?

2^{ndly}. Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest Judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3^{rdly}. Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, "a rancorous Renegado?"

4^{thly}. Is he not Poet Laureate, with his own lines on Martin the Regicide staring him in the face?

And, 5^{thly}. Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare he call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may? I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding; its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less, than that M^r. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the "*Anti-jacobin*" by his present patrons. Hence all this "skimble scamble stuff" about "Satanic," and so forth. However, it is worthy of him - "*Qualis ab incepto*."

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public, in the following poem, they may thank M^r. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared - had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonise a Monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriotic king, - inasmuch as several

years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France, - like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new "Vision," his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgements in the next world, is like his own judgement in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

P.S. - It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons, discourse in this "Vision." But for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding's "Journey from this World to the next," and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not "like a school-divine," but like the unscholarlike M^r. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of Heaven; and Chaucer's Wife of Bath, Pulci's Morgante Maggiore, Swift's Tale of a Tub, and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, &^c. may be permitted to converse in works intended not to be serious.

Q.R.

[* * M^r. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgement, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. M^r. Southey laudeth grievously "one M^r. Landor," who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the Poet Laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called *Gebir*. Who would suppose, that in this same *Gebir*, the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend M^r. Southey's heaven, - yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious Sovereign: -

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view, and he exclaims to his ghostly guide)

-

"Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.
He too amongst my ancestors! I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?"

**“Alas, O King!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east.”
“He was a warrior then, nor fear’d the gods?”
“Gebir, he fear’d the Demons, not the Gods,
Though them indeed his daily face ador’d;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squander’d, as stones to exercise a sling!
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice -
O madness of mankind! address, adored!” - *Gebir*, p. 28.**

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of “great moral lessons” are apt to be found in strange company.]

THE VISION OF JUDGEMENT

1.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate;
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era "Eighty Eight" 5
The Devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And "a pull altogether", as they say
At Sea, which drew most Souls another way. -

2.

The Angels all were singing out of tune 10
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the Sun and Moon,
Or curb a runaway young Star or two,
Or wild Colt of a Comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail - 15
As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale. -

3.

The Guardian Seraphs had retired on high
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business filled nought in the Sky
Save the Recording Angel's black bureau, 20
Who found indeed the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe
That he had stripped off both his wings in quills
And yet was in arrear of human ills. -

4.

His business so augmented of late years 25
That he was forced, against his will, no doubt
(Just like those Cherubs, earthly ministers)
For some resource to turn himself about
And claim the help of his celestial peers
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out 30
By the increased demand for his remarks;
Six Angels, and twelve Saints, were named his Clerks. -

5.

This was a handsome board, at least for heaven,
 And yet they had even then enough to do,
 So many Conquerors' Cars were daily driven, 35
 So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
 Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
 Till at the crowning carnage - Waterloo -
 They threw their pens down in divine disgust,
 The page was so besmeared with blood and dust. - 40

6.

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
 What Angels shrink from; even the very devil
 On this Occasion his own work abhorred,
 So surfeited with the infernal revel;
 Though he himself had sharpened every sword
 45
 It almost quenched his innate thirst of evil
 (Here, Sathan's sole good work deserves insertion -
 'Tis, that he has both Generals in reversion).

7.

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
 Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont, 50
 And heaven none; they form the tyrant's lease
 With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
 'Twill one day finish; meantime they increase -
 "With seven heads and ten horns", and all in front,
 Like Saint John's foretold beast - but ours are born 55
 Less formidable in the head than horn.

8.

In the first year of Freedom's second dawn
 Died George the third, although no tyrant, one
 Who shielded tyrants, till each Sense withdrawn
 Left him nor mental nor external Sun; 60
 A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,
 A weaker king ne'er left a realm undone;
 He died - but left his subjects still behind,
 One half as mad, and t'other no less blind.

9.

He died - his death made no great stir on earth; 65
 His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
 Of Velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
 Of aught but tears - save those shed by collusion -
 For these things may be bought at their true worth;
 Of Elegy there was the due infusion, 70
 Bought also; and the torches, cloaks and banners,
 Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

10.

Formed a sepulchral melodrame; of all
 The fools who flocked to swell or see the show,
 Who cared about the corpse? The funeral 75
 Made the attraction, and the black the woe;
 There throbbed not there a thought which pierced the pall,
 And when the gorgeous Coffin was laid low
 It seemed the mockery of hell to fold
 The rottenness of eighty years in gold. - 80

11.

So mix his body with the dust! It might
 Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
 The natural compound left alone to fight
 Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
 But the unnatural balsams merely blight 85
 What Nature made him at his birth - as bare
 As the mere Millions' base unummied Clay -
 Yet all his Spices but prolong decay. -

12.

He's dead - and upper Earth with him has done;
 He's buried - save the Undertaker's bill, 90
 Or Lapidary Scrawl, the world is gone
 For him - unless he left a German will -
 But where's the proctor who will ask his Son?
 In whom his qualities are reigning still,
 Except that household virtue most uncommon, 95
 Of Constancy to an unhandsome woman. - -

13.

“God save the King!” It is a large economy
In God to save the like, but if he will
Be saving, all the better, for not one am I
Of those, who think damnation better still - 100
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing with some slight restriction
The eternity of Hell’s hot jurisdiction.

14.

I know this is unpopular - I know 105
’Tis blasphemous - I know one may be damned
For hoping no one else may e’er be so -
I know my catechism - I know we’re crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite o’erflow -
I know that all save England’s church have shammed,
And that the other twice two hundred Churches 110
And Synagogues have made a *damned* bad purchase. -

15.

God help us all! God help me too! I am
God knows as helpless as the Devil can wish -
And not a whit more difficult to damn 115
Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb -
Not that I’m fit for such a noble dish -
As one day will be that immortal Fry
Of almost every body born to die. - 120

16.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate
And nodded o’er his keys - when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late -
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame -
In short, a roar of things extremely great 125
Which would have made aught save a Saint exclaim -
But he with first a start and then a wink
Said, “There’s another Star gone out I think!”

17.

But ere he could return to his repose,
 A Cherub flapped his right wing o'er his eyes - 130
 At which Saint Peter yawned, and rubbed his nose;
 "Saint Porter," said the Angel, "prithee rise!"
 Waving a goodly wing, which glowed as glows
 An earthly Peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes;
 To which the Saint replied, "Well - what's the matter? 135
 "Is Lucifer come back with all this Clatter?"

18.

"No," quoth the Cherub, "George the third is dead."
 "And who *is* George the third?" replied the Apostle.
 "What George? What third?" "The king of England," said
 The Angel. "Well! he won't find kings to jostle 140
 "Him on his way - but does he wear his head?
 "Because the last we saw here had a tussle
 "And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces
 "Had he not flung his head in all our faces. -

19.

"He was, if I remember, king of France; 145
 "That head of his, which could not keep a crown
 "On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
 "A claim to those of Martyrs - like my own;
 "If I had had my sword - as I had once
 "When I cut ears off - I had cut him down; 150
 "But having but my keys and not my brand,
 "I only knocked his head from out his hand. -

20.

"And then he set up such a headless howl,
 "That all the Saints came out and took him in -
 "And there he sits by Saint Paul, cheek by jowl; 155
 "That fellow Paul - the Parvenù! The Skin
 "Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
 "In heaven, and upon earth redeemed his sin,
 "So as to make a martyr, never sped
 "Better than did this weak and wooden head. - 160

21.

**“But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
 “There would have been a different tale to tell -
 “The fellow feeling in the Saint’s beholders
 “Seems to have acted on them like a Spell -
 “And so this very foolish head heaven solders 165
 “Back on its trunk - it may be very well -
 “And seems the custom here to overthrow
 “Whatever has been wisely done below.”**

22.

**The Angel answered, “Peter! do not pout -
 “The king who comes has head and all entire 170
 “And never knew much what it was about -
 “He did as doth the Puppet - by its wire -
 “And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt -
 “My business and your own is not to enquire
 “Into such matters, but to mind our cue - 175
 “Which is to act as we are bid to do.”**

23.

**While thus they spake, the Angelic Caravan,
 Arriving like a rush of mighty Wind
 Cleaving the fields of Space, as doth the Swan
 Some silver stream (Say Ganges, Nile, or Inde, 180
 Or Thames, or Tweed) and midst them an old man
 With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
 Halted before the Gate, and in his shroud
 Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud. -**

24.

**But bringing up the rear of this bright host 185
 A Spirit of a different aspect waved
 His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
 Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved -
 His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost -
 Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved 190
 Eternal wrath on his immortal face -
 And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.**

25.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the Gate
 Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin
 With such a glance of supernatural hate 195
 As made Saint Peter wish himself within -
 He potted with his keys at a great rate
 And sweated through his Apostolic skin -
 Of course his perspiration was but Ichor,
 Or some such other Spiritual liquor. - 200

26.

The very Cherubs huddled altogether
 Like birds when soars the Falcon - and they felt
 A tingling to the tip of every feather,
 And formed a circle like Orion's belt
 Around their poor old Charge, who scarce knew whither 205
 His Guards had led him - though they gently dealt
 With royal Manes (for by many stories,
 And true, we learn the Angels all are Tories).

27.

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
 Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges 210
 Flung over space an universal hue
 Of many-coloured flame, until its tinges
 Reached even our speck of earth, and made a new
 Aurora Borealis spread its fringes
 O'er the North Pole - the same seen, when ice-bound, 215
 By Captain Parry's crews in "Melville's Sound."

28.

And from the Gate thrown open issued beaming
 A beautiful and mighty thing of light -
 Radiant with glory - like a banner streaming
 Victorious from some World-o'erthrowing fight - 220
 My poor Comparisons must needs be teeming
 With earthly likenesses, for here the Night
 Of Clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
 Johanna Southcote or Bob Southey raving. -

29.

'Twas the Archangel Michael - all men know 225
 The make of Angels and Archangels, since
 There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
 From the fiends' leader to the angels' Prince;
 There also are some Altar-pieces, though
 I really can't say they much evince 230
 One's inner notions of immortal Spirits;
 But let the Connoisseurs explain *their* merits. -

30.

Michael flew forth - in Glory and in Good
 A Goodly work of him from whom all Glory
 And Good arise; the portal past, he stood; 235
 Before him the young Cherubs and Saint hoary
 (I say *young* - begging to be understood
 By looks, not years - and should be very sorry
 To state they were not older than Saint Peter,
 But merely that they seemed a little sweeter). 240

31.

The Cherubs and the Saint bowed down before
 That Archangelic Hierarch, the first
 Of Essences Angelical, who wore
 The aspect of a God, but this ne'er nurst
 Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core 245
 No thought save for his Maker's service durst
 Intrude - however glorified and high -
 He knew him but the Viceroy of the Sky.

32.

He and the Sombre silent Spirit met -
 They knew each other both for good and ill - 250
 Such was their power that neither could forget
 His former friend, and future foe - but still
 There was a high, immortal, proud regret
 In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
 Than destiny to make the eternal years 255
 Their date of war, and their "Champ Clos" the Spheres.

33.

But here they were in neutral space - we know
From Job that Sathan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so,
And that “the Sons of God”, like those of Clay, 260
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil - but ’twould take up hours,

34.

And this is not a theologic tract 265
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative, and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick - 270
’Tis every tittle true - beyond suspicion -
And accurate as any other vision. -

35.

The Spirits were in Neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like Eastern thresholds is
The place where Death’s grand cause is argued o’er, 275
And Souls dispatched to that world or to this,
And therefore Michael and the Other wore
A civil aspect - though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There passed a mutual glance of great politeness. 280

36.

The Archangel bowed - not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful Oriental bend -
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turned as to an Equal; not too low 285
But kindly; Sathan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor Noble meet a mushroom rich civilian. -

37.

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant, and then raising it, he stood 290
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings endued
With better sense and hearts, whom History mentions, 295
Who long have "paved Hell with their good intentions."

38.

Michael began, "What wouldst thou with this Man,
"Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
"Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
"That thou canst claim him? Speak, and do thy will, 300
"If it be just; if in his earthly span
"He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
"His duties as a king and mortal, Say,
"And he is thine; if not, Let him have way!" -

39.

"Michael!" replied the Prince of Air, "even here, 305
"Before the gate of him thou servest, must
"I claim my Subject, and will make appear
"That as he was my worshipper in dust,
"So shall he be in Spirit - although dear
"To thee and thine because nor wine nor lust 310
"Were of his weaknesses - yet on the throne
"He reigned o'er Millions to serve me alone.

40.

"Look to our earth - or rather mine - it was,
"Once, more thy master's - but I triumph not
"In this poor planet's conquest, nor, Alas! 315
"Need he thou servest envy me my lot -
"With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
"In worship round him he may have forgot
"Yon weak creation of such paltry things;
"I think few worth damnation save their kings,
 320

41.

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent to
 “Assert my right as Lord; and even had
 “I such an inclination, ’twere (as you
 “Well know) superfluous - they are grown so bad
 “That Hell has nothing better left to do 325
 “Than leave them to themselves, so much more mad
 “And evil by their own internal curse -
 “Heaven cannot make them better - nor I worse.

42.

“Look to the earth - I said - and say again -
 “When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm 330
 “Began in youth’s first bloom and flush to reign,
 “The world and he both wore a different form -
 “And Much of earth and all the watery plain
 “Of Ocean called him king; through many a storm
 “His Isles had floated on the Abyss of Time - 335
 “For the rough Virtues chose them for their clime. -

43.

“He came to his Sceptre young - he leaves it old -
 “Look to the state in which he found his realm
 “And left it - and his annals too behold -
 “How to a Minion first he gave the helm - 340
 “How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold -
 “The beggar’s vice, which can but overwhelm
 “The meanest hearts - and for the rest, but Glance
 “Thine eye along America and France! -

44.

“’Tis true he was a tool from first to last 345
 “(I have the workmen safe) but as a tool
 “So let him be consumed! From out the past
 “Of ages - since Mankind have known the rule
 “Of Monarchs - from the bloody rolls amassed
 “Of Sin and Slaughter - from the Caesar’s school, 350
 “Take the worst pupil - and produce a reign
 “More drenched with gore - more cumbered with the slain!

45.

“He ever warred with freedom and the free -
 “Nations as men - home Subjects - foreign foes -
 “So that they uttered the word ‘Liberty!’ 355
 “Found George the third their first opponent; whose
 “History was ever stained as his will be
 “With national and individual woes?
 “I grant his household abstinence; I grant
 “His neutral virtues - which most monarchs want; 360

46.

“I know he was a constant consort - own
 “He was a decent Sire, and middling lord;
 “All this is much, and most upon a throne -
 “As temperance, if at Apicius’ board,
 “Is more than at an Anchorite’s supper shown.
 365
 “I grant him all the kindest can accord -
 “And this was well for him - but not for those
 “Millions who found him what Oppression chose. -

47.

“The new World shook him off - the old yet groans
 “Beneath what he and his prepared, if not 370
 “Completed; he leaves heirs on many thrones
 “To all his vices, without what begot
 “Compassion for him - his tame virtues; drones
 “Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
 “A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake 375
 “Upon the throne of Earth - but let them quake!

48.

“Five Millions of the Primitive, who hold
 “The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
 “A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old -
 “Freedom to worship - not alone your Lord,
 380
 “Michael! but you - and you, Saint Peter! Cold
 “Must be your Souls, if you have not abhorred
 “The Foe to Catholic participation
 “In all the license of a Christian Nation. -

49.

“True, he allowed them to pray God - but as 385
 “A Consequence of Prayer refused the law
 “Which would have placed them upon the same base
 “With those who did not hold the Saints in awe” --
 But here Saint Peter started from his place,
 And cried, “You may the prisoner withdraw - 390
 “Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelf
 “While I am Guard, may I be damned myself! -

50.

“Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
 “My office (and *his* is no Sinecure)
 “Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range 395
 “The azure fields of heaven - of that be sure!”
 “Saint!” replied Sathan, “you do well to avenge
 “The wrongs he made your Satellites endure -
 “And if to this exchange you should be given
 “I’ll try and coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven.” 400

51.

Here Michael interposed, “Good Saint! and Devil!
 “Pray, not so fast - you both outrun discretion -
 “Saint Peter! You were wont to be more civil -
 “Sathan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
 “And condescension to the Vulgar’s level - 405
 “Even Saints sometimes forget themselves in Session.
 “Have you got more to say?” “No.” “If you please,
 “I’ll trouble you to call your witnesses.”

52.

Then Sathan turned and waved his swarthy hand,
 Which stirred with its electric qualities 410
 Clouds farther off than we can understand,
 Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
 Infernal thunder shook both Sea and Land
 In all the planets, and Hell’s batteries
 Let off the Artillery, which Milton mentions 415
 As one of Sathan’s most sublime inventions. -

53.

This was a Signal unto such damned souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controuls
Of worlds past present or to come; no station 420
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of Hell assigned, but where their Inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely - being damned the same. -

54.

They are proud of this - as very well they may - 425
It being a sort of knighthood - or gilt key
Stuck in their loins - or like to an "Entré"
Up the back stairs, or such Free Masonry;
I borrow my comparisons from Clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those Spirits be 430
Offended with such base low likenesses -
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

55.

When the great Signal ran from Heaven to Hell -
About ten million times the distance reckoned
From our sun to its earth - as we can tell 435
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London - through which dimly beaconed
The Weathercocks are gilt, some thrice a year -
If that the *Summer* is not too severe - 440

56.

I say that I can tell - 'twas half a minute -
I know the Solar beams take up more time
Ere, packed up for their journey, they begin it -
But then their Telegraph is less sublime -
And if they ran a race they would not win it 445
'Gainst Sathan's Couriers bound for their own clime;
The Sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its Goal - the Devil not half a day. -

57.

Upon the verge of Space - about the size
 Of Half a crown - a little speck appeared 450
 (I've seen a something like it in the Skies
 In the Ægean ere a Squall) it neared
 And growing bigger took another guise -
 Like an aërial Ship it tacked, and steered,
 Or *was* steered (I am doubtful of the grammar 455
 Of the last phrase, which makes the Stanza stammer,

58.

But take your choice) and then it grew a Cloud -
 And so it was - a Cloud of Witnesses -
 But such a Cloud! No land e'er saw a Crowd
 Of locusts numerous as the Heavens saw these - 460
 They shadowed with their myriads Space; their loud
 And varied cries were like those of Wild Geese
 (If Nations may be likened to a Goose)
 And realised the phrase of "Hell broke loose". -

59.

Here crashed a sturdy oath of stout John Bull, 465
 Who damned away his eyes as heretofore;
 There Paddy brogued "By Jasus!" - "What's your Wull?"
 The temperate Scot exclaimed; the French Ghost swore
 In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
 As the first Coachman will; and midst the roar 470
 The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
 "Our president is going to war, I guess." -

60.

Beside these were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
 In short, an universal Shoal of Shades,
 From Otaheite's Isle to Salisbury Plain, 475
 Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
 Ready to swear against the Good king's reign,
 Bitter as Clubs in Cards are against Spades,
 All summoned by this grand "Sub pœna", to
 Try if kings mayn't be damned, like me or you.
 480

61.

When Michael saw this Host, he first grew pale,
 As Angels can; next, like Italian twilight
 He turned all colours, as a Peacock's tail,
 Or Sunset streaming through a Gothic Skylight
 In some old Abbey, or a Trout not stale,
 485
 Or distant lightning on the horizon *by* night,
 Or a fresh rainbow, or a Grand review
 Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue. -

62.

Then he addressed himself to Sathan: "Why -
 "My Good old friend - for such I deem you, though
 490
 "Our different parties make us fight so shy -
 "I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe -
 "Our difference is *political* - and I
 "Trust that, whatever may occur below,
 "You know my great respect for you - and this 495
 "Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss.

63.

"Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 "My call for Witnesses? I did not mean
 "That you should half of Earth and Hell produce -
 "'Tis even superfluous, since two honest clean 500
 "True testimonies are enough - we lose
 "Our time, nay, our Eternity! between
 "The accusation and defence if we
 "Hear both - 'twill stretch our Immortality."

64.

Sathan replied, "To me the matter is 505
 "Indifferent, in a personal point of view;
 "I can have fifty better Souls than this
 "With far less trouble than we have gone through
 "Already, and I merely argued his
 "Late Majesty of Britain's case with you 510
 "Upon a point of form - you may dispose
 "Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows." -

65.

Thus spoke the Demon (late called "multifaced"
 By multo-scribbling Southey). "Then we'll call
 "One or two persons of the myriads placed 515
 "Around our Congress, and dispense with all
 "The rest," quoth Michael. "Who may be so graced
 "As to speak first? there's choice enough - who shall
 "It be?" Then Sathan answered, "There are many,
 "But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any". 520

66.

A merry, cock-eyed, curious looking Sprite
 Upon the instant started from the throng
 Drest in a fashion now forgotten quite -
 For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
 By people in the next world, where unite 525
 All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
 From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat
 Almost as scanty of days less remote. -

67.

The Spirit looked around upon the crowds
 Assembled and exclaimed, "My friends of all 530
 "The Spheres - we shall catch cold amongst these Clouds,
 "So let's to business - why this general call?
 "If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
 "And 'tis for an Election that they bawl,
 "Behold a Candidate with unturned-Coat! 535
 "Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?"

68.

"Sir," replied Michael, "you mistake - these things
 "Are of a former life, and what we do
 "Above is more August; to judge of kings
 "Is the tribunal met; so now you know." 540
 "Then I presume those Gentlemen with wings,"
 Said Wilkes, "are Cherubs - and that Soul below
 "Looks much like George the third, but to my mind
 "A good deal older - Bless me! is he blind?"

69.

“He is what you behold him, and his doom 545
 “Depends upon his deeds,” the Angel said.
 “If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
 “Gives license to the humblest beggar’s head
 “To lift itself against the loftiest.” “Some,”
 Said Wilkes, “don’t wait to see them laid in lead, 550
 “For such a liberty - and I, for one,
 “Have told them what I thought beneath the Sun.” -

70.

“Above the Sun repeat, then, what thou hast
 “To urge against him,” said the Archangel. “Why,”
 Replied the Spirit, “since old scores are past, 555
 “Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I;
 “Besides, I beat him hollow at the last
 “With all his lords and commons; in the Sky
 “I don’t like ripping up old stories, since
 “His conduct was but natural in a prince; 560

71.

“Foolish no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
 “A poor unlucky devil without a shilling -
 “But then I blame the man himself much less
 “Than Bute or Grafton and shall be unwilling
 “To see him punished here for their excess, 565
 “Since they were both damned long ago and still in
 “Their place below. For me, I have forgiven,
 “And vote his ‘habeas corpus’ into heaven.”

72.

“Wilkes,” said the Devil, “I understand all this;
 “You turned to half a Courtier ere you died, 570
 “And seem to think it would not be amiss
 “To grow a whole one on the other side
 “Of Charon’s ferry; you forget that *his*
 “Reign is concluded; whatsoe’er betide,
 “He won’t be Sovereign more; you’ve lost your labour, 575
 “For at the best he will but be your neighbour.”

73.

“However, I knew what to think of it,
 “When I beheld you in your jesting way,
 “Flitting and whispering round about the spit
 “Where Belial, upon duty for the day, 580
 “With Fox’s lard was basting William Pitt,
 “His pupil; I knew what to think, I say -
 “That fellow even in Hell breeds farther ills -
 “I’ll have him *gagged* - ’twas one of his own Bills.

74.

“Call Junius!” From the crowd a Shadow stalked, 585
 And at the name there was a general Squeeze,
 So that the very Ghosts no longer walked
 In comfort at their own aërial ease
 But were all rammed, and jammed (but to be balked
 As we shall see) and jostled heads and knees - 590
 Like wind compressed and pent within a bladder,
 Or like a human cholic, which is sadder.

75.

The Shadow came - a tall, thin, grey-haired figure,
 That looked as it had been a Shade on earth -
 Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour - 595
 But nought to mark its breeding or its birth -
 Now it waxed little - then again grew bigger -
 With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth -
 But as you gazed upon its features they
 Changed every instant - to *what*, none could say. 600

76.

The more intently the Ghosts gazed the less
 Could they distinguish whose the features were -
 The devil himself seemed puzzled even to guess -
 They varied like a dream - now here, now there -
 And several people swore from out the press 605
 They knew him perfectly, and one could swear -
 He was his father - upon which another
 Was sure he was his mother’s cousin’s brother,

77.

Another that he was a duke - or knight -
 An orator - a lawyer - or a priest - 610
 A Nabob - a Man Midwife; but the Wight
 Mysterious changed his countenance at least
 As oft as they their minds, though in full sight
 He stood, the puzzle only was increased -
 The Man was a phantasmagoria in 615
 Himself, he was so volatile and thin!

78.

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
 Presto! his face changed and he was another -
 And when that change was hardly well put on,
 It varied till I don't think his own mother 620
 (If that he had a mother) would her son
 Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other,
 Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
 At this epistolary "Iron Mask"!

79.

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem 625
 "Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely says
 Good M^{rs}. Malaprop) then you might deem
 That he was not even *one* - now many rays
 Were flashing round him - and now a thick steam
 Hid him from sight - like fogs on London days - 630
 Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies -
 And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

80.

I've an hypothesis - 'tis quite my own -
 I never let it out till now, for fear
 Of doing people harm about the throne - 635
 And injuring some minister or peer,
 On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
 It is - My gentle Public, Lend thine ear!
 'Tis that what Junius we are wont to call
 Was - *really, truly* - Nobody at all. 640

81.

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
 Written without hands, since we daily view
 Them written without heads, and books, we see,
 Are filled as well without the latter too -
 And really till we fix on Somebody 645
 For certain sure to claim them as his due,
 Their Author, like the Niger's Mouth, will bother
 The World to see if *there* be Mouth or Author.

82.

"And who and what art thou?" the Archangel said.
 "For *that* you may consult my title-page," 650
 Replied this mighty Shadow of a Shade.
 "If I have kept my secret half an age
 "I scarce shall tell it now." "Can'st thou upbraid,"
 Continued Michael, "George Rex - or allege
 "Aught further?" Junius answered, "You had better 655
 "First ask him for *his* answer to my letter;

83.

"My charges upon record will outlast
 "The Brass of both his epitaph and tomb."
 "Repent'st thou not," said Michael, "of some past
 "Exaggeration? Something which may doom 660
 "Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
 "Too bitter - is it not so? - in thy gloom
 "Of Passion?" "Passion!" cried the Phantom dim;
 "I loved my country, and I hated him.

84.

"What I have written I have written - Let 665
 "The rest be on his head or mine!" So spoke
 Old "Nominis Umbra", and while speaking yet
 Away he melted in celestial smoke.
 Then Sathan said to Michael, "Don't forget
 "To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke, 670
 "And Franklin;" but at this time there was heard
 A cry for room, though not a phantom stirred.

85.

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
 Of Cherubim appointed to that post,
 The devil Asmodeus to the circle made 675
 His way, and looked as if his journey cost
 Some trouble; when his burthen down he laid,
 “What’s this?” cried Michael, “Why, ’tis not a Ghost?”
 “I know it,” quoth the Incubus, “but he
 “Shall be one - if you leave the affair to me. 680

86.

“Confound the renegado! I have sprained
 “My left wing, he’s so heavy - one would think
 “Some of his works about his neck were chained;
 “But to the point - while hovering o’er the brink
 “Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rained) 685
 “I saw a taper far below me wink -
 “And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel -
 “No less on History than the Holy Bible.

87.

“The former is the Devil’s Scripture, and
 “The latter yours, Good Michael! So the affair 690
 “Belongs to all of us, you understand;
 “I snatched him up just as you see him there
 “And brought him off for sentence out of hand -
 “I’ve scarcely been ten minutes in the air -
 “At least a quarter it can hardly be; 695
 “I dare say that his wife is still at tea.” -

88.

Here Sathan said, “I know this man of old,
 “And have expected him for some time here;
 “A sillier fellow you will scarce behold
 “Or more conceited in his petty sphere - 700
 “But surely it was not worth while to fold
 “Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear!
 “We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
 “With carriage) coming of his own accord. -

89.

“But since he’s here, let’s see what he has done.” 705
 “Done!” cried Asmodeus, “he anticipates
 “The very business you are now upon -
 “And Scribbles as if head Clerk to the Fates.
 “Who knows to what his ribaldry may run
 “When such an Ass as this, like Balaam’s, prates?”
 710
 “Let’s hear,” quoth Michael, “what he has to say -
 “You know we’re bound to that in every way.”

90.

Now the Bard, glad to get an audience, which
 By no means often was his case below,
 Began to cough and hawk, and hem, and pitch 715
 His voice into that awful note of woe
 To all unhappy hearers within reach
 Of poets - when the tide of rhyme’s in flow -
 But stuck fast with his first Hexameter,
 Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir. 720

91.

But ere the spavined Dactyls could be spurred
 Into recitative, in great dismay
 Both Cherubim and Seraphim were heard
 To murmur loudly through their long array -
 And Michael rose ere he could get a word 725
 Of all his foundered verses under way,
 And cried, “For Godsake! Stop, my friend! ’twere best -
 ‘*Non Di, Non homines*’ - you know the rest.” -

92.

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
 Which seemed to hold all verse in detestation - 730
 The Angels had of course enough of song
 When upon service, and the Generation
 Of Ghosts had heard too much in life not long
 Before, to profit by a new occasion;
 The Monarch, mute till then, exclaimed, “What? What? 735
 “*Pye* come again! - No more - no more of that!”

93.

The tumult grew - an universal cough
 Convulsed the skies, as during a debate
 When Castlereagh has been up long enough
 (Before he was first minister of state, 740
 I mean - the *slaves hear now*). Some cried "Off! Off!"
 As at a farce, till, grown quite desperate,
 The Bard Saint Peter prayed to interpose
 (Himself an Author) only for his prose. -

94.

The Varlet was not an ill-favoured knave, 745
 A good deal like a Vulture in the face
 With a hook nose and a Hawk's eye which gave
 A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
 To his whole aspect, which though rather grave
 Was by no means so ugly as his case, 750
 But that indeed was hopeless as can be -
 Quite a poetic felony "*de se.*" -

95.

Then Michael blew his trump, and stilled the noise
 With one still greater, as is yet the mode
 On earth besides; except some grumbling voice 755
 Which now and then will make a slight inroad
 Upon decorous silence, few will twice
 Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrowded;
 And now the Bard could plead his own bad cause
 With all the attitudes of Self-Appraise. 760

96.

He said (I only give the heads) he said
 He meant no harm in scribbling - 'twas his way -
 Upon all topics - 'twas, besides, his bread -
 Of which he buttered both sides; 'twould delay
 Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread) 765
 And take up rather more time than a day
 To name his works; he would but cite a few -
 Wat Tyler - Rhymes on Blenheim - Waterloo. -

97.

He had written - praises of a Regicide -
He had written praises of all kings whatever - 770
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever -
For Pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever -
Then turned a hearty Antijacobin - 775
Had turned his coat - and would have turned his skin.

98.

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had called
Reviewing "the ungentle craft" §, and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawled - 780
Fed, paid and pampered by the very men
By whom his Muse and Morals had been mauled -
He'd written much blank-verse, and blanker prose -
And more of both than any body knows.

99.

He had written Wesley's life - here turning round 785
To Sathan, "Sir, I'm ready to write yours
"In two Octavo volumes nicely bound -
"With notes and preface - all that most allures
"The pious purchaser - and there's no ground
"For fear - for I can choose my own reviewers - 790
"So let me have the proper documents,
"That I may add you to my other Saints."

100.

Sathan bowed, and was silent. "Well, if you
"With amiable Modesty decline
"My offer what says Michael? There are few 795
"Whose Memoirs could be rendered more divine;
"Mine is a pen of all work - not so new
"As it was once - but I would make you shine
"Like your own trumpet - by the way, my own
"Has more of brass in't, and is as well blown. 800

NOTE: § : See "Life of H. Kirke White".

101.

“But talking about trumpets - here’s my ‘Vision’!
 “Now you shall judge - all people - yes - you shall
 “Judge with *my* Judgement! - and by my decision
 “Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall!
 “I settle all these things by intuition - 805
 “Times present, past, to come, Heaven, Hell, and All,
 “Like King Alfonso! (§§) When I thus see double
 “I save the Deity some Worlds of trouble.”

102.

He ceased, and drew forth an M.S., and no
 Persuasion on the part of devils or Saints 810
 Or Angels now could stop the torrent, so
 He read the first three lines of the Contents;
 But at the fourth, the whole Spiritual show
 Had vanished, with variety of scents,
 Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang 815
 Like Lightning off from his “melodious twang.” (§§§)

103.

Those grand Heroics acted as a Spell -
 The Angels stopped their ears and plied their pinions -
 The devils ran howling deafened down to Hell -
 The Ghosts fled gibbering for their own dominions 820
 (For ’tis not yet decided where they dwell
 And I leave every man to his opinions)
 Michael took refuge in his Trump - but lo!
 His teeth were set on edge - he could not blow!

NOTES: §§: King Alfonso speaking of the Ptolomean system said that “had he been consulted at the Creation of the world he would have spared the Maker some absurdities”.

§§§: See Aubrey’s account of the Apparition which “disappeared with a curious perfume” and “a melodious twang”: or see “The Antiquary”, volume first. -

104.

Saint Peter - who has hitherto been known 825
 For an impetuous Saint - upraised his keys
 And at the fifth line knocked the poet down -
 Who fell like Phaeton - but more at ease -
 Into his lake - for there he did not drown,
 A different web being by the Destinies 830
 Woven for the Laureate's final wreath - whene'er
 Reform shall happen, either here or there. -

105.

He first sunk to the bottom, like his works,
 But soon rose to the surface, like himself, (§§§§) 835
 For all Corrupted things are buoyed like Corks,
 By their own rottenness - light as an Elf,
 Or Wisp that flits o'er a Morass - he lurks
 It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf
 In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision" -
 As Wellborn says, "the Devil turned Precisian." - 840

106.

As for the rest - to come to the Conclusion
 Of this true dream - the telescope is gone
 Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
 And showed me what I in my turn have shown;
 All I saw farther in the last confusion 845
 Was that King George slipped into heaven for one -
 And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
 I left him practising the hundredth Psalm.

NOTE §§§§: A drowned body lies at the bottom till rotten - it then floats; as most people know. - - - -

Ravenna, October 4th 1821.

**Mem: This poem was begun on May 7th 1821 but left off the same day: -
 resumed about the 20th of September of the same year -
 & concluded as dated. - - - -**

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