

B8 I speake to such if any such there bee

Notes. Presented as a warning to other courtiers, and employing the kind of moral reasoning often found in contemporary works on criminality, this poem follows the interlinked chains of sin—atheism, avarice, oppression, arrogance, sexual excess, falsehood—that had corrupted Raleigh and precipitated God’s just punishment and Raleigh’s ruin. In both known sources this poem follows “To whome shall cursed I my Case complaine”.

“His Caveat to secure Courtiers”

I speake to such if any such there bee
whoe are possessed through their Princes grace
with swellinge pride and scornefull insolencye
haughty disdainig and abuse of place

To such I say if any such there bee
come see theise vices punished in mee

5

For I that am now as you see abjected
by just desert of former life ill spent
was sometime of my Prince as well respected
as any now in this new government

10

But for I then my favour misymploied
I now with punishment am much annoyed

I then did hold Religion but a Jest¹
farre more esteeming my owne pollicie
whereby I framde my Actions as a Beast
moved by beastlike sensualitie

15

For what my fleshly humor did delight
that held I lawfull were it wronge or right

My whole endeavour was to please my sence
with greedy Avarice and fowle oppression

20

divelish disdain filthie incontinence
and false invention were my cheife profession

Theise vices were by me still excercised
as those have caused me to be despised

And well he doth deserve despise to bee
whose minde with such corruption is infected
Wherefore twere good you should their natures see
that so they may the sooner be rejected

25

For any one of them sufficient is
the soule and body to deprive of Blisse

30

First looke on Avarice that sencelesse beast
and you shall see no end of greedy scraping
for though her Paunch bee stuft at Middayes feast
her still devouring mouth continues gapinge

Most wise was he who did her nature fitt
comparinge her to the infernall pitt

35

If you her reason should desier to know
why beyond reason shee doth Riches love
surelie no other reason could shee shewe
but covetous desier which doth her move

40

The which enforceth her so loud to cry
For Riches Riches most incessantly

Then Riches come and with her shee doth bringe
her God her Daughters and her Servants three
her Enemies doe alsoe after flinge
who doth her much molest and terrifie

45

For Riches never doth approche alone
but is by furies force attended on

Plutus² her God doth guide her by the hand
and doth dispose her where shee best doth please 50
her daughter Pride doth swellinge by her stand
who with sharpe pricking doth her much disease
 Filthy Excesse for More More More still cries
 and Ignorance doth blinde her mothers eies

Blinde Chance her Servante sometime doth availe her 55
and somtimes he by losses sore doth wronge her
but fraud and usurie doth never faile her
but like good servaunts still doth profitt bringe her
 suspition feare and greife her enimies
 doth wayte advantages her to surprise 60

Now when vile Avarice is full possessed
of Riches and this train which doth attend
shee doth account herselfe not meanelie blest
and then to gaine a heaven shee will not spend
 but still doth seeke her to increase with gaine 65
 by all meanes possible with busie paine

For then Oppression must his Cunnige use
in Monopolyes and in Transportacions
whereby he many thousands doth abuse
by sendinge that away to other Nations 70
 which should be dealt for Gods sake to the poore
 who wantinge aske the same from doore to doore³

But Avarice for Riches still doth Cry
so strongly that the poore cannot be heard
for shee had rather they should starve & dye 75
then shee from gettinge Riches should be barrd

such is the nature of the Damned Spright
that Riches onely is her whole delight

To please her then Oppression with his power
of all the meaner sort doth make his prey 80
like to a wide mouthd Pike which doth devoure
the smaller fish which cannot get away
and when the Foxes skinn will take no place
then doth Oppression use the Lions case⁴

If he by strength of place doth rule the Lawe 85
and suites decrees upon longe pleaded Cases
then if a matter have a cracke or flawe
Argentum⁵ must annoynt those crazie⁶ places
whereby in time it growes sufficient stronge
to passe for currant be it right or wronge⁷ 90

And if he bee in state of government
havige of meaner places oversight
then such as doe bribes unto him present
are either pentiond or discharged quite
For Avarice doth still cry out for gaine 95
and the Oppressor doth no wronge refraine

When these vilde vices had my Coffers filld
my minde likewise was then filld with disdaine
by whose approach all virtues quite were spild
which doth in minde of any man remaine 100
Yet in my minde shee founde but few to spill
for since it was a minde the same was ill

This hellbred Monster of foule Divelish kinde
was gotten by proud scorne of scornefull pride

nurst upp by Envy in a Cankerd minde 105
which could no other but it selfe abide
 deformitie her nature doth expresse
 her nature poysons where it doth possesse

Of this her nature was my minde possest
and with her poyson was I all infected 110
the which by me her furie was exprest
when any but my selfe I saw respected
 For were he farr my better in degree
 yet I disdaine he should my equall bee

This hatefull vice made me so odious seeme 115
that for the same I hated was of all
For as none but my selfe I did esteeme
so none there was that did not wish my fall
 Wherefore if this in any of you bee
 come see the same now punished in mee 120

I likewise like a Beast much time did spend
in that most beastlike sinne of fleshly pleasure
to which with filthie minde I much did bend
makinge no spare of Body, soule, nor Treasure
 For as a Beast is moved still by sence 125
 so was I movd by foule incontinence

And for I would be exquisite herein
I used supernaturall devises
Pouders Perfumes Payntings for filthie skynnes
extractions distillations Spiritt of Spices 130
 with theise and such like tricks I still was able
 To trimme a hakney for the Divells stable⁸

And as younge Apes doe learne by imitation
of elder apes their frisking apish toyes
so many apes and monkeys usde my fashion 135
and in the same doe place their cheifest joyes
never was beast to Nature soe unjust
as man & woman given to beastly lust

This sinne was my familiar recreacion
wherin I gloried much with shamelesse pride 140
boasting my selfe of easie acceptacion
protestinge that I never was denide
Ah, but if this in any of you bee
come see the same now justly plagued in mee

In false invention likewise I excelde 145
with which my Princes⁹ eares I much abusde
whereby plaine Truth was often time refelde¹⁰
and such as did present her were refuse
This sinne is onely proper to the Divell
then I which usde the same must needes be evill 150

Noe Tooth of Beaste or subtile serpents stinge
is halfe so hurtfull as a Liars Tounge
For those but paine to outward parts doe bringe
which may be cured well with Medicines stronge
But if a Liars Tounge doe make a wounde 155
noe salve can heale the same or make it sounde

When smooth tound Flattery with Falshood joyne
as seldome shall you see them goe aparte
Then what the one in her false hart doth coyne
the other publisheth by subtile Arte

And such a Tincture of the same shee setts
that of the greatest it acceptance getts

Surelie if Princes rightlie would conceive
what daunger lies in fawninge Flattery
how of their Sences shee doth them bereave
and how shee doth impaire their royaltie

165

No doubt they would then hold it for good reason
To punish her as they would punish Treason

For if it be offence deserving death
to sett the Princes shadow on base coyne¹¹
sure he much more offendes whoe with base breath
unto the Princes substance vice doth joyne

170

And thus doth he whoe makes an occupacion
his Prince to honnor with base adulation

These two united sinnes did first advance mee
and by thesie two I still my state sustainde
and theise in sinne so highly did inhance mee
that for the same this mischeife I have gainde

175

wherefore if this in any of you bee
come see this and the rest now plagued in mee

180

But doe not come as Idle gazers use
whoe make noe use of that they doe behold
but come & see how God doth me refuse
because my selfe to vice I wholly solde

soe come & see behold these plagude in mee
and fly my sinnes least soe you plagued bee

185

And doe not thinke that earthlie Princes graces
can give protection to a life ill spent

nor doe not thinke Authoritie of places
can (for one hower) reverse due punishment 190
for neither favour nor Authoritie
can stay Gods hand from just severitie

Wherefore all you that know your selves infected
with those foule synnes which I have now confessed
see that in time your prayers be directed 195
and that your wronges committed be redressed
For if you doe not speedily repent
be sure you shall receave just punishment

Be not deceavde by vaine imagination
of Gods remisse forgetfullnesse of wronge 200
For though he somtimes use procrastinacion
yet will he not deferre his comminge longe
For when mans sinfull measures overfroth
then powres he forth his measures fild with wrath

Soe measure just for measure shall you have 205
if still without remorse you doe offend
and therefore if you hope your selves to save
leave off in time and seeke your lives to mend
But if you still continue in your sinninge
then shall your endes be worse then your begininge 210

And doe not hold this my advise for vayne
because you know mee vaine that doth advise you
but rather doe thereby your vice refraine
least for the same both God and Man despise you
For though my owne Confession prove me evill 215
yet truth hath somtymes come even from the Divell

And therefore since with truth you now be warnde
though from a mouth that truth hath seldome usde
yet speaking truth lett not the same be scornde
but lett the cause therof be well perusde

220

And you shall finde that God doth soe ordaine it
for your beehoofe¹² if you can entertaine it

But if you wilfully advice refuse
and like as I did grow from bad to worse
Then looke what paiment God to mee doth use
such or the like he will to thee disburse

225

For if my warninge cannott now advise you
My punishment shall shortlie then surprise you

Source. Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fols. 14r-16r

Other known sources. BL Add. MS 15266, fol. 11v

B8

¹ *I then did hold Religion...Jest:* reference to Raleigh's alleged atheism, a charge investigated in the 1590s and revived during his treason trial.

² *Plutus:* god of wealth.

³ *For then Oppression...doore to doore:* this stanza adds specificity to the general charge of avarice, alluding to Raleigh's accumulation of several patents and monopolies from the Crown: a monopoly on the export of broadcloths; a monopoly on the licensing of wine-sellers and wine imports; and, as Warden of the Stanneries, a monopolistic control on English tin production.

⁴ *and when the Foxes...Lions case:* the fox is an emblem of cunning, the lion of brute force.

⁵ *Argentum:* silver.

⁶ *crazie:* unsound.

⁷ *If he by strength...right or wrong*: this stanza concerns the taking of bribes in judicial cases.

⁸ *To trimme a hakney...Divells stable*: to make ready a horse for the devil's stable. The meaning here is a little obscure, but the stanza seems to argue that Raleigh used magical love potions to pursue his bestial sexual desires. The potions allowed him to seduce his targets, making them fit for the devil.

⁹ *my Princes*: i.e. Elizabeth I's.

¹⁰ *refelde*: refuted, rejected.

¹¹ *To sett the Princes...base coyne*: i.e. to counterfeit money.

¹² *beehoofe*: benefit.
