THE ANNOTATED MILTON
COMPLETE ENGLISH POEMS

Edited and with Annotations Lexical, Syntactic, Prosodic, and Referential by Burton Raffel
CONTENTS

Title Page
Chronology
Preface
Introduction

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM 114

PSALM 136

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT

AT A VACATION EXERCISE

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

THE PASSION

SONG: ON MAY MORNING

ENGLISH SONNETS
No. 1 O nightingale
No. 7 How soon hath time
No. 8 Captain or colonel
No. 9 Lady, that in the prime
No. 10 Daughter to that good earl
No. 11 I did but prompt the age
No. 12 A book was writ, of late
No. 13 Harry, whose tuneful
No. 14 When faith and love
No. 15 Fairfax, whose name in arms
No. 16 Cromwell, our chief of men
No. 17 Vane, young in years
No. 18 Avenge, O Lord
No. 19 When I consider
No. 20 Lawrence, of virtuous father
No. 21 Cyriack! Whose grandsire
No. 22 Cyriack, this three years day
No. 23 Methought I saw

ON SHAKESPEARE

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER

ANOTHER ON THE SAME

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

L’ALLEGRO
IL PENSEROSEO

ARCADES

COMUS: A MASQUE

ON TIME

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

LYCIDAS

THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, BOOK ONE

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE

PSALMS 1–8:
  #1
  #2
  #3
  #4
  #5
  #6
  #7
  #8

PARADISE LOST
  Book I
  Book II
  Book III
  Book IV
  Book V
  Book VI
  Book VII
  Book VIII
  Book IX
  Book X
  Book XI
  Book XII

PARADISE REGAINED
  Book I
  Book II
  Book III
  Book IV

SAMSON AGONISTES

Suggestions for Further Reading

Ask your Bookseller for these Bantam Classics

About the Author

Copyright
CHRONOLOGY

1608  Milton born, 9 December, in London
1618?–20?  tutored by Thomas Young
1615?  
1620?–25  St. Paul’s School
1625  begins at Cambridge University, enrolled in Christ’s College
1629  March, B.A. degree
1632  March, M.A. degree
1632–38  residence at his father’s house
1634  September, Comus performed at Ludlow
1637  3 April, death of Milton’s mother
1638–39  European tour: France, Italy, Switzerland
1640  schoolteacher, in London
1641  Of Reformation in England
Of Prelatical Episcopacy
Animadversions upon the Remonstrant’s Defense
1642  May/June, married Mary Powell
The Reason of Church Government
An Apology for Smectymnuus
October, Civil War begins
1643  The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce
April, Milton’s father comes to live with him
1644  Of Education
The Judgment of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce
Areopagitica
Milton’s sight begins to fail
1645  Tetrachordon
Colasterion
1646  Poems
29 July, daughter Anne born
1647  March, death of Milton’s father
1648  25 October, daughter Mary born
1649  30 January, Charles I executed
The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates
March, appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues, Council of State
1650  left eye fails
1651  Defensio pro Populo Anglicano
16 March, son John born
1652  February/March, complete blindness
2 May, daughter Deborah born
May, Mary Powell Milton’s death
16 June, death of son, John
1654  Defensio Secunda
1655  Pro Se Defensio
1656  November, married Katherine Woodcock
1657  19 October, daughter Katherine born
1658  
February, death of Katherine Woodcock Milton  
17 March, death of daughter Katherine  
3 September, Oliver Cromwell’s death

1659  
*A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*  
Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church

1660  
The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth  
May, Charles II restored to the throne  
Milton arrested, released

1663  
February, married Elizabeth Minshull

1665  
resided at Chalfont St. Giles during plague

1667  
February, ten-book edition of *Paradise Lost*

1669  
Accidence Commenced Grammar

1670  
History of Britain

1671  
*Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*

1672  
*Joannis Miltoni Angli, Artis Logicae Plenior Institutio*

1673  
Minor Poems (enlarged edition)  
Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration

1674  
*Paradise Lost*, twelve-book edition  
8 November, Milton’s death, in London
The first version of what would become this book was written into the pages of another editor’s deservedly famous edition of Milton. Principally lexical and syntactic commentary, these early annotations stemmed directly from an extremely common quandary, namely, a teacher fundamentally (though by no means completely) dissatisfied with the textbook from which, for lack of anything better suited to his classroom, he goes on teaching. That sort of dissatisfaction can be lived with; it can finally be put to the side; or it can lead, as mine has, to a completely new book.

I teach Milton as an English poet, one of the very greatest, most influential, important, and deeply challenging the language has ever known. Although I firmly believe, like most scholars, that the more we know about any writer the more we can understand and also appreciate the resonating excellences and profundities of his or her work, I also believe that some of the things we can know are more useful than are others. Milton’s English poetry seems to me so overwhelmingly primary to both appreciation and understanding of his place in English literature that his Latin poetry shrinks to tertiary significance, and his profusely vigorous prose to secondary significance. Accordingly, this edition of Milton contains none of the Latin (or the Italian) poems, either in the original language(s) or in translation. It contains none of Milton’s prose.

The text of the English poems, however, is not only complete, but has been conservatively modernized and edited for maximum accessibility. Nothing has been done to interfere in any way whatever with the prosody of these poems. The vexing problem of syllabified versus unsyllabified vowels has been preempted by (1) the use of spelling to indicate each prosodically suppressed vowel (usually by means of an apostrophe, sometimes by such spellings as “shouldst” or “didst”), and (2) the addition of an accent mark each time a vowel is syllabified (“wingèd,” “blessèd”). My prosodic markings are consistent throughout this book. When, therefore, a word such as “winged” is monosyllabic, I have added neither an apostrophe nor an accent mark; the reader can assume that any word without one of those marks does not in my judgment require one.

Rather too much has been made of Milton’s spelling, much of which is conventional and, though appropriate to his time, without significance in ours. His punctuation is in general (though not universally) a reliable guide to verse movement. I have punctuated, and capitalized, as conservatively as possible. But I have not hesitated to interpret Milton’s use of semicolons and colons as requiring, in our time, a sentence-ending period. Nor have I hesitated to add reader-friendly paragraphing.

I would have been happier had my annotations been able to be placed alongside the line they refer to. The economics of publishing makes this impossible. But since I do not believe that lexical annotations consisting only of a single word are truly satisfactory, I have often given three or four or even more words in each gloss. Placing all annotations at the bottom of the page does, therefore, have at least the advantage of clearly separating annotations one from the other.

Most of my lexical annotations are to words rather than to phrases, clauses, or sentences. As a teacher, I have found that students need to know what the components mean, just as much as they need to know the meaning of the finished product. Indeed, understanding syntax becomes a good deal easier when the components are clearly understood—and many of my annotations are syntactic as well as lexical. All syntactic material is placed in square brackets: [verb]. If, as is usually the case, annotations are both lexical and syntactic, the lexical portion always precedes the syntactic.

I have tried to annotate everything a student—any student, all students—might need to know. Not being able to predict on which page a student might first come upon material opaque to him or her, I have annotated repeatedly, tirelessly, and for some readers surely excessively. But I would much rather be safe than sorry.

Translations of the original (and it is striking how often Milton, though writing in a form of English, requires something very like translation) are always set in quotation marks. Renderings of anything more than a single word, however, are signaled first by a repetition of the words being annotated, and second by an equal sign placed immediately after that repetition:

    evil store = an abundance of evil
those in servitude: servants

When the annotation is more commentary than rendering, the colon is replaced by an equal sign:

due time = in the time that, properly, it should take

When there are multiple meanings (and Milton is enormously fond of layered meaning, as also he is far fonder of wordplay, including puns, than his reputation would suggest) that are sufficiently distinct from one another, I have grouped them under numbered headings:

(1) perilous, rash, risky, (2) enterprising

Lexical glosses involving more than one word, but not involving semantic layering, simply employ commas: common, ordinary, uneducated

The slash is used to indicate that one of the words or phrases in a multiword annotative definition has distinct alternative possibilities:

having no material being/body

care for/prediction of the future

Note that the slash places in the alternative only the word immediately before it. Thus the first example above should be understood as “having no material being or body,” and the second as “care for or prediction of the future.” One additional example may make this clearer:

not maternal/the mother of

This should be understood, accordingly, as “not maternal, not the mother of.”

Referential (informational) annotations use both the colon and, somewhat differently, the equal sign:

a Titan, daughter of Gaia (earth) by Zeus: goddess of justice

Horeb = Sinai, in Exodus and Deuteronomy

Nimrod (“hunter”) : see Genesis 10:8–10

When I do not know with reasonable certainty what Milton is referring to or saying, I have said so, using a simple question mark:

not specified: the basic nature of the Godhead?

face (defiantly) ? await?

Although commentary, in the usual scholarly meaning, has been almost completely avoided in these annotations, it has sometimes been unavoidable. I have kept it as brief as possible, and have usually introduced it by the signal “i.e.”:

i.e., the act of building, not the structure being built

The pronunciation of Greek names and, on occasion, of certain other words, often requires elucidation, which I have kept as minimal as possible:

Calliope [4 syllables, 2nd and 4th accented]

Hecate [trisyllabic], ghost-world goddess
One early reader commented that users of this book might sometimes find themselves dizzy, forced constantly to look up and down the page, from text to footnotes and back, on and on and on. Depending on the opacity of Milton’s vocabulary, the turgidity of his syntax, and the frequency and insistence of his allusions, these pages necessarily vary enormously in their density of annotation. Lexically confident readers are advised to ignore as many of my annotations as they can. But it would be much appreciated if lexically well informed readers, and indeed anyone who finds any of the errors, omissions, and unclarities I have struggled to eliminate, would send me corrections.
INTRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING and appreciating John Milton—Milton, that is, as an English poet—depends less on a knowledge of Christian doctrine or the rise and then the decline and fall of Puritanism as a governing force in British life, less on a wide-ranging familiarity with classical poetry and medieval and Renaissance European scholarship (including but certainly not limited to alchemy, astronomy, and astrology), and less on an awareness of the intellectual currents of seventeenth-century Europe than on the ability to understand why poetry such as the following—not by Milton, but written nearly a hundred years before the publication of Paradise Lost—maintained a continuing and sometimes worshipful readership well into the twentieth century:

Lo I the man, whose Muse whilom did mask,
    As time her taught, in lowly Shepherd’s weeds,
    Am now enforced a far unfitter task,
    For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds,
    And sing of Knights’ and Ladies’ gentle deeds;
    Whose praises having slept in silence long,
    Me, all too mean, the sacred Muse areeds
        [advises, teaches]
    To blazon broad amongst her learnèd throng:
    Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

Help then, O holy Virgin, chief of nine,
    Thy weaker Novice to perform thy will,
    Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne [chest for books/documents]
    The antique rolls which there lie hidden still,
Of Faery knights and fairest Tanaquil [wife of Tarquinius; here Queen Elizabeth]
    Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
    Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
    That I must rue his undeservèd wrong:
O help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my dull tongue.

The scholarly (but not necessarily merely literate) reader will immediately recognize these lines, and their author, and will know the massive and so long beloved English epic from which they come, Edmund Spenser’s The Faerie Queene. And any reader at all, after a quarter of an hour’s exposure to Paradise Lost in particular, will have at least some sense of the similarities of Milton’s work to that of Spenser. These include:

• insistently lofty, elevated diction, expressive of the urgent conviction that poet and reader are engaged not in some casual, friendly dialogue or in mere entertainment, but in an activity at once both serious and highly moral; note that in line 7 the Muse is called “sacred”

• constant, even fundamental reference to past persons and events, including regular allusions to past intellectual belief structures (and note, please, the use of the plural; we here meet classical Muses and shepherds along with medieval knights, Roman along with British history, pagan along with Christian religion, and so on)

• frequent reliance on archaically tinted vocabulary (I have here modernized spelling, but the attentive reader will not be fooled)

• markedly convoluted syntax, with sentences being stretched (and bent) over many lines

• what modern poets and readers might call a long breath line—rhythms that elongate and tend
to roll like the waves of the sea, rather than (as in much modern poetry) poke and dart even as they loll

• reliance on more or less objectified conventions, which are the very farthest thing from “personal” to either the poet or his poem: e.g., the confession in line 3 not only of the poet’s incapacity for this task but of his general poetic ineptitude (he is here called to “a far unfitter task”—and see also “Me, all too mean,” in line 7, and the reference to his “weak wit” and “dull tongue” in the final line of the second stanza)

• a set of assumptions, apparently fixed and settled for all time, about trumpets being “stern” (line 4), knights and ladies “gentle” (line 5) and their prior praises plainly insufficient (line 6), poets and their readers being “learnèd” (line 8), what is old being always good (the “antique rolls” of line 13), royalty invariably “noble” if male and “fair” or even “fairest” if female (lines 14 and 15), and princely suffering being both romantic and unfair (lines 16 and 17)

And there is more. But this is the introduction to a book about John Milton, not Edmund Spenser, vastly influential on Milton as Spenser clearly was. All the same, to nail the point home, let me quickly carry the story of Spenser’s fame and influence into the nineteenth and, just barely, the twentieth century. William Wordsworth, at age thirty-one, was reported on Monday, the sixteenth of November, 1801, to be feeling “some what weakish,” but in compensation (and perhaps as a curative) “now at 7 o’clock reading Spenser” (Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, 59). Eight days later, “after tea William read Spenser[,] now and then a little aloud to us,” his wife and sister (62). And on Thursday, the first of July, 1802, said to be “a very rainy day,” we learn that “we had a nice walk, and afterwards sate by a nice snug fire and William read Spenser and I read ‘As you like it’” (144). Plainly, Spenser traveled and was seen to belong in some pretty special company. Indeed, the very first poem in The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats, identified therein as “the earliest known composition of Keats,” is an “Imitation of Spenser” (1). Spenser’s tracks are all over the Keats volume, from a “Spenserian Stanza, written at the close of book v. of THE FAERIE QUEENE” (8–9), a sonnet “To Spenser” (42), and three more “Spenserian Stanzas” aimed in 1819 at Charles Armitrage Brown, in response (in Keats’ own words) to “Brown this morning… writing some Spenserian stanzas against Mrs., Miss [Fanny] Brawne and me.”

And Spenser’s reach extends, as I have indicated, a good century further. In an 1858 letter to his sister, sent from Oxford, John Addington Symonds requests that he be sent his copy of Spenser (the request placed, in sequence, between Chaucer and “the large Milton” [The Letters of John Addington Symonds, I, 167]). In another letter home the next year, he asks, “Has a small Spenser in 6 diamond volumes, come for me from Jeffries in Redcliffe Street? I ordered it when I was last in Clifton” (I, 200). Nor did Symonds’ interest flag in later years. Almost thirty years along, he writes to Edmund Gosse, 16 May 1886, from Germany, expressing genuine concern about the possible misattribution of a sixteen-century poem the style of which “seems to me suspiciously like that of Spenser” (III, 139). Writing in 1896 from his prison cell in Reading, Oscar Wilde requested “Spenser’s Poems,” among other books (The Letters of Oscar Wilde, 405 n). And, finally, in August 1912 Edward Dowden writes that “most of my reading hours were given to Spenser, and once again I went through the ‘Faerie Queene’ (though I can’t say, as Southey did, that I have read it once a year” [Letters of Edward Dowden, 381]).

Yet Milton not only participates in a long and strong tradition, connecting to it in more ways than I can here comment upon, but he has always been, and still remains, an immensely significant, powerful contributor to that tradition. He draws upon Shakespeare (he was born eight years before Shakespeare’s death), as has everyone else. But he also adds to Shakespeare, as most others neither have done nor could do.

He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening, from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains in her spotty globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand —
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marl, not like those steps
On Heaven’s azure. And the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.

The sweep and grandeur of this portrait of Satan, struggling to preserve his dignity (not to mention his power) even though newly fallen from the glories of heaven to the sulfurous and smoking fields of hell, is unmatchable in English verse. Virgil and even Homer, had they seen (or heard) Milton’s description of the “ponderous shield, / Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, / Behind him cast,” the “broad circumference” of which “Hung on his shoulders like the moon,” would have recognized and perhaps envied a colleague in and competitor for poetic glory. Milton’s uniquely majestic rhetoric, his commanding poetic “voice,” seem almost the effect of some marvelously benignant Midas touch, turning even tawdriness into magnificent resonance.

It is not difficult, of course, to find this side of Milton, especially in Paradise Lost and Samson Agonistes but also, in different and younger ways, in Lycidas and, fittingly, in his quite early “On Shakespeare,” probably written when he was only twenty-two. This is the Milton of whom Douglas Bush could declare, “Whoever the third of English poets may be [Shakespeare and Chaucer being overwhelming consensus choices for numbers I and 2], Milton’s place has been next to the throne” (English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 359). But whether writing about angels or demons, Milton’s touch can also be delicate and lyrically shimmering:

...how he fell

From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o’er the crystal battlements.
From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer’s day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star....

His psychological insights, as well as his sense of inner drama, exceed those of every English poet or dramatist but Shakespeare. Here is Satan, newly arrived in view of the Garden of Eden:

...Horror and doubt distract

His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place.

This patient, careful, almost tender delineation of devilish torment is a good deal more impressive even than that offered in Marlowe’s fine play Doctor Faustus: “How comes it, then,” asks Faustus of the devil, “that thou art out of hell?” And the devil replies, “Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it” (The Works of Christopher Marlowe, ed. Brooke, 155). Marlowe gives us high drama, as does Milton. But Milton gives us more.

And who can forget, once read, the achingly stupendous close to Lycidas, composed when Milton was twenty-nine:

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th’ oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray.
He touched the tender stops of various quills.

With eager thought warbling his Doric lay.
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

LYCIDAS, 186–93

The very moment he heard (by e-mail) that this edition was in preparation, a friend of mine, many years away from any connection with schools or colleges, promptly wrote out from memory a remarkably accurate transcript of almost fifty lines of *Lycidas*. That is exactly the sort of response, and the sort of tribute, that this edition of Milton’s English poems is intended to elicit.

The principal function of the introduction to a book like this is to inform prospective readers of the editor’s goals and intentions and of the nature of the material offered in support of those goals and intentions in the pages that follow. Introductions to editions of Milton customarily explain the editor’s view of Milton’s theological concerns, usually discussing the poetry’s relationship to those concerns. Biographical information is often set out as well. (Biographical material is here offered, in capsule form, in the Chronology, which immediately follows the Contents listing above.) In this volume, however, much of the necessary theological and other informational material is spread throughout the book, being contained in the annotations (affixed to the poems for which such information is necessary), these comprising whatever value the book may possess. Those who employ this edition as a university textbook, which in all likelihood will be its chief use, will have an informed and communicative instructor to frame additionally needed contexts. And the brief list of suggested reading at the end of this volume offers, I trust, whatever further guidance may be required, at least in the initial stages of coming to know John Milton’s English poetry. Most of the items there cited, of course, contain references to still further critical and historical materials.
A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM 114

When the blest seed of Terah’s faithful son
After long toil their liberty had won,
And passed from Pharian fields to Canaan land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty’s hand,
Jehovah’s wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head
Low in the earth. Jordan’s clear streams recoil,
As a faint host that hath received the foil.
The high, huge-bellied mountains skip like rams
Amongst their ewes, the little hills like lambs.
Why fled the oceans and why skipped the mountains?
Why turned Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake earth, and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was, and aye shall last,
That glassy floods from ruggèd rocks can crush,
And make soft rills from fiery flint-stones gush.
1624

Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for He is kind,
   For His mercies aye endure,
   Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze His name abroad,
For of gods He is the God,
   For His, etc.

O let us His praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell,
   For His, etc.

That with His miracles doth make
Amazèd Heav'n and earth to shake,
   For His, etc.

Who by His wisdom did create
The painted Heav'ns so full of state,
   For His, etc.

Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the wat'ry plain,
   For His, etc.

Who by His all-commanding might
Did fill the new-made world with light,
   For His, etc.

And caused the golden-tressèd sun
All the day long his course to run,
   For His, etc.

The hornèd moon to shine by night,
Amongst her spangled sisters bright,
   For His, etc.

He with His thunder-clasping hand
Smote the first-born of Egypt land,
   For His, etc.

And in despite of Pharaoh fell, He brought from thence His Israel,
   For His, etc.

The ruddy waves He cleft in twain,
Of the Erythraean main,\(^{29}\)
   For His, etc.

The floods stood still like walls of glass
While the Hebrew bands did pass,
   For His, etc.

But full soon they did devour
The tawny\(^{40}\) king with all his power,
   For His, etc.

His chosen people He did bless
In the wasteful\(^{41}\) wilderness,
   For His, etc.

In bloody battle He brought down
Kings of prowess and renown,
   For His, etc.

He foiled bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amororean\(^{42}\) coast,
   For His, etc.

And large-limbed Og\(^{43}\) He did subdue,
With all his over-hardy\(^{44}\) crew,
   For His, etc.

And to His servant Israel\(^{45}\)
He gave their land, therein to dwell,
   For His, etc.

He hath with a piteous eye
Beheld us in our misery,
   For His, etc.

And freed us from the slavery
Of the invading enemy,
   For His, etc.

All living creatures He doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their need,
   For His, etc.

Let us therefore warble\(^{46}\) forth
His mighty majesty and worth,
   For His, etc.

That His mansion hath on high,
Above the reach of mortal eye,
   For His mercies aye endure,
   Ever faithful, ever sure.
ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH

1625–26? 1628?

I

O fairest flower no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer’s chief honor if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak winter’s force, that made thy blossom dry,
For he being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,
But killed, alas, and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

II

For since grim Aquilo, his charioteer,
By boisterous rape th’ Athenian damsel got,
He thought it touched his deity full near
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away the infamous blot
Of long-uncoupled bed and childless eld,
Which ’mongst the wanton gods a foul reproach was held.

III

So mounting up in icy-pearlèd car
Through middle empire of the freezing air
He wandered long, till thee he spied from far.
There ended was his quest, there ceased his care:
Down he descended from his snow-soft chair,
But all unwares with his cold-kind embrace
Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair biding place.

IV

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate,
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,

Whilom did slay his dearly lovèd mate,
Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas’ strand,
Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land,
But then transformed him to a purple flower:
Alack, that so to change thee winter had no power.
Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead
Or that thy corpse corrupts in earth’s dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low-delved tomb.
Could Heav’n, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality that showed thou wast divine.

Resolve me, then, O soul most surely blest
(If so it be that thou these plaints dost hear)!
Tell me, bright spirit, where’er thou hoverest,
Whether above that high, first-moving sphere
Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were),
Oh say me true if thou were mortal wight
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.

Were thou some star which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall?
Which careful Jove in Nature’s true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?
Or did, of late, earth’s sons besiege the wall
Of shiny Heav’n, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?

Or were thou that just maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O tell me sooth,
And cam’st again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou Mercy, that sweet smiling youth?
Or that crowned matron, sage white-robèd Truth?
Or any other of that heav’nly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who having clad thyself in human weed
To earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures Heav’n doth breed,
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heav’n aspire?

Or wert thou some star which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall?
Which careful Jove in Nature’s true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?
Or did, of late, earth’s sons besiege the wall
Of shiny Heav’n, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?

Or were thou that just maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O tell me sooth,
And cam’st again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou Mercy, that sweet smiling youth?
Or that crowned matron, sage white-robèd Truth?
Or any other of that heav’nly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who having clad thyself in human weed
To earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures Heav’n doth breed,
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heav’n aspire?
But oh, why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy Heav’n-loved innocence?
To slake his wrath, whom sin hath made our foe?
To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,
Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence?
               To stand ’twixt us and our deservèd smart? 75
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art.

XI

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,
Her false-imagin’d loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild.
Think what a present thou to God has sent,
And render Him with patience what he lent.
               This if thou do, He will an offspring give
That till the world’s last end shall make thy name to live.
AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE, PART LATIN, PART ENGLISH

1628

The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began:

Hail, native language, that by sinews weak
Didst move my first endeavoring tongue to speak
And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,
Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips,

Driving dumb silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before!
Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask,
That now I use thee in my later task.
Small loss it is that hence can come unto thee:
I know my tongue but little grace can do thee.
Thou needst not be ambitious to be first:
Believe me, I have thither packed the worst—
And, if it happen, as I did forecast,
The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
I pray thee, then, deny me not thy aid
For this same small neglect that I have made,
But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure,
Not those new-fangled toys and trimming slight
Which takes our late fantasticks with delight,
But cull those richest robes and gay'st attire
Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
I have some naked thoughts that rove about
And loudly knock to have their passage out,
And, weary of their place, do only stay
Till thou has decked them in thy best array,
That so they may without suspect
Fly swiftly to this fair assembly's ears.

Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some graver subject use,
Such as may make thee search thy coffers round
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound—
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'n's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity

How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire.
Then passing through the spheres of watchful fire,  
And misty regions of wide air next under,  
And hills of snow and loftis, of piled thunder,  
May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,  
In Heav’n’s defiance mustering all his waves.  
Then sing of secret things that came to pass  
When beldam Nature in her cradle was.  
And last, of kings and queens and heroes old,  
Such as the wise Demodocus, once told,  
In solemn songs at king Alcinous’ feast,  
While sad Ulysses’ soul and all the rest  
Are held with his melodious harmony  
In willing chains and sweet captivity.  
But fie, my wand’ring muse! How thou dost stray!  
Expectance calls thee now another way:  
Thou know’st it must be now thy only bent  
To keep in compass of thy predicament.  
Then quick, about thy purposed business come,  
That to the next I may resign my room.

Then Ens is represented as father of the [ten Aristotelian] predicaments, his ten sons, whereof the eldest stood for substance, with his canons, which Ens, thus speaking, explains:

Good luck befriend thee, son, for at thy birth  
The fairy ladies danced upon the hearth.  
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy  
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,  
And sweetly singing round about thy bed  
Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.  
She heard them give thee this: that thou should’st still  
From eyes of mortals walk invisible.  
Yet there is something that doth force my fear,  
For once it was my dismal hap to hear  
A sibyl old, bow-bent with crooked age,  
That far events full wisely could presage,  
And in time’s long and dark prospective glass  
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass:  
“Your son,” said she, “(nor can you it prevent)  
Shall be subject to many an accident.  
O’er all his brethren he shall reign as king,  
Yet every one shall make him underling,  
And those that cannot live from him asunder  
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.  
In worth and excellence he shall out-go them,  
Yet being above them, he shall be below them.  
From others he shall stand in need of nothing,  
Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing.  
To find a foe it shall not be his hap,  
And peace shall lull him in her flow’ry lap.  
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door  
Devouring war shall never cease to roar.  
Yea, it shall be his natural property  
To harbor those that are at enmity.”
What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?

The next, Quantity and Quality, spoke in prose. Then Relation was called by his name:

Rivers arise, whether thou be the son
Of utmost Tweed, or Ouse, or gulfy Dun,
Or Trent, who like some earth-born giant spreads
His thirty arms along the indented meads,
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath,
Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden’s death,
Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lea,
Or coaly Tyne, or ancient hallowed Dee,
Or Humber loud, that keeps the Scythian’s name,
Or Medway smooth, or royal-towered Thame.
ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST’S NATIVITY

1629

I

This is the month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the son of Heav’n’s eternal king,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring.
For so the holy sages once did sing,

That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty
Wherewith he wont, at Heav’n’s high council-table
To sit, the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and here with us to be

Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III

Say Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the infant God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the Heav’n by the sun’s team untrod,

Hath took no print of the approaching light
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how, from far, upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste, with odors sweet!
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessèd feet!
Have thou the honor, first thy Lord to greet,

And join thy voice unto the Angel choir
From out his secret altar, touched with hallowed fire.

THE HYMN
I

It was the winter wild,
While the Heav’n-born child
        All meanly\textsuperscript{115} wrapped in the rude \textsuperscript{116} manger\textsuperscript{117} lies.

Nature in awe\textsuperscript{118} to him
Had doffed \textsuperscript{119} her gaudy \textsuperscript{120} trim, \textsuperscript{121}
        With her great master so to sympathize.
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty \textsuperscript{122} paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
        To hide her guilty front\textsuperscript{123} with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute \textsuperscript{124} with sinful blame,
        The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
Confounded\textsuperscript{125} that her Maker’s eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace.
        She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger, \textsuperscript{126}
        With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
And waving wide her myrtle wand
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

IV

No war or battle’s sound
Was heard the world around.
        The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
The hookèd \textsuperscript{127} chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood,
        The trumpet spoke not to the armèd throng,
And kings sat still, with awful \textsuperscript{128} eye,
As if they surely knew their sov’reign Lord was by.

V

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
        His reign of peace upon the earth began.
The winds, with wonder whist,\textsuperscript{129}
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

VI

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence,
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespoke, and bid them go.

VII

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

VIII

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row.
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below.
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger struck,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringèd noise
As all their souls in blissful rapture took.

The air such pleasure loath to lose
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.
X

Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's 138 seat, the airy region thrilling.
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling.
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heav’n and earth in happier union.

XI

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shame-faced night arrayed. 139
The helmèd Cherubim
And swordèd Seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks, with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn choir,
With unexpressive 140 notes to Heav’n’s new-born heir.

XII

Such music (as ’tis said)
Before was never made
But when of old the sons of morning sung,

While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering 141 waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears
(If ye have power to touch our senses so),
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of Heav’n’s deep organ blow,
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold,
And speckled 142 vanity
Will sicken soon, and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould,
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

XV

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and like glories wearing
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
And Heav’n, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

XVI

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so,
The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify.
Yet first to those ychained in sleep
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep

XVII

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang
While the red fire and smoldering clouds out-break.
The aged earth aghast
With terror of that blast
Shall from the surface to the center shake;
When at the world’s last session

The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread His throne,

XVIII

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is—
But now begins, for from this happy day
Th’ old dragon under ground
In straiter limits bound
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And wroth to see his kingdom fail
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX
The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance or breathèd spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX

The lonely mountains o’er,
And the resounding shore,

A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament.
From haunted spring and dale
Edged with poplar pale
The parting genius is with sighing sent.
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The lars and lemures moan with midnight plaint.
In urns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint,
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forges his wonted seat.

XXII

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine
And moonèd Ashtaroth
Heav’n’s queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers’ holy shine.

The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn.
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn,

XXIII

And sullen Moloch fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue.
In vain with cymbals’ ring
They call the grisly king,
    In dismal dance about the furnace blue.
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
    Trampling th’ unshowered grass with lowings loud,
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest:
    Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud.

In vain with timbred anthems dark
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.

XXV

He feels from Judah’s land
The dreaded infant’s hand,
    The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn.
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
    Not Typhon huge, ending in snaky twine.
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

XXVI

So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
    Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail.
    Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII

But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
    Time is our tedious song should here have ending.
Heav’n’s youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
    Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending,
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.
THE PASSION

1630: “This subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished.”

I

Erewhile 191 of music and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of air and earth did ring,
And joyous news of Heav'nly infant's birth,
My muse with Angels did divide to sing. 192
But headlong joy is ever on the wing,

    In wintry solstice like the shortened light
Soon swallowed up in dark and long outliving night.

II

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize 193 ere long
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo,

    Most perfect hero, tried in heaviest 194 plight 195
Of labors huge and hard, too hard for human wight 196

III

He sov'reign priest, stooping his regal head
That dropped with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle 197 entered,
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies.
Oh what a mask was there, what a disguise!

    Yet more: the stroke of death he must abide 198
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

IV

These latter scenes confine my roving verse;
To this horizon is my Phoebus 199 bound:
His Godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings otherwhere are found.
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound 200

    Me softer airs befit, 201 and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, 202 more apt for mournful things.
V

Befriend me, night, best patroness of grief,
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flattered fancy to belief
That Heav’n and earth are colored with my woe,
My sorrows are too dark for day to know.
   The leaves should all be black wheron I write,
   And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish white.

VI

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels
That whirled the prophet \[203\] up, at Chebar flood!
My spirit some transporting Cherub feels,
To bear me where the towers of Salem \[204\] stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood.
   There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
   In pensive \[205\] trance, \[206\] and anguish, and ecstatic fit. \[207\]

VII

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heav’n’s richest store, \[208\]

And here though grief my feeble hands uplock \[209\]
Yet on the softened quarry \[210\] would I score \[211\]
My plaining \[212\] verse, as lively \[213\] as before,
   For sure so well instructed are my tears
That they would fitly fall in ordered characters. \[214\]

VIII

Or should I, thence hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
The gentle neighborhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild,
And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
   Might think th’ infection \[215\] of my sorrows loud
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.
SONG: ON MAY MORNING

1630–31

Now the bright morning star, day’s harbinger, Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her The flow’ry May, who from her green lap throws The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose. Hail bounteous May, that dost inspire Mirth and youth and warm desire, Woods and groves are of thy dressing. Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing. Thus we salute thee with our early song, And welcome thee, and wish thee long.
SONNET 1

1628? 1630?

O nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray, 219
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover’s heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious 222 May.

Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo’s bill,
Portend success in love. O if Jove’s will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay 223
Now timely 224 sing, ere the rude
bird of hate 225
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh,
As thou from year to year hast sung too late

For my relief, yet hadst no reason why,
Whether the muse or love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train 227 am I.

SONNET 7

1632

How soon hath time, the subtle 228 thief of youth,
Stol’n on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on, with full career, 229
But my late spring no bud or blossom show’th.

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu’th. 230
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still 231 in strictest measure ev’n 232
To that same lot 233 however mean 234 or high,
Towards which time leads me, and the will of Heav’n.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great task-master’s eye.

SONNET 8

1642

Captain or colonel, 235 or knight in arms,
Whose chance 236 on these defenseless doors may seize, 237
If ever deed of honor did thee please
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the muses' bow'r!
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus when temple and tow'r
Went to the ground, and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save th' Athenian walls from ruin bare.

SONNET 9
1643–45

Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hath shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labor up the hill of Heav'nly truth,
The better part with Mary, and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast, and they that overween
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure,
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss, at the mid hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, virgin wise and pure.

SONNET 10
1643–45

Daughter to that good earl once president
Of England's Council and her Treasury,
Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chaeronéa, fatal to liberty
Killed with report that old man, eloquent.
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you, Madam, methinks I see him living yet,
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honored Margaret.

SONNET 11
1645?

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs.

As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona’s twin-born progeny,
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom, in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when truth would set them free.
Licence, they mean, when they cry “liberty,”
For who loves that must first be wise and good.
But from that mark how far they rove we see
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

SONNET 12

1647?

A book was writ, of late, called Tetrachordon,
And woven close both matter, form, and style.
The subject new, it walked the town a while,
Numb’ring good intellects—now seldom pored on.

Cries the stall-reader, “Bless us! What a word on
A title page is this!” And some in file
Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-
End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than Gordon, Colkitto,
or MacDonnell, or Galasp? Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp!
Thy age, like ours—O soul of Sir John Cheek!—Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught’st Cambridge, and King Edward, Greek.

SONNET 13

1646

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas ears, committing short and long.

Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for envy to look wan.
To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air couldst humor best our tongue.
Thou honor’st verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honor thee, the priest of Phoebus choir,
That tun’st their happiest lines, in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

SONNET 14

1646

When faith and love, which parted from thee
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.

Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavor,
Stayed not behind nor in the grave were trod,
But as faith pointed with her golden rod
Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.

Love led them on, and faith, who knew them best—
Thy handmaids—clad them o’er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew, so dressed,
And spoke the truth of thee in glorious themes
Before the judge, who thenceforth bid thee rest
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

SONNET 15

1648

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy, or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumors loud, that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league, to imp her serpent wings:
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
For what can wars but endless wars still breed,
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth valor bleed
While avarice and rapine share the land.

SONNET 16

1652

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude
To peace and truth thy glorious way hath ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God’s trophies, and His work pursued,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots embru’d,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester’s laureat wreath, yet much remains
To conquer still. Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war, new foes arise,
Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains!
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

SONNET 17

1652

Vane, young in years but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne’er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, The fierce Epeirut and th’ African bold:
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states, hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how war may best, upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides, to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each—thou hast learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe.
Therefore, on thy firm hand religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

SONNET 18

1655

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold—
Ev’n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones!
Forget not! In Thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, who rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heav’n. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O’er all th’ Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant, that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who having learned Thy way
Early, may fly the Babylonian woe.

SONNET 19

1655

When I consider how my life is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide
Lodged with me, useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He, returning, chide—
“Doth God exact day labor, light denied?”
I fondly ask, but patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
Either man’s work or His own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at His bidding speed
And post o’er land and ocean, without rest.
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

SONNET 20

1655

Lawrence, of virtuous father, virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

SONNET 21

1655

Cyriack! Whose grandsire on the Royal Bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause
Pronounced and in his volumes taught our laws,
Which others at their Bar so often wrench —
Today deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth, that after no repenting draws.
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends, and what the French!
To measure life, learn thou betimes and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way.
For other things, mild Heav’n a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains!

SONNET 22

1655
Cyriack, this three years day these eyes, though clear
To outward view of blemish or of spot,
Bereft \(^{347}\) of light their seeing have forgot,
Nor to their idle \(^{348}\) orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heav’n’s hand or will, nor bate \(^{349}\) a jot \(^{350}\)
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, t’ have lost them overplied \(^{351}\)
In liberty’s defense, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world’s vain mask,
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

SONNET 23

1656–58?

Methought I saw my late espouséd saint \(^{352}\)
  Brought to me, like Alcestis \(^{353}\) from the grave,
  Who Jove’s great son to her glad husband gave,
  Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine as whom, washed from spot of child-bed taint \(^{354}\)
  Purification in th’ old law \(^{355}\) did save,
  And such as yet once more I trust to have
  Full sight of her in Heav’n, without restraint, \(^{356}\)
Came vested \(^{357}\) all in white, pure as her mind.
  Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
  Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
  But O, as to embrace me she inclined \(^{358}\)
  I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.
ON SHAKESPEARE

1630

What needs my Shakespeare, for his honored bones,
The labor of an age in pilèd stones,
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument!
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavoring art
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou our fancy, of itself bereaving
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.
ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER

1631

who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague.
Here lies old Hobson. Death has broke his girt
And here, alas, hath laid him in the dirt,
Or else the ways being foul, twenty to one
He’s here stuck in a slough and overthrown.
’Twas such a shifter that if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down,
For he had any time this ten years full
Dodged with him, betwixt Cambridge and The Bull.
And surely, Death could never have prevailed
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed,
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey’s end was come,
And that he had ta’en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlain
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
“Hobson has supped, and’s newly gone to bed.”
ANOTHER ON THE SAME

Here lieth one who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move,
So hung his destiny never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot,
Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion numbered out his time,
And like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath.
Nor were it contradiction to affirm
Too long vacation hastened on his term.
Merely to drive the time away he sickened,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.
"Nay," quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,
"If I may not carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched,
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers."
Ease was his chief disease, and to judge right
He died for heaviness that his cart went light.
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath (there be that say't)
As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight!"
But had his doings lasted as they were
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon, he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate
Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas,
Yet (strange to think) his wain was his increase.
His letters are delivered all and gone,
Only remains this superscription.
AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

1631

This rich marble doth inter
The honored wife of Winchester,
A Viscount’s daughter, an Earl’s heir,
Besides what her virtues fair
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told — alas, too soon,
And so short time of breath,
To house with darkness and with death.
Yet had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
Her high birth and her graces sweet
Quickly found a lover meet;
The virgin choir for her request
The god that sits at marriage feast.

He at their invoking came
But with a scarce well-lighted flame,
Ye might discern a cypress bud
The virgin garland as he stood
Ye might discern a cypress bud.

Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son,
And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes.

But whether by mischance or blame
Atropos for Lucina came,
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree:
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, yet not laid in earth,
And the languished mother’s womb
Was not long a living tomb.

So have I seen some tender slip
Saved with care from winter’s nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Plucked up by some unheedy swain.

Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower.
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears
Prove to be presaging tears
Which the sad morn had let fall.
On her hastening funeral.
   Gentle lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have.
After this, thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That to give the world increase
Shortened hast thy own life’s lease.
Here besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon,
And some flowers and some bays
For thy hearse to strew the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came,
Devoted to thy virtuous name,
Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt’st in glory,
Next her much like to thee in story,
That fair Syrian shepherdess
Who after years of barrenness
The highly-favored Joseph bore
To him that served for her before,
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light.
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.
L’ALLEGRO

Hence, loathèd melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn
Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings.
There under ebon shades and low-browed rocks
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

But come thou, goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore—
Or whether (as some, sager, sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There on beds of violets blue
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles
Nods, and becks and wreathèd smiles
Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek
And love to live in dimple sleek,
Sport that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter, holding both its sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light-fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet liberty.
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free,
To hear the lark begin his flight
And, singing, startle the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise,
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine,
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin. And to the stack or the barn door Stoutly fierce struts his dames before.

Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerily rouse the slumbering morn
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.

Sometime walking not unseen
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great sun begins his state.

Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight,
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o’er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight, mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures,

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest,
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.

Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two agèd oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes.

And then in haste her bow’r she leaves,
With Thestyris to bind the sheaves.
Or if the earlier season lead
To the tanned haycock in the mead,
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,

And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the checkered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail.
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab\textsuperscript{498} the junkets \textsuperscript{499} eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said,
And he, by friar’s lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl, duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail\textsuperscript{500} hath threshed the corn\textsuperscript{501}
That ten day-laborers could not end,
Then lies him down (the lubber fend!\textsuperscript{502}
And, stretched out all the chimney’s length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And, crop-full,\textsuperscript{503} out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin\textsuperscript{504} rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Tow’red cities please us, then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where thongs of knights and barons bold
In weeds\textsuperscript{505} of peace high triumphs\textsuperscript{506} hold,
With store\textsuperscript{507} of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen\textsuperscript{508} oft appear
In saffron\textsuperscript{509} robe, with taper\textsuperscript{510} clear,
And pomp,\textsuperscript{511} and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry,
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson’s\textsuperscript{512} learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy’s\textsuperscript{514} child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating\textsuperscript{515} cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting\textsuperscript{517} soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout\textsuperscript{518}
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton\textsuperscript{519} heed\textsuperscript{520} and giddy\textsuperscript{521} cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,
That Orpheus\textsuperscript{522} self may heave\textsuperscript{524} his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian\textsuperscript{526} flowers, and hear
Such strains\textsuperscript{526} as would have won the ear
Of Pluto,\textsuperscript{527} to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice\textsuperscript{528}
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.\textsuperscript{529}
Hence, vain deluding joys,
   The brood of folly without father bred!
How little you bestead,  
   Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys?
Dwell in some idle brain,
   And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess
As thick and numberless
   As the gay motes that people the sun beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
   The fickle pensioners of Morpheus train.
But hail thou, goddess, sage and holy,
   Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose saintly visage is too bright
   To hit the sense of human sight
And, therefore, to our weaker view
   O'er laid with black, staid wisdom's hue—
Black, but such as in esteem
   Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiope Queen that strove
   To set her beauty's praise above
The sea nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended,
   Thee, bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore:
   His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain),
Oft in glimmering bow'rs and glades
   He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.
    Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
   All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train,
   And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn!
   Come, but keep thy wonted state
With even step and musing gait,
   And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.
   There held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
   With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast
   And join with thee calm peace, and quiet,
Spare 560 fast, 561 that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye 562 round about Jove's altar sing.
And add to these retired 563 leisure,
That in trim 564 gardens takes his pleasure.
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him 565 that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne, 566
The cherub Contemplation, 567
And the mute silence hist 568 along,
'Less 569 Philomel 570 will deign a song
In her sweetest, saddest plight, 571
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia 572 checks 573 her dragon yoke, 574
Gently o'er th' accustomed oak—
Sweet bird that shunn' st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chantress, 575 oft the woods among,
I woo 576 to hear thy even song,
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry, smooth-shaven 577 green,
To behold the wand'ring moon
Riding near her highest noon
Like one that had been led astray
Through the Heav'n's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a plat 578 of rising ground
I hear the far-off curfew sound
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen 579 roar.
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still 580 removed 581 place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 582
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's 583 drowsy charm 584
to bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tow'r
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear, 585
With thrice great Hermes, 586 or unsphere
The spirit of Plato 587 to unfold 588
What worlds, or what vast regions, hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion 589 in this fleshly nook, 590
And of those daemons 591 that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent 592
With planet, or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous 593 tragedy
In sceptered 594 pall 595 come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes', or Pelops' line, or the tale of Troy divine.
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musaeus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek
And made Hell grant what love did seek.
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And who had Canace to wife. That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride.
And if ought else, great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchiefed in a comely cloud
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude ax, with heavèd stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honeyed thigh,
That at her flow'ry work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eye-lids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th’ unseen genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters’ pale
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy -proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voiced choir below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies
And bring all Heav’n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that Heav’n doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.
ARCADES

1633–34?

Part of an entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Darby, at Harefield, by some noble persons of her family, who appear on the scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

1. Song

Look, nymphs, and shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook.
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.

Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise.
Less than half we find expressed:
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads
In circle round her shining throne,
Shooting her beams like silver threads!
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the center of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds.
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparall’ed?

As they come forward, the Genius of the Wood appears
and, turning toward them, says:

Gen. Stay, gentle swains, for though in this disguise
I see bright honor sparkle through your eyes.
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood so often sung,
Divine Alphéus, who by secret sluice
Stole under seas, to meet his Arethuse.  
And ye the breathing roses of the wood,  
Fair silver-buskined  nymphs as great and good,  
I know this quest of yours, and freq  intent,  
Was all in honor and devotion meant  
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,  
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,  
And with all helpful service will comply  
To further this night’s glad solemnity,  
And lead ye where you may more near behold  
What shallow-searching fame hath left untold,  
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,  
Have sat to wonder at and gaze upon.

For know, by lot  from Jove I am the pow’r  
Of this fair wood and live in oaken bow’r  
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove  
With ringlets quaint,  and wanton  windings wove.  
And all my plants I save from nightly ill  
Of noisome  winds or blasting  vapors chill,  
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew  
And heal the harms, of  thwarting  thunder blew,  
Or what the cross, dire-looking planet  smites,  
Or hurtful worm with cankered  venom bites.  
When evening gray doth rise, I fetch  my round  
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground,  
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn  
Awakes the slumb’ring leaves, or tasseled horn  
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,  
Number  my ranks, and visit every sprout  
With puissant  words, and murmurs made to bless.  
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness  
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I  
To the celestial sirens’ harmony,  
That sit upon the nine enfoldèd spheres  
And sing to those that hold the vital shears  
And turn the adamantine  spindle round,  
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.  
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie  
To lull the daughters of Necessity  
And keep unsteady  Nature to her law,  
And the low  world in measured  motion draw  
After the heav’nly tune, which none can hear  
Of human mould, with gross  unpurgèd  ear.  
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze  
The peerless height of her immortal praise,  
Whose luster leads us, and for her most fit,  
If my inferior hand or voice could hit  
Inimitable sounds. Yet as we go  
Whate’er the skill of lesser gods can show  
I will assay,  her worth to celebrate.  
And so attend  ye toward her glittering state,  
Where ye may all (that are of noble stem)  Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture’s  hem.
2. Song

O'er the smooth enamelled green
Where no print of step hath been,
   Follow me as I sing
      And touch the warbled string.
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm, star-proof.
   Follow me:
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendor as befits
   Her deity.
   Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

3. Song

Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lillied banks.
On old Lycaeus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks.
Though Erymanth your loss deplore
   A better soil shall give you thanks.
From the stony Maenalus
Bring your flocks and live with us.
   Here ye shall have greater grace
To serve the lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
   Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.
COMUS: A MASQUE

1634; revised 1637

THE PERSONS

the attendant spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis
Comus, with his crew
the lady
brother 1 [older]
brother 2 [younger]
Sabrina, the nymph

The first scene discovers a wild wood. The attendant spirit descends (or enters):

Before the starry threshold of Jove’s court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live ensphered
In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth and, with low-thoughtèd care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and fev’rish being,
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants,
Amongst the enthronèd gods, on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity:
To such my errand is, and but for such
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune—besides the sway
Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream—
Took in, by lot twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep,
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities,
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble peer, of mickle trust and power,
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms,
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state
And new-entrusted scepter. But their way
Lies through the perplex'd 681 paths of this drear Wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger.
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that by quick command from sov'reign Jove
I was dispatched for their defence and guard.
And listen why, for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song
From old or modern bard, in hall or bow'r.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of mis-used wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed
On Circe's island fell (who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the sun? whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape
And downward fell, into a grovelling swine).

This nymph that gazed upon his 682 clust'ring locks
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up and Comus named,
Whose ripe and frolic 683 of 684 his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous 685 Wood
And, in thick shelter of black shade embow'red,
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Off 'ring to every weary traveller
His orient 686 liquor, in a crystal glass,
To quench the drought of Phoebus, which as they taste
(For most do taste, through fond 687 intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance—
Th' express resemblance of the gods—is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear
Or ounce 688 or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely 689 than before
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favored of high Jove
Chances to pass through this advent'rous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from Heav'n, to give him safe convoy—
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky robes, spun out of Iris 690 woof,
And take the weeds 691 and likeness of a swain 692
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft pipe 693 and smooth-dittied song
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion.
But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps. I must be viewless, now.

Comus enters, with a charming rod in one hand, his glass in the other. With him a rout of monsters headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening. They come in, making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.

COMUS. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of Heav’n doth hold,
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream,
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity!
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odors, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed,
And advice, with scrupulous head.
Strict age, and sour severity
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry choir
Who in their nightly watchful spheres
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morris move,
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain brim
The wood nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep.
What has night to do with sleep?
Night has better sweets to prove:
Venus now wakes, and wakens love.
Come, let us our rites begin!
’Tis only daylight that makes sin—
Which these dun shades will ne’er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veil’d Cotytto, t’whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! Mysterious dame
That ne’er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou rid’st with Hecat and befriend
Us, thy vowèd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our conceal’d solemnity.
Come, knit hands and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round!

The measure

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees:
Our number may affright. Some virgin, sure
(For so I can distinguish, by mine art),
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains. I shall ere long
Be well-stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother, Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion
And give it false presentments lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment
And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
Which must not be, for that’s against my course.
I under fair pretence of friendly ends
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not implausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes. I fairly step aside
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The lady enters.

LADY. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true:
My best guide, now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up amongst the loose, unlettered hinds,
When for their teeming flocks and granges full
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
To meet the rudeness and swill’d insolence
Of such late wassailers. Yet where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind maze of this tangled Wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favor of these pines,  
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side,  
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit  
As the kind, hospitable woods provide.  
They left me then, when the gray-hooded ev’n  
Like a sad votarist in palmer’s weeds  
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus’ wain.  
But where they are, and why they came not back,  
Is now the labor of my thoughts. ’Tis likeliest  
They had engaged their wand’ring steps too far,  
And envious darkness, ere they could return,  
Had stol’n them from me—else, O thievish night!  
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,  
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars  
That Nature hung in Heav’n, and filled their lamps  
With everlasting oil, to give due light  
To the misled and lonely traveller?  
    This is the place, as well as I may guess,  
Whence ev’n now the tumult of loud mirth  
Was rife in my list’ning ear.  
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.  
What might this be? A thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory,  
Of calling shapes and beck’ning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues that syllable men’s names  
On sands and shores, and desert wildernesses.  
    These thoughts may startle well, but not astound  
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
By a strong siding champion, conscience—  
O welcome, pure-eyed faith, white-handed hope,  
Thou flittering Angel girt with golden wings!  
And thou, unblemished form of chastity,  
see ye visibly, and now believe  
That He, the supreme good, t’ whom all things ill  
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
Would send a glist’ring guardian, if need were,  
To keep my life and honor unassailed.  
    Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?  
I did not err: there does a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,  
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.  
I cannot halloo to my brothers, but  
Such noise as I can make, to be heard farthest,  
I’ll venture, for my new-enlivened spirits  
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph that liv’st unseen
Within thy airy cell
By slow Maeander’s margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well,
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O if thou have
Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parley daughter of the sphere,
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'n's harmonies.

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?
Sure, something holy lodges in that breast
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence!
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness, till she smiled. I have oft heard
My mother, Circe, with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who as they sung would take the imprisoned soul
And lap it in Elysium. Scylla wept
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause!
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself.
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her
And she shall be my queen.
    Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed—
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Silvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall Wood!
LADY. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
COMUS. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?
LADY. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.
COMUS. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
LADY. They left me, weary, on a grassy turf.
COMUS. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
LADY. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.
COMUS. And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?
LADY. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
COMUS. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them?
LADY. How easy my misfortune is to hit!
COMUS. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
LADY. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
COMUS. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
LADY. As smooth as Hebe's, their unrazored lips.
COMUS. Two such I saw, what time the labored ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedge at his supper sat.
I saw 'em under a green mantling vine
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots.
Their port was more than human, as they stood:
I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element
That in the colors of the rainbow live
And play 't pleated clouds. I was awe-struck,
And as I passed I worshipped! If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heav'n
To help you find them.
LADY. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
COMUS. Due west it rises, from this shrubby point.
LADY. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practiced feet.
COMUS. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle or bushy dell of this wide wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side
My daily walks and ancient neighborhood,
And if your stray attendance be yet lodged
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, lady, to a low but loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
LADY. Shepherd, I take thy word
And trust thy honest offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters than in tap'stry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength!
Shepherd, lead on.—
The two brothers.
BROTHER 1. Unmuffle, ye faint stars, and thou fair moon
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud
And disinherit chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades!
Or if your influence be quite dammed up
With black, usurping mists, some gentle taper.
Through a rush candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

BROTHER 2. Or if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
It would be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But O, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now? Whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burrs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

BROTHER 1. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils,
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown
What need a man forestall his date of grief
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion?
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would,
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet, retired solitude,
Where with her best nurse, contemplation,
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' th' center and enjoy bright day,
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the midday sun—
Himself is his own dungeon.

BROTHER 2. 'Tis most true
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a Senate house—
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, or his few books, or his beads, or maple dish, or do his gray hairs any violence? But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard Of dragon watch with unenchantèd eye, To save her blossoms and defend her fruit From the rash hand of bold incontinentence. You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps Of miser’s treasure by an outlaw’s den And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope Danger will wink on opportunity And let a single helpless maiden pass Uninjured, in this wild surrounding waste. Of night or loneliness, it recks me not: I fear the dread events that dog them both, Lest some ill greeting touch attempt the person of our unowner sister.

BROTHER 1. I do not, brother, Infer as if I thought my sister’s state Secure without all doubt or controversy. Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear Does arbitrate th’ event, my nature is That I incline to hope rather than fear And banish, gladly, squint suspicion. My sister is not so defenceless left As you imagine. She has a hidden strength Which you remember not.

BROTHER 2. What hidden strength, Unless the strength of Heav’n, if you mean that? BROTHER 1. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength Which, if Heav’n gave it, may be termed her own. ’Tis chastity, my brother, chastity. She that has that is clad in complete steel, And like a quivered nymph with arrows keen May trace huge forests and unharbored heaths, Infamous hills and sandy perilous wilds, Where through the sacred rays of chastity No savage fierce, bandit or mountaineer, Will dare to soil her virgin purity. Yea, there where very desolation dwells, By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades, She may pass on with unbленched majesty— Be it not done in pride or in presumption. Some say no evil thing that walks by night In fog, or fire, by lake or moory fen, Blue meager hag or stubborn unladen ghost That breaks his chains at curfew time, No goblin or swart fairy of the mine, Has hurtful power o’er true virginity.

Do you believe me yet, or shall I call Antiquity from the old schools of Greece To testify the arms of chastity? Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen, forever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain pard, but set at naught
The frivolous bolt of Cupid. Gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o’ th’ woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freeze’d her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dash’d brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe!
So dear to Heav’n is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so
A thousand liveried Angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with Heav’nyl habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th’ outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul’s essence,
Till all be made immortal. But when lust
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion.
Embodies and embrutes till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchers
Hovering, and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loath to leave the body that it loved
And linked itself, by carnal sensual’ty,
To a degenerate and degraded state.

BROTHER 2. How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crab’d, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo’s lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

BROTHER 1. List, list! I hear
Some faroff halloo break the silent air.

BROTHER 2. Methought so too. What should it be?

BROTHER 1. For certain,
Either someone, like us night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbor woodman—or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

BROTHER 2. Heav’n keep my sister! Again: again, and near!

Best draw and stand upon our guard.

BROTHER 1. I’ll halloo.
If he be friendly, he comes well. If not, Defence is a good cause, and Heav’n be for us.

*The attendant spirit enters, habited like a shepherd.*
That halloo I should know. What are you? Speak!
Come not too near: you fall on iron stakes else!
SPIRIT. What voice is that, my young lord? Speak again.
BROTHER 2. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd—sure!
BROTHER 1. Thyrsis? Whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook, to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every muskrose of the dale.
How cam'st thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from his fold, or young kid lost his dam?
Or straggling weather the pent flock forsook?
How could'st thou find this dark, sequestered nook?

SPIRIT. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf. Not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought!
But O, my virgin lady: where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
BROTHER I. To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect we lost her as we came.
SPIRIT. Aye me, unhappy! Then my fears are true.
BROTHER I. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee, briefly show.

SPIRIT. I'll tell you. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance),
What the sage poets, taught by th' Heav'ny Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell,
For such there be. But unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous Wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him who drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoelling reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learned,
Tending my flocks hard by, i' th' hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate.
In their obscure haunts of inmost bow'rs.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
T' inveigle and invite th' unware sense
Of them that pass, unweeting by the way.
This evening, late—by then the chewing flocks
Had ta’n their supper on the savory herb—
I sat me down to watch, upon a bank
With ivy canopied and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapped in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy
Till Fancy had her fill, but ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance,
At which I ceased and listened them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy, frightened steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained sleep.
At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes
And stole upon the air, that even silence
Was took, ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature and be never more
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But O, ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honored lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear,
And O, poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
How sweet thou sing’st, how near the deadly snare!
Then down the lawns I ran, with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till guided by mine ear I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey,
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbor villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant. With that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here.
But further know I not.
BROTHER 2. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with Hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
BROTHER 1. Yes, and keep it still,
Lean on it safely: not a period
Shall be unsaid for me! Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force—but not entralled
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory,
But evil on itself shall back recoil
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,  
The pillared firmament is rottenness  
And earth’s base built on stubble. But come, let’s on!  
Against th’ opposing will and arm of Heav’n  
May never this just sword be lifted up  
But for that damned magician, let him be girt  
With all the grisly legions that troop  
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,  
Harpies and hydrias or all the monstrous bugs  
’Twixt Africa and Ind! I’ll find him out  
And force him to restore his purchase back,  
Or drag him by the curls and cleave his scalp  
Down to the hips!  
SPIRIT. Alas, good vent’rous youth,  
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise,  
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.  
Far other arms and other weapons must  
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.  
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints  
And crumble all thy sinews!  
BROTHER 1. Why prithee, shepherd,  
How durst thou then thyself approach so near  
As to make this relation?  
SPIRIT. Care and utmost shifts!  
How to secure the lady from surprisal  
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad  
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled  
In every virtuous plant and healing herb  
That spreads her verdant leaf to th’ morning ray.  
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing,  
Which when I did, he on the tender grass  
Would sit and hearken e’en to ecstasy,  
And in requital ope his leathern scrip  
And show me simples of a thousand names,  
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.  
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,  
But of divine effect, he culled me out.  
The leaf was darkish and had prickles on it,  
But in another country, as he said,  
Bore a bright golden flow’r—but not in this soil—  
Unknown, and like esteemed—and the dull swain  
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon.  
And yet more med’cinal is it than that Moly  
Which Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.  
He called it Haemony, and gave it me,  
And bade me keep it as of sov’reign use  
’Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast or damp,  
Or ghastly Furies apparition.  
I pursed it up, but little reck’ning made,  
Till now that this extremity compelled.  
But now I find it true, for by this means  
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised—
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer’s hall—
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him, break his glass
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground.
But seize his wand. Though he and his cursed crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
BROTHER I. Thyrsis, lead on apace.
I’ll follow thee.

And some good Angel bear a shield before us!
The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all
manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all
dainties. Comus appears, with his rabble, and the lady set
in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which
she puts by and goes about to rise.

COMUS. Nay, lady. Sit. If I but wave this wand
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster
And you a statue—or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

LADY. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou has emmanacled, while Heav’n sees good.

COMUS. Why are you vexed, lady? Why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger. From these gates
Sorrow flies far. See here be all the pleasures
That Fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julip here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that nepenthes which the wife of Thon,
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this—
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the cov’nants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

LADY. ’Twill not, false traitor!
’Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the “cottage,” and the “safe abode”
Thou toldst me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With visored falsehood and base forgeries
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me, here,
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno, when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer! None
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.
COMUS. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk
To deck her sons. And that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty in her own loins
She hutch’d th’ all-worshipped ore and precious gems
To store her children with. If all the world
Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
Th’ all-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half His riches known, and yet despised,
And we would serve Him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of His wealth,
And live like Nature’s bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight
And strangled with her waste fertility,
Th’ earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes.
The herds would over-multitude their lords,
The sea o’er-fraught would swell, and th’ unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so be-stud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, lady. Be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, virginity.
Beauty is Nature’s coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavory in th’ enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk, with languished head.
Beauty is Nature’s brag, and must be shown
In courts, on feast days, on high solemnities
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home:
They had their name thence. Coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler or to tease the housewife’s wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that?
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in those gifts!
Think what, and be advised. You are but young yet.

LADY. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason’s garb!
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.

Impostor! Do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance! She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good
That live according to her sober laws
And holy dictate of spare temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature’s full blessings would be well dispensed
In unsuperfluous, ev’n proportion.
And she no whit encumbered with her store.
And then the giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid—for winish gluttony
N’er looks to Heav’n, amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder.

Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? To him that dares
Arm his profuse tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say—yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered, to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity.
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit and gay rhetoric
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence!
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute earth would lend her nerves
And shake till all thy magic structures reared so high
Were shattered into heaps o’er thy false head!
COMUS. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words, set off by some superior power.
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shudd’ring dew
Dips me all o’er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus.
To some of Saturn’s crew. I must dissemble
And try her yet more strongly.

Come, no more.
This is mere moral babble and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this, yet ’tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight! One sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.
The brothers rush in, with swords drawn, wrest his glass
out of his hand, and break it against the ground. His rout
makes sign of resistance, but all are driven in. The
attendant spirit comes in.
SPIRIT. What? Have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook, ye should have snatched his wand
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the lady that sits here,
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay, be not disturbed. Now I bethink me:
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibaeus old I learned—
The soothest shepherd that e’er piped on plains.
There is a gentle nymph, not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream.
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure.
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine.
That had the scepter from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdam, Gwendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood.
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water nymphs that in the bottom played
Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus hall,
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head
And gave her to his daughters to embathe
In nectared lavers, strewn with asphodil,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropped in ambrosial oils, till she revived
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts and ill luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialized liquors heals.
For which the shepherds at their festivals
Carol her goodness, loud in rustic lays.
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream,
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song,
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin such as was herself,
In hard besetting need. This will I try
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG

Sabrina, fair,
Listen where thou are sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lillies knitting
The loose train of the amber-dropping hair.
Listen for dear honor’s sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save.

Listen and appear to us
In name of great Oceanus—
By th’ earth-shaking Neptune’s mace,
And Tethys’ grave, majestic pace—
By hoary Nereus’ wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard’s hook—
By scaly Triton’s winding shell,
And old sooth-saying Glaucus’ spell—
By Leucothea’s lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands—
By Thetis’ tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens’ sweet—
By dead Parthenope’s dear tomb,
And fair Ligéa’s golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft, alluring locks—
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams, with wily glance!
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave
Till thou our summons answered have.

Listen and save.

Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings:

By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate and the azure sheen
Of turquoise blue, and emerald green
That in the channel strays,
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslips' velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.

Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here.
SPIRIT. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band 1009
Of true virgin, here distressed 1010
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
SABRINA. Shepherd, it is my office 1011 best
To help ensnarèd chastity.
Brightest lady, look on me!
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure 1012
Thrice upon thy finger’s tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip!
Next, this marble-venomed seat
Smeared with gums 1013 of glutinous 1014 heat
I touch with chaste palms, moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold—
And I must haste, ere morning hour,
To wait 1015 in Amphitrite’s 1016 bow’r.
Sabrina descends, and the lady rises out of her seat.
SPIRIT. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises’ 1017 line,
May thy brimmèd waves, for this,
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty 1018 rills 1019
That tumble down the snowy hills.
Summer drought or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October’s torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill 1020 with mud.
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl 1021 and the golden ore.
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tow’r and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come lady, while Heav’n lends us grace
Let us fly this cursèd place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a taste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert 1022 wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father’s residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wishèd presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide,
With jigs and rural dance resort. 1023
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste! The stars grow high—
But night sits monarch yet in the mid-sky.

The scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town and the [Lord] President’s castle. Then come in country dancers. After them, the attendant spirit, with the two brothers and the lady.

**SONG**

*Spirit.* Back, shepherds, back! Enough, your play,
Till next sunshine holiday.
Here be, without duck 1024 or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise 1025
As Mercury did first devise 1026
With the mincing 1027 Dryades, 1028
On the lawns and on the leas. 1029
*This second song presents them to their father and mother:*

**[SONG 2]**

Noble lord, and lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold sogoodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heav’n hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here, through hard assays; 1030
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O’er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the spirit epiloguizes:

*Spirit.* To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd 1031 shades and bow’rs
Revels the spruce and jocund spring.
The Graces, and the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring,
That there eternal summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia’s balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purflèd scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her fair son advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wand’ring labors long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride
And from her fair, unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy. So Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done.
I can fly or I can run
Quickly to the green earth’s end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,
Love virtue: she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime—
Or, if virtue feeble were,
Heav’n itself would stoop to her.
Fly, envious time, till thou run out thy race!
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping\textsuperscript{1051} hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet’s\textsuperscript{1052} pace,
And glut thyself with what thy womb\textsuperscript{1053} devours—
Which is no more than what is false and vain
And merely mortal dross.\textsuperscript{1054}
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain.
For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,
Then long eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,\textsuperscript{1055}
And joy shall overtake us as a flood
When everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine
With truth, and peace, and love shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of Him t’ whose happy-making sight alone,
When once our Heav’nly-guided soul shall climb,
Then all this earthy grossness quit,\textsuperscript{1056}
Attired with stars we shall forever sit,
Triumphing over death, and chance, and thee, O time!
UPON THE CIRCUMCISION

1633–37

Ye flaming powers and wingèd warriors bright
That erst with music and triumphant song
First heard by happy watchful shepherd’s ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along,
Through the soft silence of the list’ning night,
Now mourn, and if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distill no tear,
Burn in your sighs and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow.
He who with all Heav’n’s heraldry
Entered the world, now bleeds to give us ease.
Alas, how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to cease!

O more exceeding love or law more just?
Just law, indeed—but more exceeding love!
For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death till He that dwelt above,
High-throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied His glory, ev’n to nakedness,
And that great cov’nant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied,
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice bore for our excess,
And seals obedience, first, with wounding smart
This day, but O, ere long
Huge pangs, and strong,
Will pierce more near His heart.
AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

1637

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav’n’s joy,
Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, voice and verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce
And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure content
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud up-lifted Angel trumpets blow
And the Cherubic host, in thousand choirs,
Touch their golden harps of immortal wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly,
That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise,
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against Nature’s chime and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience and their state of good.
O may we soon again renew that song
And keep in tune with Heav’n, till God ere-long
To His celestial consort us unite
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light.
LYCIDAS

1637

In this monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester [in W. England] on the Irish seas, 1637. And by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sear,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due,
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.

Who would not sing for Lycidas? He well knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his wat’ry bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, sisters of the sacred well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse!
So may some gentle muse
With lucky words favor my destined urn
And, as he passes, turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Batt’ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at ev’ning bright
Toward Heav’n’s descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile, the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to th’ oaten flute.

Rough satyrs danced, and fauns with clov’n heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long.
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.
But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o’er-grown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays,
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flow'rs, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white thorn blows—
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Aye me, I fondly dream!
Had ye been there, for what could that have done?
What could the muse herself, that Orpheus bore,
The muse herself, for her enchanting son
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His goary visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

Alas! What boots it, with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind!)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days.
But the fair guerdon, when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears
And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise,
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears.
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove,
As he pronounces lastly on each deed.
Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds
And listens to the herald of the sea That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his story,
And sage Hippotades their answer brings;
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th’ eclipse and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.

“Ah! Who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?”
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake.
Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:
“How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck’ning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers’ feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned ought else the least
That to the faithful herdsman’s art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped,
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoll’n with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread,
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said!
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams. Return, Sicilian muse,
And call the vales and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowrets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the wild whispers use
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes
That on the green turf suck the honeyed show’rs
And purple all the ground with vernal flow’rs.
Bring the rath primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The muskrose, and the well attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauties shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Aye me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world,
Or whether thou to our moist vows denied
Sleep'st, by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold—
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth,
And O, ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor!
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed
And yet anon repairs his drooping head
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves!
Where other groves and other streams along
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song
In the blest kingdoms meek, of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more!
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.
    Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray.
He touched the tender stops of various quills
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay.
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.
Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa, rendered almost word for word, without rhyme, according to the Latin measure, as near as the [English] language will permit.

What slender youth, bedewed with liquid odors, Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave, Pyrrha? For whom bind' st thou In wreaths thy golden hair, Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he On faith and changèd gods complain, and seas Rough with black winds and storms Unwonted shall admire, Who now enjoys thee credulous all gold? Who always vacant, always amiable, Hopes thee, of flattering gales Unmindful? Hapless they To whom thou, untried, seem' st fair. Me in my vowed Picture the sacred wall declares t' have hung My dank and drooping weeds To the stern god of sea.
ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE, UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT

1647?

Because you have thrown off your prelate lord
And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy,
To seize the widowed whore, plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,

Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy
Taught ye by mere A.S. and Rutherford?

Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul
Must now be named and printed heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch what d’ye call

But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packings, worse than those of Trent,
That so the Parliament

May with their wholesome and preventive shears
Clip your phylacteries (though bauk your ears),
And succor our just fears
When they shall read this clearly in your charge:
New presbyter is but old priest writ large.
Blessed is the man who hath not walked astray
In counsel of the wicked, and i’ th’ way
Of sinners hath not stood, and in the seat
Of scorners hath not sat. But in the great
Jehovah’s Law is ever his delight,
And in His Law he studies day and night.
He shall be as a tree which, planted, grows
By wat’ry streams, and in his season knows
To yield his fruit, and his leaf shall not fall,
And what he takes in hand shall prosper all.
Not so the wicked, but as chaff 1263 which fanned 1264
The wind drives, so the wicked shall not stand 1265
In judgment, or abide 1266 their trial then,
Nor sinners in the assembly of just men.
For the Lord knows th’ upright way of the just,
And the way of bad men to ruin 1267 must.

Why do the gentiles 1268 tumult, 1269 and the nations
Muse 1270 a vain thing? The kings of the earth upstand 1271
With power, and princes in their congregations 1272
Lay deep their plots together, through each land,
Against the Lord and His Messiah dear.
Let us break off, say they, by strength of hand,
Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear,
Their twisted cords. He who in Heav’n doth dwell
Shall laugh. The Lord shall scoff 1273 them, then, severe, 1274
Speak to them in His wrath, and in His fell 1275
And fierce 1276 ire 1277 trouble 1278 them. But I saith He
Anointed hath my King (though ye rebel)
On Sion, my holy hill. A firm decree
I will declare. The Lord to me hath said
Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee
This day. Ask of me, and the grant is made.
As thy possession I on thee bestow
Th’ heathen, and as thy conquest (to be swayed 1279)
Earth’s utmost bounds. Them shalt thou bring full low,
With iron scepters bruised, 1280 and them disperse
Like to a potter’s vessel, shivered so.
And now be wise at length, 1281 ye kings averse, 1282
Be taught, ye judges of the earth—with fear
Jehovah serve, and let your joy converse. With trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he appear in anger and ye perish in the way. If once his wrath take fire, like fuel sere. Happy all those who have him in their stay.

3

When he fled from Absalom, Lord, how many are my foes, How many those that in arms against me rise. Many are they that of my life distrustfully thus say: No help for him in God there lies. But thou, Lord, art my shield, my glory, Thee through my story, Th’ exalter of my head I count. Aloud I cried Unto Jehovah. He full soon replied And heard me from His holy mount. I lay and slept, I waked again, For my sustain Was the Lord. Of many millions The populous rout. I fear not, though encamping round about They pitch against me their pavilions. Rise, Lord. Save me, my God, for Thou hast smote ere now On the cheek-bone all my foes, Of men abhorred Hast broke the teeth. This help was from the Lord, Thy blessing on Thy people flows.

4

Answer me when I call, God of my righteousness. In straits and in distress Thou didst me disen thrall And set at large. Now pity me, and hear my earnest prayer. Great ones, how long will ye My glory have in scorn? How long be this forborn Still to love vanity, To love, to seek, to prize Things false and nothing else but lies? Yet know the Lord hath chose, Chose to Himself apart The good and meek of heart (For whom to choose He knows). Jehovah from on high Will hear my voice, what time to Him I cry.
Be awed, and do not sin.
Speak to your hearts alone,
Upon your beds, each one,
And be at peace within.
Offer the offerings just
Of righteousness, and in Jehovah trust.
Many there be that say
“Who yet will show us good?”
Talking like this world’s brood!
But Lord, thus let me pray:
On us lift up the light,
Lift up the favor of Thy count’rance bright.
Into my heart more joy
And gladness Thou has put
Than when a year of glut
Their stores doth over-cloy
And from their plenteous grounds
With vast increase their corn
and wine abounds.
In peace at once will I
Both lay me down and sleep,
For Thou alone dost keep
Me safe, where ere I lie.
As in a rocky cell
Thou, Lord, alone in safety mak’st me dwell.

Jehovah, to my words give ear,
My meditation weigh,
The voice of my complaining hear,
My King and God, for unto Thee I pray.
Jehovah, Thou my early voice
Shalt in the morning hear.
I’ th’ morning I to Thee, with choice,
Will rank my prayers and watch till Thou appear.
For Thou art not a God that takes
In wickedness delight.
Evil with Thee no biding makes.
Fools or madmen stand not within Thy sight.
All workers of iniquity Thou hast, and them unblessed
Thou wilt destroy that speak a lie.
The bloody and guileful man God doth detest.
But I will in Thy mercies dear,
Thy numerous mercies go
Into Thy house, I in Thy fear
Will towards Thy holy temple worship low.
Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness,
Lead me because of those
That do observe if I transgress.
Set Thy right ways before where my step goes.
For in his faltering mouth unstable
No word is firm or sooth.
Their inside troubles miserable,
An open grave their throat; their tongue they smooth.
God, find them guilty, let them fall
  By their own counsels quelled.
Push them in their rebellions all
Still on, for against Thee they have rebelled.
Then all who trust in Thee shall bring
  Their joy, while Thou from blame
Defend'st them. They shall ever sing
And shall triumph in Thee, who love Thy name.
For Thou, Jehovah, wilt be found
  To bless the just man still
As with a shield. Thou will surround
Him with Thy lasting favor and good will.

Lord, in Thine anger do not reprehend me,
Nor in Thy hot displeasure me correct.
Pity me, Lord, for I am much deject,
  Am very weak and faint. Heal and amend me,
For all my bones that even with anguish ache
  Are troubled, yea, my soul is troubled sore.
And Thou, O Lord, how long? Turn, Lord, restore
  My soul, O save me for Thy goodness sake,
For in death is no remembrance of Thee.
  Who in the grave can celebrate Thy praise?
Weary I am with sighing out my days,
  Nightly my couch I make a kind of sea,
My bed I water with my tears, mine eye
  Through grief consumes is waxen old and dark
I' th' midst of all mine enemies, that mark.
  Depart all ye that work iniquity!
Depart from me, for the voice of my weeping
  The Lord hath heard, the Lord hath heard my prayer,
My supplication with acceptance fair
  The Lord will own and have me in His keeping.
Mine enemies shall be all blank and dashed
  With much confusion, then grown red with shame
They shall return in haste the way they came,
  And in a moment shall be quite abashed.

Upon the words of Chush, the Benjamite, against him.

Lord, my God, to Thee I fly,
Save me and secure me under
Thy protection, while I cry,
Lest as a lion (and no wonder)
He haste to tear my soul asunder—
Tearing, and no rescue nigh.

Lord, my God, if I have thought
Or done this, if wickedness
Be in my hands, if I have wrought 1341
Ill to him that meant me peace,
Or to him have rendered 1342 less
And not freed my foe for naught, 1343

Let th’ enemy pursue my soul
And overtake it, let me tread 1344
My life down to the earth and roll
In the dust my glory dead—
In the dust, and there outspread
Lodge 1345 it with dishonor foul.

Rise, Jehovah, in Thine ire
Rouse Thyself amidst the rage
Of my foes, that urge 1347 like fire,
And wake 1348 for me, their furi’ 1349 assuage 1350
Judgment here 1351 thou didst engage 1352
And command, which I desire.
So th’ assemblies of each nation
Will surround Thee, seeking right.
Thence to Thy glorious habitation
Return on high, and in their sight.
Jehovah judgeth most upright
All people, from this world’s foundation, 1353

Judge me, Lord, be judge in this
According to my righteousness
And the innocence which is
Upon me. Cause at length to cease
Of evil men the wickedness,
And their power, that do amiss. 1354

But the just establish fast 1355
Since Thou art the just God that tries 1357
Hearts and reins. 1359 On God is cast
My defence, and in Him lies,
In Him who both just and wise
Saves th’ upright of heart at last. 1359

God is a just judge, and severe, 1360
And God is every day offended.
If th’ unjust will not forbear 1361
His sword He whets, 1362 His bow hath bended
Already, and for him intended
The tools of death, that waits 1363 Him near.

(His arrows purposely made He
For them that persecute.) 1364 Behold,
He 1365 travels big 1366 with vanity,
Trouble he hath conceived of old
As in a womb, and from that mould
Hath at length brought forth a lie.
He digged a pit, and delved it deep,
And fell into the pit he made.
His mischief that due course doth keep,
Turns on his head, and his ill trade
Of violence will undelayed
Fall on his crown with ruin steep.

Then will I Jehovah’s praise
According to His justice raise,
And sing the name and deity
Of Jehovah, the most high.

O Jehovah, our Lord, how wondrous great
And glorious is Thy name through all the earth!
So as above the Heav’ns Thy praise to set
Out of the tender mouths of latest birth.
Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou
Hast founded strength, because of all Thy foes,
To stint th’ enemy and slack th’ avenger’s brow
That bends his rage Thy providence t’ oppose.

When I behold Thy Heav’ns, Thy fingers’ art,
The moon and stars which Thou so bright hast set
In the pure firmament, then saith my heart:
O what is man, that Thou remembrest yet
And think’st upon him, or of man begot
That him Thou visit’st and of him art found.
Scarce to be less than gods Thou mad’st his lot,
With honor and with state Thou hast him crowned.

O’er the works of Thy hand Thou mad’st him lord.
Thou hast put all under his lordly feet
All flocks, and herds, by Thy commanding word,
All beasts that in the field or forest meet,

Fowl of the Heav’ns, and fish that through the wet
Sea-paths in shoals do slide. And know no dearth.
O Jehovah, our Lord, how wondrous great
And glorious is Thy name through all the earth.
PARADISE LOST

1662–1665?
THE VERSE

The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek and of Virgil in Latin, rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse (in longer works especially) but the invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter—graced indeed, since, by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise and for the most part worse than they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself to all judicious ears trivial and of no musical delight, which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect, then, of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect—though it may seem so, perhaps, to vulgar readers—that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.
BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

This first Book proposes first in brief the whole subject, man’s disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent, who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action past over, the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell, described here not in the center (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos. Here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him.

They confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven—for that Angels were, long before this visible Creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council.

What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep. The infernal peers there sit in council.

1. Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
2. Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
3. Brought Death into the world, and all our woe
4. With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
5. Restore us and regain the blissful seat
6. Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
7. Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
8. That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
9. In the beginning how the heavens and earth
10. Rose out of Chaos. Or if Sion hill
11. Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed
12. Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
13. Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song
14. That with no middle flight intends to soar
15. Above th’Aonian mount, while it pursues
16. Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme
17. And chiefly thou, O Spirit that dost prefer
18. Before all temples th’ upright heart and pure
19. Instruct me, for Thou know’st, Thou from the first
20. Wast present and, with mighty wings outspread
21. Dove-like sat’st brooding on the vast abyss
22. And mad’st it pregnant. What in me is dark
23. Illumine, what is low raise and support
24. That, to the height of this great argument
25 I may assert Eternal Providence
26 And justify the ways of God to men
27 Say first—for Heav’n hides nothing from thy view
28 Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
29 Moved our grand progenitors, in that happy state
30 Favored of Heav’n so highly, to fall off
31 From their Creator and transgress His will
32 For one restraint, lords of the world besides
33 Who first seduced them to that foul revolt
34 Th’ infernal Serpent, he it was whose guile
35 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
36 The mother of mankind, what time his pride
37 Had cast him out from Heav’n, with all his host
38 Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
39 To set himself in glory above his peers
40 He trusted to have equalled the Most High
41 If he opposed and with ambitious aim
42 Against the throne and monarchy of God
43 Raised impious war in Heav’n and battle proud
44 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
45 Hurl’d headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
46 With hideous ruin and combusticn down
47 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
48 In adamantine chains and penal fire
49 Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent to arms
50 Nine times the space that measures day and night
51 To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew
52 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
53 Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
54 Reserved him to more wrath, for now the thought
55 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
56 Torments him. Round he throws his baleful eyes
57 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
58 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate
59 At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
60 The dismal situation waste, and wild
61 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
62 As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
63 No light but rather darkness visible
64 Served only to discover sights of woe
65 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
66 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
67 That comes to all, but torture without end
68 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
69 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed
70 Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heav’n
As from the center thrice to th’ utmost pole
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell
There the companions of his fall, o’erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire
He soon discerns and, wailing by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beelzebub. To whom th’ arch-enemy
And thence in Heav’n called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began
“If thou beest he—but O how fallen! how changed
From him who, in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright!—if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin—into what pit thou seest
From what height fall’n, so much the stronger proved
He with His thunder. And till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those
Nor what the potent victor in His rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change
(Though changed in outward luster) that fixed mind
And high disdain from sense of injured merit
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend
And to the fierce contentions brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed
That durst dislike His reign and, me preferring
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heav’n,
And shook His throne. What though the field be lost
All is not lost—the unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate
And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome
That glory never shall His wrath or might
Exhort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify His power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted His empire: that were low indeed
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall, since, by fate, the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail
Since, through experience of this great event
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war
Irreconcilable to our grand foe
Who now triumphs, and in th’ excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav’n.”
So spoke th’ apostate Angel, though in pain
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair
And him thus answered, soon, his bold compeer:
“O Prince, O chief of many thronèd Powers
That led th’ embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heav’n’s perpetual King
And put to proof His high supremacy
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav’n, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low
As far as gods and Heav’nly Essences
Can perish—for the mind and spirit remains Invincible, and vigor soon returns
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery
But what if He our conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o’erpowered such force as ours
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains
That we may so suffice His vengeful ire
Or do Him mightier service as His thralls
By right of war, whate’er His business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire
Or do His errands in the gloomy deep
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment
Whereeto with speedy words th’ arch-fiend replied
“Fall’n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
Doing or suffering. But of this be sure
To do aught good never will be our task
But ever to do ill our sole delight
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then His providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good
Our labor must be to pervert that end
And out of good still to find means of evil
Which oft-times may succeed so as, perhaps
Shall grieve Him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim
“But see! the angry victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heav’n. The sulphurous hail
Shot after us in storm o’erblown, hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heav’n received us falling, and the thunder
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep
Let us not slip th’ occasion, whether scorn or satiate
fury yield it from our foe
“Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild
The seat of desolation, void of light
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves
There rest, if any rest can harbor there
And, re-assembling our afflicted Powers
Consult how we may henceforth most offend Our enemy, our own loss how repair
What reinforcement we may gain from hope
If not, what resolution from despair
Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size
Titanian or earth-born, that warred on Jove Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan which God of all His works
Created hugest that swim th’ ocean-stream
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays
So stretched out huge in length the arch-fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heav’n
Left him at large to his own dark designs
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion. wrath, and vengeance poured
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature. On each hand the flames
Driv’n backward slope their pointing spires and, rolled
In billows, leave in th’ midst a horrid vale
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights—if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire
And such appeared in hue as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Etna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole
Of unblést feet. Him followed his next mate
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength
Not by the sufferance of supernal power
“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime
Said then the lost Archangel, “this the seat
That we must change for Heav’n?—this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since He
Who now is sov’reign can dispose and bid
What shall be right. Farthest from Him is best
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above His equals. Farewell, happy fields
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n.
What matter where, if I be still the same
And what I should be, all but less than He
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free. Th’Almighty hath not built
Here for His envy, will not drive us hence
Here we may reign secure and, in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav’n!
“But wherefore let we then our faithful friends
Th’ associates and co-partners of our loss
Lie thus astonished on th’ oblivious pool
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heav’n, or what more lost in Hell
So Satan spoke; and him Beelzebub
Thus answered: “Leader of those armies bright
Which, but th’ Omnipotent, none could have foiled!
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed.
No wonder, fall’n such a pernicious height
He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
At evening, from the top of Fesolé
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands
Rivers, or mountains in her spotty globe
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some great ammiral were but a wand
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marl, not like those steps
On Heaven’s azure. And the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions, Angel forms, who lay entranced.
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched, embow’r—or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o’erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrewn
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood
Under amazement of their hideous change
He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded: “Princes, Potentates, Warriors, the Flow’r of Heav’n—once yours, now lost
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heav’n?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heav’n-gates discern
Th’ advantage, and descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall’n!”
They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel
Yet to their general’s voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram’s son, in Egypt’s evil day
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind
That o’er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell
‘Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires
Till, as a signal giv’n, th’ uplifted spear
Of their great sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain
A multitude like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhine or the Danau, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band
The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood
Their great commander—godlike shapes, and forms
Excelling human; princely Dignities
And Powers that erst in Heav'n sat on thrones
Though of their names in Heav'nly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and razed
By their rebellion, from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till wand'ring o'er the earth
(Through God's high sufferance) for the trial of man
By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and th' invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold
And devils to adore for deities
Then were they known to men by various names
And various idols through the heathen world
Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last
Roused from their slumber on that fiery couch, At their great emperor's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?
The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God
Their altars by His altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the Cherubim, yea, often placed
Within His sanctuary itself their shrines
Abominations!—and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront His light
First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children’s cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipped in Rabba and her wat’ry plain
In Argob and in Basan to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Topher thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell
Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab’s sons
From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
Of southmost Abarim in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon’s realm, beyond
The flow’ry dale of Sibma clad with vines
And Eléalé to th’ asphaltic pool.
Peor his other name, when he enticed Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile.
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Ev’n to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, last hard by hate
till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth—those male
These feminine. For Spirits, when they please Can either sex assume, or both, so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones
Like cumbrous flesh, but in what shape they choose
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure
Can execute their airy purposes
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods, for which their heads as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes.

With these in troop

Came Astoreth, w
Astarté, queen of heaven, with crescent horns
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on th’ offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king whose heart, though large
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul.

Thammuz came next behind
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer’s day
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded. The love-tale
Infected Sion’s daughters with like heat
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish, yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza’s frontier bounds
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold
A leper once he lost, and gained a king
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God’s altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished.
After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wand’ring gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
Th’ infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb, and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bether and in Dan,
Lik’ning his Maker to the grazèd ox—
Jehovah, who in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods
Belial came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smoked, yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli’s sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God.
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest tow’rs,
And injury. And when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might.
The rest were long to tell, though renowned.
Gods, yet confessed later than Heav’n and Earth,
Their boasted parents; Titan, Heav’n’s first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn. He from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea’s son, like measure found:
So Jove usurping reigned. These first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heav’n, or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land, or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to th’ Hesperian fields
And o’er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.
All these and more came flocking, but with looks
downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself, which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage and dispelled their fears
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud, and clarions, be upreared.
His mighty standard, as his right, a Cherub tall
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
Th’ imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
With gems and golden luster rich emblazed
Seraphic arms and trophies, all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout that tore Hell’s concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With orient colors waving. With them rose
A forest huge of spears, and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat
Nor wanting power to mitigate and suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they
Breathing united force with fixèd thought
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps o’er the burnt soil.

And now
Advanced in view they stand—a horrid front of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd files Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse The whole battalion views—their order due, Their visages and stature as of gods Their number last he sums. And now his heart Distends with pride and hard’ning in his strength Glories, for never since created man
Met such embodied force as, named with these Could merit more than that small infantry Warred on by cranes—though all the giant brood Of Phlegra with th’ heroic race were joined That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side Mixed with auxiliar gods, and what resounds In fable or romance of Uther’s son, Begirt with British and Armorick knights And all who since, baptized or infidel Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban, Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond, Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore When Charlemain with all his peerage fell By Fontarabbia Thus far these, beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed Their dread commander. He, above the rest In shape and gesture proudly eminent Stood like a tow’r. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
Of glory obscured, as when the sun new-ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all th'Archangel, but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of heav'n, and from eternal splendors flung
For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood
Their glory withered—as when Heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak, whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers. Attention held them mute
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth. At last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way
"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with th'Almighty! And that strife
Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to re-ascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat
For me, be witness all the host of Heav'n,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But He who reigns
Monarch in Heav'n till then as one secure
Sat on His throne, upheld by old repute
Consent or custom, and His regal state
Put forth at full but still His strength concealed
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall
Henceforth His might we know, and know our own
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked. Our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile
What force effected not, that He no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe
Space may produce new worlds—whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heav’n that He ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom His choice regard
Should favor equal to the sons of Heav’n.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption—thither, or elsewhere
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th’ abyss
Long under darkness cover.

Full counsel must mature. Peace is despair’d
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved
He spoke and, to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim: the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with graspèd arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav’n.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire—
Shone with a glossy scurf —undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore
The work of sulphur.
A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heav’n, for even in Heav’n his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heav’n’s pavement, trodden gold
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught
Ransacked the center, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wond’ring tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook
As in an organ, from one blast of wind
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave, nor did there want cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures grav’n.
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. Th’ ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o’er the smooth
And level pavement. From the archèd roof
Pendant by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered, and the work some praise
And some the architect. His hand was known
In Heav’n by many a tow’red structure high
Where sceptered Angels held their residence
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece. And in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber, and how he fell
From Heav'n they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements. From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
On Lemnos, th'Aegean isle. Thus they relate,
Erring, for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before, nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heav'n high tow'rs, nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell
Meanwhile the wingèd heralds, by command
Of sov'reign power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest. They anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged, the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Paynim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters, they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank
The suburb of their straw-built citadel
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state-affairs. So thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened till, the signal given
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons
Now less than smallest dwarfs in narrow room
Throng numberless—like that pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount, or faery elves
Whose midnight revels by a forest-side
Or fountain some belated peasant sees
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course. They, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms

Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, reduced

Though without number still, amidst the hall

Of that infernal court. But far within

And in their own dimensions like themselves

The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim

In close recess and secret conclave sat

A thousand demi-gods on golden seats

Frequent and full. After short silence, then

And summons read, the great consult began
BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven. Some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophesy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves, about this time to be created.

Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search. Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage, is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell Gates, finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them, by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven.

With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

1. High on a throne of royal state, which far
2. Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind
3. Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
4. Show’rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold
5. Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
6. To that bad eminence and, from despair
7. Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
8. Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
9. Vain war with Heav’n and, by success taught
10. His proud imaginations thus displayed
11. “Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav’n!”—
12. For since no deep within her gulf can hold
13. Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fall’n,
14. I give not Heav’n for lost. From this descent
15. Celestial Virtues rising will appear
16. More glorious and more dread than from no fall
17. And trust themselves to fear no second fate
18. Me, though, just right and the fixed laws of Heav’n
19. Did first create your leader, next free choice
20. With what besides in council or in fight
21. Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss
22. Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
23. Established in a safe, unenvied throne
24. Yielded with full consent. The happier state
25. In Heav’n, which follows dignity, might draw
26. Envy from each inferior. But who here
27. Will envy whom the highest place exposes
28. Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s aim
29. Your bulwark and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction, for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence, none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage, then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord
More than can be in Heav’n, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us. And by what best way
Whether of open war or covert guile
We now debate. Who can advise may speak
He ceased. And next him Moloch, sceptered king,
Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heav’n, now fiercer by despair
His trust was with th’ Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all. With that care lost
Went all his fear—of God, or Hell, or worse
He recked not—and these words thereafter spoke:
My sentence is for open war. Of wiles
More unexpert, I boast not. Then let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend—sit ling’ring here
Heav’n’s fugitives? and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! Let us rather choose
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O’er Heav’n’s high tow’rs to force resistless way
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer! When to meet the noise
Of His almighty engine, He shall hear
Infernal thunder and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among His Angels, and His throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear and pursued us through the deep
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? Th’ ascent is easy, then
Th’ event is feared! Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way His wrath may find
To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driv’n out from bliss condemned
In this abhorred deep to utter woe
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of His anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus
We should be quite abolished, and expire
What fear we then? What doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential —happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being
Or if our substance be indeed divine
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing. And by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb His Heav’n,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm
Though inaccessible, His fatal throne
Which if not victory, is yet revenge
He ended frowning, and his look denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On th’ other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane
A fairer person lost not Heav’n. He seemed
For dignity composed, and high exploit
But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropped manna and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels, for his thoughts were low
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear
And with persuasive accent thus began
“I should be much for open war, O peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success,
When he who most excels in fact of arms
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge
First, what revenge? The tow’rs of Heav’n are filled
With armèd watch that render all access
Impregnable. Oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection to confound
Heav’n’s purest light, yet our great enemy
All incorruptible, would on His throne
Sit unpolluted, and th’ ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
Th’Almighty victor to spend all His rage
And that must end us, that must be our cure
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
those thoughts that wander through eternity
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows
Let this be good, whether our angry foe
Can give it, or will ever? How He can
Is doubtful; that He never will is sure
Will He, so wise, let loose at once His ire
Belike through impotence or unaware
To give His enemies their wish, and end
Them in His anger, whom His anger saves
To punish endless? ‘Wherefore cease we, then
Say they who counsel war: ‘we are decreed
Reserved and destined to eternal woe
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more
What can we suffer worse?’ Is this, then, worst
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms
What when we fled amain, pursued and struck
With Heav’n’s afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage
And plunge us in the flames? Or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire
Impendent horrors, threat'ning hideous fall
One day upon our heads, while we, perhaps
Designing or exhorting glorious war
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains
There to converse with everlasting groans
Unrespitèd, unpitied, unreprieved
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades. For what can force or guile
With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heav'n's height
All these our motions vain sees and derides
Not more Almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles
Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heav’n
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice, since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree
The victor’s will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow—to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom, which if we can sustain and bear
Our Supreme foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us, not offending, satisfied
With what is punished, whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if His breath stir not their flames
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapor or, inured, not feel
217 Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
218 In temper and in nature, will receive
219 Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain
220 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light
221 Besides what hope the never-ending flight
222 Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
223 Worth waiting—since our present lot appears
224 For happy though but ill, for ill not worst
225 If we procure not to ourselves more woe
226 Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason’s garb
227 Counelled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth
228 Not peace. And after him thus Mammon spoke
229 “Either to disenthrone the King of Heav’n
230 We war, if war be best, or to regain
231 Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
232 May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
233 To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife
234 The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
235 The latter—for what place can be for us
236 Within Heav’n’s bound, unless Heav’n’s Lord supreme
237 We overpower? Suppose He should relent
238 And publish grace to all, on promise made
239 Of new subjection? With what eyes could we
240 Stand in His presence humble, and receive
241 Strict laws imposed, to celebrate His throne
242 With warbled hymns, and to His Godhead sing
243 Forced hallelujahs, while He lordly sits
244 Our envied sov’reign, and His altar breathes
245 Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers
246 Our servile offerings? This must be our task
247 In Heav’n, this our delight. How wearisome
248 Eternity so spent in worship paid
249 To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue
250 By force impossible, by leave obtained
251 Unacceptable, though in Heav’n, our state
252 Of splendid vassalage, but rather seek
253 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
254 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess
255 Free and to none accountable, preferring
256 Hard liberty before the easy yoke
257 Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
258 Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
259 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
260 We can create, and in what place soe’er
261 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
262 Through labor and endurance. This deep world
263 Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heav’n’s all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, His glory unobscured
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers His throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Must’ring their rage, and Heav’n resembles Hell!
As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants not her hidden luster, gems and gold,
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence. And what can Heav’n show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper, which must needs remove
The sensible of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.
He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
Th’ assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blust’ring winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o’erwatched whose barque by chance,
Or pinnacle anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace, for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell, so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michael
Wrought still within them, and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to Heav’n.
Which when Beelzebub perceived—than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat—with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engrav’n
Deliberation sat, and public care,
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies. His look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer’s noontide air, while thus he spoke:
“Thrones and Imperial Powers, offspring of Heav’n,
Ethereal Virtues! Or these titles now
Must we renounce and, changing style, be called
Princes of Hell? For so the popular vote
Inclines—here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire. Doubtless! While we dream,
And know not that the King of Heav’n hath doomed
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond His potent arm, to live exempt
From Heav’n’s high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against His throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under th’ inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For He, to be sure,
In height or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of His Kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron scepter rule
Us here, as with His golden those in Heav’n.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined us and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought. For what peace will be giv’n
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? And what peace can we return,
But, to our power, hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least
May reap His conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heav’n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav’n
Err not)—another world, the happy seat
Of some new race, called man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favored more
Of Him who rules above. So was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook Heav’n’s whole circumference confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness: how attempted best,
By force or subtilety. Though Heav’n be shut,
And Heav’n’s high arbitrator sit secure
In His own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of His Kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it. Here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire
To waste His whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
The puny habitants, or if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish His own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt His joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In His disturbance, when His darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original, and faded bliss—
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
Attesting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires.” Thus Beelzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed, for whence
But from the author of all ill could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes. With full assent
They vote, whereat his speech he thus renews:
“Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighboring arms,
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heav’n, or else in some mild zone
Dwell not unvisited of Heav’n’s fair light
Secure, and at the bright’ning orient beam
Purge off this gloom. The soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand’ring feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his airy flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe,
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage, for on whom we send
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.
This said, he sat, and expectation held
His look suspense awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts, and each
In other’s count’nance read his own dismay,
Astonished.
None among the choice and prime of those Heav’n-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage, till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spoke:
“O progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O peers,
And this imperial sov’reignty, adorned
With splendor, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honor, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest
High honored sits? Go therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heav’n, though fall’n. Intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell more tolerable, if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion Intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me.” Thus saying, rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply,
Prudent, lest from his resolution raised, Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
And so refused, might in opinion stand His rivals, winning cheap the high repute Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they Dreaded not more th’ adventure than his voice Forbidding, and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a god Extol him equal to the Highest in Heav’n.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised That for the general safety he despised His own, for neither do the Spirits damned Lose all their virtue, lest bad men should boast Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites
Or close ambition varnished o’er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief—
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o’erspread Heav’n’s cheerful face, the louring element Scowls o’er the darkened landscape, snow or shower.
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet, Extend his evening beam, the fields revive, The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

O shame to men! Devil with devil damned

Firm holds. Men only disagree

Of creatures rational, though under hope

Of Heav’nly grace. And God proclaiming peace,

Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife

Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,

Wasting the earth, each other to destroy,

As if (which might induce us to accord)

Man had not hellish foes enow besides,

That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved, and forth

In order came the grand infernal peers.

Midst came their mighty Paramount and seemed

Alone th’ antagonist of Heav’n, nor less

Than Hell’s dread emperor, with pomp supreme,

And godlike imitated state. Him round

A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed

With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.

Then of their session ended they bid cry,

With trumpet’s regal sound, the great result.

Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim

Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy,

By herald’s voice explained. The hollow abyss

Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell

With deaf ‘ning shout returned them loud acclaim.

Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised

By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers

Disband and, wand’ring, each his several way

Pursues, as inclination or sad choice

Leads him, perplexed, where he may likeliest find

Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours till his great chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields.
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fromed brigades form—
As when, to war proud cities, war appears,
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds. Before each van
Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickes, legions close. With feats of arms
From either end of Heav'n the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhoean rage, more fell
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind. Hell scarce holds the wild uproar,
As when Alcides, from Oechalia crowned
With conquest, felt th' envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
Into th' Euboic sea.
Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.
Their song was partial, but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense)
Others apart sat on a hill retired
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdurèd breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton, whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her wat’ry labyrinth, whereof who drinks Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood, a frozen continent Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems Of ancient pile, all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf as that Serbonian bog Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk. The parching air Burns frore, and cold performs th’ effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled, At certain revolutions all the damned Are brought and feel by turns the bitter change Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce, From beds of raging fire to starve in ice Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink.
But Fate withstands and, to oppose th’ attempt,
Medusa, with Gorgonian terror, guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, th’ adventurous bands,
With shuddering horror pale and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O’er many a frozen, many a fiery aip,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras and Chimeras dire.
Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight. Sometimes
He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left,
Now shaves with le
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs—they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates. Three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal yet when they list would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla bathing in the sea that parts Calabria
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the laboring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape
If shape it might be called, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed
For each seemed either—that shadow seemed
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart. What seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid strides. Hell trembled as he strode.
Th’ undaunted fiend what this might be admired—
Admired, not feared (God and His Son except,
Created thing naught valued
he nor shunned)
And with disdainful look thus first began:
“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav’n.
To whom the goblin, full of wrath, replied:
“Art thou that traitor Angel? Art thou he
Who first broke peace in Heav’n, and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heav’n’s sons,
Conjured against the Highest—for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heav’n,
Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy ling’ring, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.
So spoke the grisly terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threat’ning, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On th’ other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In th’ arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim. Their fatal hands
No second stroke intend. And such a frown
Each cast at th’ other as when two black clouds,
With Heav’n’s artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian then stand front to front,
Hov’ring a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown. So matched they stood,
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
Ris’n, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
“O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,
“Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father’s head? And know’st for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained His drudge to execute
Whate’er His wrath, which He calls justice, bids—
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!
She spoke, and at her words the hellish pest
Forbore.
Then these to her Satan returned:
“So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call’st
Me father, and that phantasm call’st my son?
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.
T’ whom thus the portress of Hell-gate replied:
“Hast thou forgot me, then? and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair
In Heav’n when at th’ assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heav’n’s King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side op’ning wide,
Likest to thee in shape and count’nance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
All th’ host of Heav’n. Back they recoiled, afraid
At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
Portentous held me. But, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse—thine chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam’st enamored, and such joy thou took’st
With me in secret that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in Heav’n, wherein remained
(For what could else?) to our Almighty foe
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
Driv’n headlong from the pitch of Heaven, do
Into this deep, and in the general fall
I also, at which time this powerful key
Into my hands was giv’n, with charge to keep
These gates forever shut, which none can pass
Without my op’ning. Pensive here I sat
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed. But he my inbred enemy
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out ‘Death!'
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded ‘Death!
I fled, but he pursued (though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage), and swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And in embraces forcible and foul
Engend’ring with me, of that rape begot
These yeling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw’st—hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me, for when they list into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast.
Then bursting forth Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who set them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be. So Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow. Neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered Heav’nly, for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist.
She finished, and the subtle fiend, his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:
“Dear daughter—since thou claim’st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show’st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heav’n, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befall’n us unforeseen, unthought-of—know
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the Heav’nly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
Th’ un-founded deep, and through the void immense
To search, with wand’ring quest, a place foretold
Should be—and by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round—a place of bliss
In the purlieus of Heav’n, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed
Lest Heav’n, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know, and this once known shall soon return
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed
With odors. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.
He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespoke her sire:
“The key of this infernal pit, by due
And by command of Heav’n’s all-powerful King,
I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates. Against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o’ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heav’n and Heav’nly born—
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamors compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav’st me. Whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as besemi
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took,
And towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
Could once have moved, then in the key-hole turns
Th' intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden, open fly
(With impetuous recoil and jarring sound)
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened—but to shut
Excelled her power. The gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a banded host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array.
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep—a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,
And time, and place, are lost, where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mast'ry, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms. They around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,
He rules a moment. Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns. Next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless th'Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds—
Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage, for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms
With all her battering engines, bent to raze
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of Heav’n were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans
He spread for flight and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground, thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious, but that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacancy. All unawares,
Flutt’ring his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and niter, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying. Behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With wingèd course, o’er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold, so eagerly the fiend
O’er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence.
Thither he plies Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies,
Bord’ring on light. When straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep! With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Adès, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon, Rumor next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
T’ whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: “Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm, but by constraint
Wand’ring this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
From your dominion won, th’ Ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound, direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness, and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be th’ advantage all, mine the revenge!
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heav’n’s King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard, for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded. And Heav’n-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to def
Encroached on still through our intestine broils,
Weakening the scepter of old Night. First Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heav’n and earth, another world
Hung o’er my realm, linked in a golden chain
To that side Heav’n from whence your legions fell!
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain.
He ceased, and Satan stayed not to reply,
But glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way, harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling rocks,
Or when Ulysses on the larboard steered.
Charybdis, and by th’ other whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labor hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labor he,
But he once passed, soon after, when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
Following his track (such was the will of Heav’n)
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching th’ utmost orb
Of this frail world, by which the Spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav’n
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din,
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And like a weather-beaten vessel holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn,
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off th’ empyreal Heav’n, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat,
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendant world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

The End of the Second Book
BOOK III

THE ARGUMENT

God sitting on His throne sees Satan flying towards this world, then newly created; shews him to the Son who sat at His right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears His own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created man free and able enough to have withstood his tempter; yet declares His purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced.

The Son of God renders praises to His Father for the manifestation of His gracious purpose towards man, but God again declares that grace cannot be extended towards man without the satisfaction of divine justice. Man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore with all his progeny devoted to Death must die, unless some one can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment.

The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for man. The Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and earth; commands all the Angels to adore him. They obey, and hymning to their harps in full choir, celebrate the Father and the Son.

Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world’s outermost orb, where wandering he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither. Thence [Satan] comes to the Gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence to the orb of the sun; he finds there Uriel the Regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.

Hail holy light, offspring of Heav’n first-born,
Or of the Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproachèd light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear’st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
Before the Heav’n’s thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
Through utter and through middle darkness borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
Taught by the Heav’nly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to re-ascend,
Though hard and rare. Thee I re-visit safe,
And feel thy sov’reign vital lamp, but thou
Re-visit’st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn,
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smite with the love of sacred song. But chief
Thee, Sion, and the flow’ry brooks beneath
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit, nor sometimes forget
Those other two, equaled with me in fate
(So were I equaled with them in renown)
Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers, as the wakeful bird sings darkling,
and in shadiest covert hid Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev’n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine,
But cloud instead, and ever-during
tunes me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature’s works to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate. There plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.
Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyrean where He sits
High throned above all height, bent down His eye,
His own works and their works at once to view.
About Him all the Sanctities of Heav’n
Stood thick as stars, and from His sight received
Beatitude past utterance. On His right
The radiant image of His glory sat,
His only Son. On earth He first beheld
Our two first parents, yet the only two
Of mankind in the happy garden placed,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivaled love,
In blissful solitude. He then surveyed
Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of Heav’n on this side Night
In the dun\textsuperscript{2460} air sublime, \textsuperscript{2461} and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings and willing feet
On the bare outside of this world, that seemed
Firm (and embosomed, \textsuperscript{2462} without firmament,\textsuperscript{2463} without firmament)
Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
Him God beholding, from His prospect\textsuperscript{2464} high,
Wherein past, present, future, He beholds,
Thus to His only Son foreseeing spoke:
“Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage
Transports\textsuperscript{2465} our adversary? whom no bounds
Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
Wide interrupt,\textsuperscript{2466} can hold, so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
Through all restraint broke\textsuperscript{2467} loose, he wings his way
Not far off Heav’n, in the precincts\textsuperscript{2468} of light,
Directly towards the new created world,
And man there placed, with purpose to assay\textsuperscript{2469}
If him by force he can destroy or, worse,
By some false guile pervert. And shall pervert,
For man will hearken to his glozing\textsuperscript{2470} lies,
And easily transgress\textsuperscript{2471} the sole command,
Sole pledge\textsuperscript{2472} of his obedience: So will fall
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
All he could have. I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood,\textsuperscript{2473} though free to fall.
Such I created all the ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed.
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,\textsuperscript{2474}
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
As if predestination over-ruled
Their will, disposed\textsuperscript{2475} by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed
Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.

So without least impulse or shadow of Fate,

Or aught by me immutably foreseen,

They trespass, authors to themselves in all

Both what they judge and what they choose. For so

I formed them free, and free they must remain,

Till they enthrall themselves. I else must change

Their nature, and revoke the high decree

Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained

Their freedom. They themselves ordained their fall.

The first sort by their own suggestion fell,

Self-tempted, self-depraved. Man falls deceived

By the other first. Man therefore shall find grace,

The other none. In mercy and justice both,

Through Heav’n and earth, so shall my glory excel,

But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.

Thus while God spoke, ambrosial fragrance filled

All Heav’n, and in the blessèd Spirits elect

Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.

Beyond compare, the Son of God was seen

Most glorious. In him all His Father shone,

Substantially expressed, and in his face

Divine compassion visibly appeared,

Love without end, and without measure grace,

Which uttering thus he to his Father spoke:

"O Father, gracious was that word which closed

Thy sov’reign sentence, that man should find grace.

For which both Heav’n and earth shall high extol

Thy praises, with th’ innumerable sound

Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith Thy throne

Encompassed shall resound Thee ever blessed.

For should man finally be lost? Should man,

Thy creature late so loved, Thy youngest son,

Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined

With his own folly? That be from Thee far,

That far be from Thee, Father, who art judge

Of all things made, and judgest only right.

Or shall the adversary thus obtain

His end, and frustrate Thine? Shall he fulfill

His malice, and Thy goodness bring to nought?

Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,

Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell

Draw after him the whole race of mankind,

By him corrupted? Or wilt Thou Thyself

Abolish Thy creation, and unmake

For him, what for Thy glory Thou hast made?

So should Thy goodness and Thy greatness both
Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.

To whom the great Creator thus replied:

“O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
As my eternal purpose hath decreed.
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsafed. Once more I will renew
His lapsèd powers, though forfeit and enthralled
By Sin to foul exorbitant desires.
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By me upheld, that he may know how frail
His fall’n condition is, and to me owe
All his deliverance, and to none but me.
Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
Elect above the rest; so is my will.
The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offered grace
Invites, for I will clear their senses dark,
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
Though but endeavored with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
And I will place within them as a guide
My umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
Light after light, well used, they shall attain,
And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,
They who neglect and scorn shall never taste,
But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,
That they may stumble on, and deeper fall.
And none but such from mercy I exclude.
“But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,
Disloyal, breaks his fealty and sins
Against the high supremacy of Heav’n,
Affecting God-head and, so losing all,
To expiate his treason hath nought left,
But to destruction sacred and devote,
He, with his whole posterity, must die.
Die he or justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
Say, Heav'nly Powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime and, just, the unjust to save?
Dwells in all Heav'n charity so dear?
He asked, but all the Heav'nly choir stood mute,
And silence was in Heav'n: on man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appeared,
Much less that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fullness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renewed:
"Father, Thy word is past, man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means? that finds her way,
The speediest of Thy wingèd messengers,
To visit all Thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
Happy for man, so coming. He her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost:
Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
Behold me, then: me for him, life for life
I offer. On me let Thine anger fall;
Account me man. I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to Thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased. On me let Death wreak all his rage.
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquished. Thou hast giv'n me to possess
Life in myself forever. By Thee I live,
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due (All that of me can die), yet that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
Forever with corruption there to dwell,
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
Death his Death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed.
I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
While, by Thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave.
Then with the multitude of my redeemed
Shall enter Heav’n, long absent, and return,
Father, to see Thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
And reconcilement. Wrath shall be no more,
Thenceforth, but in Thy presence joy entire.”

His words here ended, but his meek aspect,
Silent, yet spoke, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience. As a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seized
All Heav’n, what this might mean, and whither tend,
Wond’ring. But soon th’Almighty thus replied:
“O thou, in Heav’n and earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
My sole complacence! Well thou know’st how dear
To me are all my works, nor man the least,
Though last created, that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.
Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
Their nature also to thy nature join,
And be thyself man among men on earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
By wondrous birth. Be thou in Adam’s room
The head of all mankind, though Adam’s son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a second root, shall be restored
As many as are restored, without thee none.
His crime makes guilty all his sons: thy merit,
Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
So Heav’nly love shall outdo hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
So easily destroyed, and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
Man’s nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying

Godlike fruition, quitted all, to save

A world from utter loss, and hast been found

By merit more than birthright Son of God,

Found worthiest to be so by being good,

Far more than great or high—because in thee

Love hath abounded more than glory abounds.

Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt

With thee thy manhood also to this throne.

Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign

Both God and man, Son both of God and man,

Anointed universal King. All power

I give thee: reign forever, and assume

Thy merits. Under thee, as head supreme,

Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce.

All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide

In Heav’n, or earth, or under earth in Hell.

When thou, attended gloriously from Heav’n

Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send

The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaim

Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds

The living, and forthwith the cited dead

Of all past ages, to the general doom

Shall hasten. Such a peal shall rouse their sleep.

Then all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge

Bad men and Angels. They, arraigned, shall sink

Beneath thy sentence. Hell, her numbers full,

Thenceforth shall be forever shut. Meanwhile

The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring

New Heav’n and earth, wherein the just shall dwell

And after all their tribulations long

See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,

With joy and peace triumphing, and fair truth.

Then thou thy regal scepter shalt lay by,

For regal scepter then no more shall need:

God shall be all in all. But all ye gods,

Adore him, who to compass all this dies,

Adore the Son, and honor him as me.

No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all

The multitude of Angels, with a shout

Loud as from numbers without number, sweet

As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav’n rung

With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled

The eternal regions. Lowly reverent

Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground

With solemn adoration down they cast

Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold,
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
Began to bloom, but soon for man's offence
To Heav'n removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flow'res aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
And where the river of bliss through midst of Heav'n
Rolls o'er Elysian flow'res her amber stream.
With these that never fade the Spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams,
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high.
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part, such concord is in Heav’n.
Thee, Father, first they sung Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King, Thee Author of all being,
Fountain of light, Thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where Thou sit’st
Throned inaccessible, but when Thou shad’st
The full blaze of thy beams and, through a cloud
Drawn round about Thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright Thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle Heav’n, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
Thee next they sang of all creation first,
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous count’nance, without cloud
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold. On thee
Impressed the effulgence of His glory abides,
Transfused on thee His ample Spirit rests.
Heaven of Heav’n and all the Powers therein
By thee created; and by thee threw down
Thy Father’s dreadful thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
Heav’n’s everlasting frame, while o’er the necks
Thou drov’st of warring Angels disarrayed.
Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father’s might,
To execute fierce vengeance on His foes,
Not so on man. Him through their malice fallen,
Father of mercy and grace, Thou didst not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined.
No sooner did Thy dear and only Son
Perceive Thee purposed not to doom frail man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
He to appease Thy wrath, and end the strife
Of mercy and justice in Thy face discerned,
Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
Second to Thee, offered himself to die
For man’s offence. O unexampled love,
Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
Hail, Son of God, Savior of men! Thy name
Shall be the copious matter of my song
Henceforth, and never shall my heart thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father’s praise disjoin.
Thus they in Heav’n, above the starry sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile, upon the firm opacious globe
Of this round world, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed
From Chaos and th’ inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
It seemed, now seems a boundless continent
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
Starless exposed, and ever-threat’ning storms
Of Chaos blust’ring round, inclement sky,
Save on that side which from the wall of Heav’n,
Though distant far, some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air less vex’d with tempest loud.
Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids,
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light
So on this windy sea of land, the fiend
Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey—
Alone, for other creature in this place,
Living or lifeless, to be found was none,
None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
Up hither like aerial vapors flew
Of all things transitory and vain, when Sin
With vanity had filled the works of men:
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or th’ other life,
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds.
All th’ unaccomplished works of Nature’s hand,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
Till final dissolution, wander here,
Not in the neighboring moon, as some have dreamed.
Those argent fields’ more likely habitants,
Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold
Betwixt th’ angelical and human kind.
Hither of ill-joined sons and daughters born
First from the ancient world those giants came,
With many a vain exploit, though then renowned.
The builders next of Babel on the plain
Of Sennaär, and still with vain design,
New Babels, had they wherewithal would build.
Others came single: he, who to be deemed
A god, leaped fondly into Aetna's flames,
Empedocles: and he, who to enjoy
Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
Cleombrotus; and many more too long,
Embryos and idiots, eremites, and friars
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery.

Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
In Golgotha him dead who lives in Heav'n,
And they who to be sure of Paradise,
Dying, put on the weeds of Dominick,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.

They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that first moved.
And now Saint Peter at Heav'n's wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
Of Heav'n's ascent they lift their feet, when lo!
A violent cross wind from either coast
Blows them transverse, ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air. Then might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tossed
And fluttered into rags, then relics, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds. All these, upwhirled aloft,
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off
Into a limbo large and broad, since called
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.
All this dark globe the fiend found as he passed,
And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste
His travelled steps. Far distant he descries,
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of Heav'n, a structure high
At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellished. Thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model or by shading pencil drawn.
These stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz,
Dreaming by night under the open sky
And waking cried, "This is the gate of Heav'n!
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heav'n sometimes,
Viewless. And underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from earth, sailing arrived,
Wafted by Angels, or flew o’er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss,
Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o’er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to th’ earth, a passage wide,
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion and, though that were large,
Over the Promised Land, to God so dear,
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests His Angels to and fro
Passed frequent, and His eye with choice regard
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan’s flood,
To Beersaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and th’Arabian shore.
So wide the op’ning seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair
That scaled by steps of gold to Heav’n-gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis
With glistering spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams,
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair.
Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of Night’s extended shade), from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond th’ horizon. Then from pole to pole
He views in breadth, and without longer pause
Down right into the world’s first region throws
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other worlds—
Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles. But who dwelt happy there
He stayed not to inquire. Above them all
The golden sun, in splendor likest Heav’n,
Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends
Through the calm firmament, but up or down,
By center, or eccentric, hard to tell,
Or longitude, where the great luminary
Aloof the vulgar constellations thick,
That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
Dispenses light from far. They as they move
Their starry dance in numbers that compute
Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
The universe, and to each inward part
With gentle penetration, though unseen,
Shoots invisible virtue ev’n to the deep,
So wondrously was set his station bright.
There lands the fiend, a spot like which perhaps
Astronomer in the sun’s lucent orb
Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.
The place he found beyond expression bright,
Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone,
Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.
If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;
If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
In Aaron’s breast-plate, and a stone besides
Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen
That stone, or like to that which here below
Philosophers in vain so long have sought—
In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea,
Drained through a limbic to his native form.
What wonder then if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold? when with one virtuous touch
The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,
Here in the dark so many precious things
Of color glorious, and effect so rare?
Here matter new to gaze the Devil met,
Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands,
For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
But all sun-shine, as when his beams at noon
Culminate from th’equator, as they now
Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
Shadow from body opaque can fall, and the air,
Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray
To objects distant far, whereby he soon
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
The same whom John saw also in the sun.
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid.
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fléde with wings
Lay waving round. On some great charge employed
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.
Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wandering flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of man,
His journey’s end and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape,
Which else might work him danger or delay.
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffused, so well he feigned.
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
Of many a colored plume, sprinkled with gold;
His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.
He drew not nigh unheard. The Angel bright,
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,
Admonished by his ear, and straight was known
The Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the seven
Who in God’s presence, nearest to His throne,
Stand ready at command, and are His eyes
That run through all the Heav’ns, or down to th’ earth
Bear His swift errands over moist and dry,
O’er sea and land. Him Satan thus accosts:
“Uriel, for thou of those sev’n Spirits that stand
In sight of God’s high throne, gloriously bright,
The first art wont His great authentic will
Interpreter through highest Heav’n to bring,
Where all His sons thy embassy attend,
And here art likeliest by supreme decree
Like honor to obtain, and as His eye
To visit oft this new creation round.
Unspeakable desire to see, and know
All these His wondrous works, but chiefly man,
His chief delight and favor, him for whom
All these His works so wondrous He ordained,
Hath brought me from the choirs of Cherubim
Alone thus wand’ring. Brightest Seraph, tell
In which of all these shining orbs hath man
His fixèd seat, or fixèd seat hath none,
But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell,
That I may find him, and with secret gaze
Or open admiration2705 him behold,
On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured,
That both in him and all things, as is meet,2706
The universal Maker we may praise,
Who justly hath driven out His rebel foes
To deepest Hell and, to repair that loss,
Created this new happy race of men
To serve Him better. Wise are all His ways.
So spoke the false dissembler unperceived,
For neither man nor Angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By His permissive will, through Heav’n and earth,
And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom’s gate, and to simplicity2707
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems. Which now for once beguiled
Uriel, though regent2708 of the sun, and held2709
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heav’n,
Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
In his2710 uprightness,2711 answer thus returned:
“Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify
The great work-master, leads to no excess
That reaches2212 blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy empyreal2713 mansion2714 thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,
Contented with report, hear only in Heav’n.
For wonderful indeed are all His works,
Pleasant2715 to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight.
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw when at His word the formless mass,
This world’s material mould, came to a heap2716
Confusion heard His voice, and wild uproar
Stood2717 ruled2718 stood vast infinitude confined,
Till at His second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous2719 elements, earth, flood, air, fire,
And this ethereal2720 quintessence2211 of Heav’n
Flew upward, spirited2722 with various forms,
That rolled orbicular,2723 and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move.
Each had his place appointed, each his course.
The rest, in circuit, walls this universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines.
That place is earth, the seat of man, that light
His day, which else, as th’ other hemisphere,
Night would invade, but there the neighboring moon
(So call that opposite fair star) her aid
Timely interposes, and her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heav’n,
With borrowed light her countenance triform
Hence fills and empties to enlighten th’ earth,
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot, to which I point, is Paradise,
Adam’s abode; those lofty shades, his bow’r.
Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires.
Thus said, he turned, and Satan, bowing low,
As to superior Spirits is wont in Heav’n,
Where honor due and reverence none neglects,
 Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath,
Down from th’ ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throws his steep flight in many an airy wheel,
Nor stayed till on Niphates’ top he lights.

The End of the Third Book
Satan now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprize which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair, but at length confirms himself in evil. Journeying on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described, [he] overleaps the bounds and sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, [in order] to look about him. The Garden described; Satan’s first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; [he] overhears their discourse, thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress. Then [he] leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means.

Meanwhile Uriel descending on a Sun-beam warns Gabriel, who had in charge the Gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at Noon, by his sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, as discovered after wards by his furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him out ere morning.

Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower describ’d; their evening worship. Gabriel drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam’s bower, lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping. There they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel, by whom questioned, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.
That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he what must be
Worse: of worse deeds, worse sufferings must ensue.  
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad,
Sometimes towards Heav'n and the full-blazing sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower.
Then much revolving, thus in sighs began:
“O thou, that with surpassing glory crowned,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new world, at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads, to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heav'n against Heav'n's matchless King.
Ah, wherefore! He deserved no such return
From me, whom He created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with His good
Upbraided none. Nor was His service hard.
What could be less than to afford Him praise,
The easiest recompence, and pay Him thanks—
How due!
Yet all His good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome still paying, still to owe,
Forgetful what from Him I still received,
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged. What burden then?
O, had His powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy: no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition! Yet why not? Some other Power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken from within
Or from without, to all temptations armed.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hast: whom hast thou then or what t' accuse,
But Heav'n's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then His love accursed, since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe.
Nay, cursed be thou, since against His thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues!
“Me miserable! Which way shall I fly?
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell. Myself am Hell,
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threat’ning to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav’n.
O then, at last relent! Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission, and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan,
While they adore me on the throne of Hell!
With diadem and scepter high advanced
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery. Such joy ambition finds
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state, how soon
Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilement grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep,
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall. So should I purchase dear
Short intermission, bought with double smart.
This knows my punisher, therefore as far
From granting He, as I from begging, peace.
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us out-cast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind created, and for him this world.
So farewell hope and, with hope, farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost.
Evil, be thou my good: by thee at least
Divided empire with Heav’n’s King I hold—
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign,
As man ere long, and this new world, shall know.
Thus while he spoke, each passion dimmed his face
Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair,
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.

For Heav'nly minds from such distemper foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,
Each perturbation smoothened with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud, and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge.
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel, once warned, whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort. His gestures fierce
He marked, and mad demeanor, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied. And overhead up grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend,
Shade above shade, a woody theater
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung,
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighboring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue
Appeared, with gay enamelled colors mixed,
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath shrowdered the earth. So lovely seemed
That landscape. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive all sadness but despair.
Now gentle gales, Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambique, off at sea north-east winds blow

Of Araby the blest, with such delay

Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league

Cheered with the grateful smell old ocean smiles.

So entertained those odorous sweets the fiend,

Who came their bane, though with them better pleased

Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume

That drove him, though enamored, from the spouse

Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent

From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.

Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill

Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow,

But further way found none, so thick entwined,

As one continued brake, the undergrowth

Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed

All path of man or beast that passed that way.

One gate there only was, and that looked east

On th' other side. Which when the arch-felon saw,

Due entrance he disdained and, in contempt,

At one slight bound high over-leaped all bound

Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within

Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,

Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,

Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve

In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,

Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold—

Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash

Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,

Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,

In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles,

So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold.

So since into His church lewd hirelings climb.

Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,

The middle tree and highest there that grew,

Sat like a cormorant, yet not true life

Thereby regained, but sat devising death

To them who lived, nor on the virtue thought

Of that life-giving plant, but only used

For prospect, what well-used had been the pledge

Of immortality. So little knows

Any, but God alone, to value right

The good before him, but pervers best things

To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.

Beneath him with new wonder now he views,

To all delight of human sense exposed
In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea more,
A Heav'n on earth. For blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by Him in th' east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line
From Auran eastward to the royal tow'rs
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground He caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste,
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold. And next to life
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath engulfed, for God had thrown
That mountain as His garden-mold high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden, thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wand'ring many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account,
But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendant shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flow'rs worthy of Paradise, which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill and dale and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrowned the noontide bow'rs. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view,
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here onl, and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flow'rs of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant. Meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their choir apply, airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on th' eternal Spring. Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine, gath'ring flow'rs,
Herself a fairer flow'r by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world. Nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive, nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom gentiles Ammon call, and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea and her florid son
Young Bacchus from his stepdame Rhea's eye,
Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara, though this by some supposed
True Paradise under the Ethiop line
By Nilus head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend
Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight, and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honor clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all.
And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure
(Severe, but in true filial freedom placed)
Whence true authority in men. Though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed:
For contemplation he, and valor, formed;
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.

His fair large front and eye sublime declared Absolute rule, and hyacinthine locks.

Round from his parted forelock manly hung Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad.

She as a veil down to the slender waist Her unadornèd golden tresses wore

Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied Subjection, but required with gentle sway.

And by her yielded, by him best received, Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,

And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay. Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed.

Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame Of Nature's works. Honor dishonorable,

Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,

And banished from man's life his happiest life, Simplicity and spotless innocence!

So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:

So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair That ever since in love's embraces met,

Adam the goodliest man of men, since born His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

Under a tuft of shade that on a green stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side They sat them down and, after no more toil Of their sweet gardening labor than sufficed To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell, Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline On the soft downy bank, damasked with flow'rs. The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind, Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream, Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league, Alone as they. About them frisking played All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase In wood or wilderness, forest or den.

Sporting, the lion ramped, and in his paw Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close, the serpent sly
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Couched and now filled with pasture gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating, for the sun,
Declined was hasting now with prone career
To th' ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heav’n the stars that usher evening rose.
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered, sad:
“O Hell! What do mine eyes with grief behold!
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to Heav’nly Spirits bright
Little inferior, whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy,
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue, and this high seat your Heav’n
Ill fenced for Heav’n to keep out such a foe
As now is entered. Yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so straight, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth. My dwelling haply may not please
(Like this fair Paradise) your sense, yet such
Accept your Maker’s work. He gave it me,
Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest-gates,
And send forth all her kings. There will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring. If no better place,
Thank Him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
On you (who wrong me not), for Him who wronged.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt as I do, yet public reason just,
Honor and empire with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.
So spoke the fiend, and with necessity
(The tyrant’s plea) excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and unespied
To mark what of their state he more might learn,
By word or action marked. About them round
A lion now he stalks with fiery glare,
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close, then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing, he might surest seize them both,
Gripped in each paw: When Adam, first of men,
To first of women Eve, thus moving speech,
“Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all! Needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of His good
As liberal and free as infinite,
That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
In all this happiness, who at His hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof He hath need, He who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge: of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life.
So near grows death to life, whate’er death is,
Some dreadful thing no doubt, for well thou know’st
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion giv’n
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights,
But let us ever praise Him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task,
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flow’rs,
Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.
To whom thus Eve replied: “O thou for whom
And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head! What thou hast said is just and right.
For we to Him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed
Under a shade on flow’rs, much wond’ring where
And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved.
Pure as th’ expanse of Heav’n. I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the wat’ry gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back—but
It started back—but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon, with answering looks
Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me: ‘What thou see’st,
What there thou see’st, fair creature, is thyself.
With thee it came and goes. But follow me
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race. ’What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,
Under a platane, yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth wat’ry image. Back I turned.
Thou following cried’st aloud, ‘Return, fair Eve.
Whom fly’st thou? Whom thou fly’st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone. To give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear.
Part of my soul, I seek thee! and thee claim
My other half. 'With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.
So spoke our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned
On our first father. Half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregnats the clouds
That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:
“Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,
Imparadised in one another’s arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.3021
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems.
One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called,
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?
Can it be death? And do they only stand 3022
By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,
They taste and die. What likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied.
A chance (but chance) may lead where I may meet
Some wand’ring Spirit of Heav’n by fountain side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair—enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed!”3026
So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o’er hill, o’er dale, his roam.3029
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heav’n meets
With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect 3031
Against the eastern gate of Paradise
Leveled his evening rays. It was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high.
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars, Gabriel sat,
Chief of the Angelic guards, awaiting night.
About him exercised heroic games
Th’ unarmed youth of Heav’n, but nigh at hand
Celestial armory—shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the ev’n
On a sun-beam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts s fired
Impress the air) and shows the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste:
“Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at height of noon came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
More of the Almighty’s works, and chiefly man,
God’s latest image. I described his way
Bent all on speed, and marked his airy gait,
But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
Alien from Heav’n, with passions foul obscured.
Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
New troubles. Him thy care must be to find.
To whom the wingèd warrior thus returned:
“Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the sun’s bright circle where thou sit’st,
See far and wide. In at this gate none pass
The vigilance here placed, but such as come
Well known from Heav’n. And since meridian hour
No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,
So minded have o’er-leaped these earthly bounds
On purpose, hard thou know’st it to exclude
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
But if within the circuit of these walks,
In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
Thou tell’st, by morrow dawning I shall know.
So promised he, and Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
Bore him slope downward to the sun now fall’n
Beneath the Azores, whither the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal or this less voluble earth,
By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.
Now came still ev’ning on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad.
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were sunk, all but the wakeful nightingale:
She all night long her amorous descant sung.
Silence was pleased. Now gloowed the firmament
With living sapphires. Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
(Apparent queen) unveiled her peerless light,
And o’er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: “Fair consort, th’ hour
Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
Mind us of like repose, since God hath set
Labor and rest, as day and night, to men
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines
Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long
Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heav’n on all his ways,
While other animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
With first approach of light, we must be ris’n,
And at our pleasant labor, to reform
Yon flow’ry arbors, yonder alleys green,
Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth.
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, night bids us rest.
To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:
“My author and disposer, what thou bid’st
Unargued I obey. So God ordains:
God is thy law, thou mine. To know no more
Is woman’s happiest knowledge, and her praise.
With thee conversing I forget all time;
All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds. Pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow’r,
Glistening with dew. Fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers, and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild, then silent night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of Heav’n, her starry train.
But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow’r,
Glistening with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
Nor grateful ev’ning mild, nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.
“But wherefore all night long shine these? For whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?
To whom our general 3076 ancestor replied:
“Daughter of God and man, accomplished 3077 Eve,
These have their course to finish round the earth,
By morrow ev’ning, and from land to land
In order, though to nations yet unborn.
Minist’ring 3078 light prepared, 3079 they set and rise,
Lest total darkness should by night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In Nature and all things, which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, 3080 but with kindly 3081 heat
Of various 3082 influence, 3083 foment 3084 and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue 3085 on all kinds 3086 that grow
On earth, made hereby apter 3087 to receive
Perfection from the sun’s more potent 3088 ray.
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain, nor think, 3089 though men were
That Heav’n would want 3090 spectators, God want praise.
Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise His works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep 3091
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to others’ note,
Singing their great Creator? Oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk, 3092
With Heav’nly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number, 3093 joined, their songs
Divide 3094 the night, and lift our thoughts to Heav’n.
Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
On to their blissful bower. It was a place
Chosen by the sov’reign Planter, 3095 when He framed
All things to man’s delightful use. The roof
Of thickest covert 3096 was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf, on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall. Each beauteous flow’r,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,
Reared high their flourished 3097 heads between, and wrought 3098
Mosaic. Underfoot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broidered 3099 the ground, more colored than with stone
Of costliest emblem. 3100 Other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower
More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned, 3101
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espousèd Eve decked first her nuptial bed,
And Heav’nly choirs the hymenaean sung,
What day the genial Angel to our sire
Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts, and O! too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove’s authentic fire.
Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
Both turned, and under open sky adored
The God that made both sky, air, earth, and Heav’n,
Which they beheld, the moon’s resplendent globe
And starry pole: “Thou also mad’st the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and Thou the day,
Which we, in our appointed work employed,
Have finished, happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by Thee. And this delicious place
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropped falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, Thy gift of sleep.
This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure
(Which God likes best), into their inmost bow’r
Handed they went and, eased the putting off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid, nor turned, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused,
Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase: who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and man?
Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driv’n from men
Among the bestial herds to range.
By thee Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.

Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here love his golden shaft employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels, not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,
Casual fruition, nor in court-amours,
Mixed dance, or wanton masque, or midnight ball,
Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flow’ry roof
Show’d red roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,
Blest pair! and O! yet happiest, if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more!
Now had night measured with her shadowy cone
Halfway up hill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim,
Forth issuing at the accustomed hour, stood armed
To their night watches in warlike parade,
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spoke:
“Uzzriel half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch. These other wheel the north;
Our circuit meets full west.” As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:
“Ithuriel and Zephon, with wingèd speed
Search through this garden, leave unsearched no nook,
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of harm.
This ev’n’ning from the sun’s decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?), escaped
The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt.
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.
So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the moon. These to the bower direct
In search of whom they sought, him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Assaying by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, as he list phantasms and dreams,
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise
At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits engend’ring pride.
Him thus intent, Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly, for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
Discovered and surprised. As when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid
Fit for the tun some magazine to store
Against a rumored war, the smutty grain
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air,
So started up in his own shape the fiend.
Back stepped those two fair Angels, half amazed
So sudden to behold the grisly king,
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:
“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
Com’st thou, escaped thy prison? And, transformed,
Why sat’st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?
“Know ye not then,” said Satan, filled with scorn,
Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate
sitting where ye durst not soar.
Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng. Or if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?
To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:
“Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness, to be known
As when thou stood’st in Heav’n upright and pure.
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee, and thou resembl’st now
Thy sin and place of doom, obscure and foul.
But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account
to him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm.
So spoke the Cherub, and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw and pined
His loss, but chiefly to find here observed
His luster visibly impaired, yet seemed
Undaunted. “If I must contend,” said he,
“Best with the best, the sender, not the sent,
Or all at once. More glory will be won,
Or less be lost.” “Thy fear,” said Zephon bold,
“Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.
The fiend replied not, overcome with rage,
But like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and closing stood in squadron joined,
Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:
“O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade,
And with them comes a third of regal port,
But faded splendor wan, who by his gait
And fierce demeanor seems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without contest.
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.”
He scarce had ended, when those two approached
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture couched.
To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spoke:
“Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place,
Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss!
To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:
“Gabriel, thou had’st in Heav’n th’ esteem
Of wise, and such I held thee. But this question asked
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doomed? Thou would’st thyself, no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou might’st hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight, which in this place I sought.
To thee no reason, who know’st only good,
But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
His will who bound us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked.
The rest is true, they found me where they say,
But that implies not violence or harm.
Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel, moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:
“O loss of one in Heav’n to judge of wise
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison ’scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds, in Hell prescribed.

So wise he judges it to fly from pain,
However, and to 'scape his punishment!
So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, than no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.

But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled, or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief,
The first in flight from pain! Had'st thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.

To which the fiend thus answered, frowning stern:
"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel! Well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The blasting vollied thunder made all speed
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.

But still thy words at random, as before,
Argue thy inexperience what behooves
From hard assays and ill successes past
A faithful leader, not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried.

I, therefore, I alone first undertook
To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
This new created world, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on earth, or in mid air,
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay legions dare against,
Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymn His throne,
And practised distances to cringe, not fight.

To whom the warrior Angel soon replied:
"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly, professing next the spy,
Argues no leader but a liar traced,
Satan—and couldst thou faithful add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
Faithful to whom? To thy rebellious crew?
Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!
Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to th' acknowledged Power supreme?"
And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
Heav’n’s awful Monarch? Wherefore, but in hope
To dispossess Him, and thyself to reign?
But mark what I agreed thee now. Avaunt!
Fly thither whence thou fled’st! If from this hour
Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chained,
And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred.
So threatened he, but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied:
“Then when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud liminary Cherub! But ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven’s King
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy comppeers,
Used to the yoke, draw’st His triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of Heav’n star-pav

While thus he spoke, the angelic squadron bright
Turned fiery red, sharp’ning in moonèd horns
Their phalanx and began to hem him round
With ported spears, as thick as when a field
Of Ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind
Sways them. The careful ploughman doubting stands,
Lest on the threshing floor his hopeful sheaves prove chaff. On th’ other side, Satan, alarmed, stood,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat horror plumed, nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds Might have ensued, nor only Paradise
In this commotion, but the starry cope yet seen
Of Heav’n, perhaps, or all the elements
At least had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
With violence of this conflict, had not soon
Th’ Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in Heav’n His golden scales, seen
Between Astrea and the Scorpion sign,
Wherein all things created first He weighed,
The pendulous round earth with balanced air
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
The sequel each of parting and of fight.
The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam.
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespoke the fiend:

“Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know’st mine
Neither our own, but giv’n. What folly then
To boast what arms can do? since thine no more
Than Heav’n permits, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire. For proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak,
If thou resist.” The fiend looked up, and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more, but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of
BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her. They come forth to their day labors; their morning hymn at the door of their bower.

God to render man inexcusable sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand; who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise, his appearance described, his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table.

Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates at Adam’s request who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a Seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

1. Now morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
2. Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
3. When Adam waked, so customed, for his sleep
4. Was airy-light, from pure digestion bred,
5. And temperate vapors bland, which th’ only sound
6. Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora’s fan,
7. Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
8. Of birds on every bough, so much the more
9. His wonder was to find unwakened Eve
10. With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
11. As through unquiet rest. He, on his side
12. Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
13. Hung over her enamored, and beheld
14. Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
15. Shot forth peculiar graces. Then with voice
16. Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
17. Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: “Awake,
18. My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
19. Heav’n’s last best gift, my ever new delight!
20. Awake. The morning shines, and the fresh field
21. Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
22. What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
23. How Nature paints her colors, how the bee
24. Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.
25. Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
26. On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spoke:
27. “O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
28. My glory, my perfection! Glad I see
Thy face, and morn returned, for I this night
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed
(If dreamed) not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow’s next design,
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk,
With gentle voice; I thought it thine. It said,
‘Why sleep’st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labored song. Now reigns
Full-orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things. In vain,
If none regard Heav’n wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, Nature’s desire?
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
To find thee I directed then my walk,
And on, methought, alone I passed through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the tree
Of interdicted knowledge. Fair it seemed,
Much fairer to my fancy than by day,
And as I wond’ring looked, beside it stood
One shaped and winged like one of those from Heav’n
By us oft seen. His dewy locks distilled
Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed,
And ‘O fair plant,’ said he, ‘with fruit surcharged,
Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
Nor god, nor man? Is knowledge so despised?
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offered good: why else set here?
This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
He plucked, he tasted; me damp horror chilled
At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold,
But he thus, overjoyed: ‘O fruit divine,
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropped,
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
For gods, yet able to make gods of men.
And why not gods of men? Since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The author not impaired, but honored more?
Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve!
Partake thou also. Happy thou art,
Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.
Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined,
But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see
What life the gods live there, and such live thou!
“So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Ev'n to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked. The pleasant savory smell
So quickened appetite that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
And various, wond'ring at my flight and change
To this high exaltation. Suddenly
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep. But O, how glad I waked
To find this but a dream!” Thus Eve her night
Related, and thus Adam answered, sad:
“Best image of myself, and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally, nor can I like
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear.
Yet evil whence? In thee can harbor none,
Created pure. But know that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy holds. Of all external things
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, airy shapes,
Which reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call our knowledge or opinion, then retires
Into her private cell, when Nature rests.
Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes
To imitate her but, misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances, methinks, I find
Of our last evening’s talk, in this thy dream,
But with addition strange. Yet be not sad.
Evil into the mind of god or man
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or blame behind. Which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never will consent to do.
Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world.
And let us to our fresh employments rise
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers
That open now their choicest bosomed smells,
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.
So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered.
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair.
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.
So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arborous roof
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the sun, who scarce up-risen,
With wheels yet hov’ring o’er the ocean-brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landscape all the east
Of Paradise and Eden’s happy plains,
Lowly they bowed adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style, for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tuneable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness. And they thus began:
“These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sit’st above these. Heav’n’s
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these Thy lowest works. Yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels, for ye behold Him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle His throne rejoicing, ye in Heav’n!
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end!
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night
(If better thou belong not to the dawn)
Sure pledge of day that crown’st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise Him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.

Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,

Acknowledge Him thy greater, sound His praise

In these, both when thou climb’st

And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall’st.

Moon, that now meet’st the orient sun, now fly’st

With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies,

And ye five other wand’ring fires that move

In mystic dance not without song, resound

His praise, who out of darkness called up light.

Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth

Of Nature’s womb, that in quaternion run

Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix

And nourish all things: let your ceaseless change

Vary, to our great Maker still new praise.

Ye mists and exhalations that now rise

From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,

Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,

In honor to the world’s great Author rise,

Whether to deck with clouds the uncolored sky,

Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,

Rising or falling still advance His praise.

His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,

Breathe soft or loud. And wave your tops, ye pines,

With every plant, in sign of worship wave!

Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow,

Melodious murmurs, warbling tune His praise.

Join voices, all ye living souls! Ye birds,

That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,

Bear on your wings, and in your notes, His praise.

Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk

The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,

Witness if I be silent, morn or ev’n,

To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,

Made vocal by my song, and taught His praise.

Hail, universal Lord, be bounteous still

To give us only good. And if the night

Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,

Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts

Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm.

On to their morning’s rural work they haste,

Among sweet dews and flow’rs, where any row

Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far

Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check

Fruitless embraces. Or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with him brings
Her dow'ri, th' adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
With pity Heav'n's high King, and to him called
Raphael, the sociable Spirit that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid. "Raphael," said He, "thou hear'st what stir on earth Satan, from Hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,
Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed
This night the human pair, how he designs
In them at once to ruin all mankind.
Go, therefore: half this day as friend with friend
Converse with Adam, in what bow'r or shade
Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired,
To repast his day-labor with repast
Or with repose, and such discourse bring on
As may advise him of his happy state,
Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free,
Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware
He swerve not, too secure. Tell him withal
His danger, and from whom—what enemy,
Late fall'n himself from Heav'n, is plotting now
The fall of others from like state of bliss.
By violence? No, for that shall be withstood,
But by deceit and lies. This let him know
Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned.
So spoke the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint
After his charge received, but from among
Thousand celestial Ardors, where he stood
Veiled with his gorgeous wings, up springing light,
Flew through the midst of Heav'n. Th' angelic choirs,
On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
Through all th' empyreal road, till at the gate
Of Heav'n arrived, the gate self-opened wide
On golden hinges turning, as by work
Divine the sov'reign Architect had framed
From hence no cloud, or to obstruct his sight,
Star interposed however small, he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crowned
Above all hills. As when by night the glass
Of Galileo, less assured, observes
Imagined lands and regions in the moon,
Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades, first appearing, kens.
A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky
Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air, till within soar
Of tow’ring eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phoenix, gazed by all as that sole bird,
When, to enshrine his relics in the sun’s bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
At once on th’ eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns,
A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine. The pair that clad each shoulder broad, came mantling o’er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colors dipped in Heav’n; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia’s son he stood
And shook his plumes, that Heav’nly fragrance filled the circuit wide.
Straight knew him all the bands of Angels under watch, and to his state,
And to his message high, in honor rise,
For on some message high they guessed him bound.
Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
And flowering odors, cassia, nard, and balm—
A wilderness of sweets. For Nature here
Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.
Him through the spicy forest onward come
Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
Of his cool bow’r, while now the mounted sun
Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm Earth’s inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs.
And Eve within, due at her hour prepared
For dinner savory fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry or grape. To whom thus Adam called:
“Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold
Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving, seems another morn
Ris’n on mid-noon! Some great behest from Heav’n
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
Abundance, fit to honor and receive
Our Heav’nly stranger. Well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburthening grows
More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare.”
To whom thus Eve:

“Adam, earth’s hallowed mold,
Of God inspired, small store will serve, where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk,
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes.
But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest, as he beholding shall confess, that here on earth
God hath dispensed His bounties as in Heav’n.
So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change.
Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India east or west, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,
She gathers tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and mead
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulce creams.
Nor these to hold wants her fit vessels pure. Then strews the ground
With rose and odors from the shrub unfumed.
Meanwhile our primitive great sire, to meet
His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own perfect Perfections. In himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,
Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all apace.
Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submissive approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature bowing low,
Thus said:
“Native of Heav’n, for other pla
None can than Heav’n such glorious shape contain,
Since by descending from the thrones above
Those happy places thou hast deigned a while
To want, and honor these, vouchsafe with us
Two only, who yet by sov’reign gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bow’r
To rest, and what the garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline.”

Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild:
“Adam, I therefore came, nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heav’n,
To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bow’r
O’ershades, for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will.” So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona’s arbor smiled,
With flow’rets decked, and fragrant smells. But Eve,
Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
Of three that in mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from Heav’n. No veil
She needed, virtue-proof: no thought infirm
Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel “Hail”
Bestowed, the holy salutation used
Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
“Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heaped this table!
—Raised of grassy tur

Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample square from side to side
All autumn piled, though spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand. A while discourse they hold—
No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began
Our author, 3471

“Heav’nly stranger, please to taste

These bounties, 3472 which our Nourisher, from whom

All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,

To us for food and for delight hath caused

The earth to yield—unsavory food perhaps

To spiritual natures. Only this I know,

That one celestial Father gives to all.

To whom the Angel:

“Therefore what He gives

(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part 3473

Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found

No ungrateful 3474 food. And food alike those pure

Intelligential substances require,

As doth your rational, 3475 and both 3476 contain

Within them every lower faculty

Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,

Tasting concoct, 3477 digest, assimilate,

And corporeal to incorporeal turn.

For know, whatever was created, needs

To be sustained and fed. Of elements

The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,

Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires

Etherereal, and as lowest first the moon,

Whence in her visage round 3478 those spots, unpurged 3479

Vapors not yet into her substance turned.

Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale

From her moist continent 3480 to higher orbs.

The sun, that light imparts to all, receives

From all 3481 his alimental 3482 recompence

In humid exhalations, and at ev’n 3483

with the ocean. Though in Heav’n the trees

Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines

We brush mellifluous 3485 dews, and find the ground

Covered with pearly grain; yet God hath here 3486

Varied His bounty so with new delights

As may compare with Heaven, and to taste

Think not I shall be nice.” 3487 So down they sat,

And to their viands 3488 fell, nor seemingly 3489

The Angel, nor in mist, 3490 the common gloss 3491

Of theologians, but with keen dispatch

Of real 3492 hunger, and concoctive 3493 heat

To transubstantiate. 3494 What redounds, 3495 transpires 3496

Through Spirits with ease—nor wonder, if by fire

Of sooty coal the empiric 3497 alchemist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been
Enamored at that sight. But in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover’s hell.
Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
Not burdened Nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let th’ occasion pass
Giv’n him by this great conference to know
Of things above his world, and of their being
Who dwell in Heav’n, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,
Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far
Exceeded human. And his wary speech
Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:
“Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favor, in this honor done to man,
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of Angels, yet accepted so
As that more willingly thou could’st not seem
At Heav’n’s high feasts t’ have fed. Yet what compare?
To whom the wingèd Hierarch replied:
“O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to Him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance and, in things that live, of life,
But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,
As nearer to Him placed, or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes. Flow’rs and their fruit,
Man’s nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual, give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding, whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or intuitive. Discourse
Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance. Time may come when men
With Angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare.
And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improved by tract of time and, winged, ascend
Ethereal, as we. Or may, at choice,
Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell,
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm His love entire,
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more.
To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:
“O favorable Spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From center to circumference, whereon,
In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution joined, ‘If ye be found
Obedient?’ Can we want obedience then
To Him, or possibly His love desert,
Who formed us from the dust and placed us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?
To whom the Angel:

              “Son of Heav’n and ear
Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God;
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself—
That is, to thy obedience: therein stand
This was that caution given thee: be advised.
God made thee perfect, not immutable,
And good He made thee, but to persevere
He left it in thy power, ordained thy will
By nature free, not overruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity.
Our voluntary service He requires,
Not our necessitated. Such with Him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself, and all th’Angelic host that stand
In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds,
On other surety none. Freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not. In this we stand or fall,
And some are fall’n, to disobedience fall’n,
And so from Heav’n to deepest Hell. O fall
From what high state of bliss, into what woe!
To whom our great progenitor:

              “Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighboring hills
Aerial music send. Nor knew I not to be both will and deed created free. Yet that we never shall forget to love Our Maker, and obey Him whose command, Single, is yet so just, my constant thoughts Assured me, and still assure. Though what thou tell'st Hath passed in Heav'n, some doubt within me move. But more desire to hear, if thou consent, The full relation, which must needs be strange, Worthy of sacred silence to be heard. And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins His other half in the great zone of Heav'n. Thus Adam made request, and Raphael, After short pause assenting, thus began: “High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men, Sad task and hard. For how shall I relate To human sense the invisible exploits Of warring Spirits? How, without remorse, The ruin of so many, glorious once, And perfect while they stood? How last unfold The secrets of another world, perhaps Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good This is dispensed, and what surmounts the reach Of human sense I shall delineate so, By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms, As may express them best. Though what if earth Be but a shadow of Heav'n, and things therein Each t' other like, more than on earth is thought? “As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild Reign'd where these Heav'n's now roll, where earth now rests Upon her center poised, when on a day (For time, though in eternity, applied To motion, measures all things durable By present, past, and future), on such day As Heav'n’s great year brings forth, the empyreal host Of Angels by imperial summons called, Innumerable before the Almighty’s throne Forthwith, from all the ends of Heav'n, appeared Under their Hierarchs in orders bright. Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced, Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear Stream in the air, and for distinction serve Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees, Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazoned Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,

Amidst as from a flaming mount whose top
Brightness had made invisible, thus spoke:

“Hear, all ye Angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.
This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,
And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
All knees in Heav’n, and shall confess him Lord.
Under his great vice-gerent reign abide
United, as one individual soul,
Forever happy. Him who disobey,
Me disobey, breaks union, and that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end.

“So spoke the Omnipotent, and with His words
All seemed well pleased—all seemed, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill,
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem.
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God’s own ear
Listens delighted. Ev’ning now approached
(For we have also our ev’ning and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need)
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous, all in circles as they stood.
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled
With Angels’ food, and rubied nectar flows
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heav’n.
On flow’rs reposed, and with fresh flow’rets crowned,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who show’d
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial night with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had changed
to grateful twilight (for night comes not there)
In darker veil), and roseate dews disposed.

All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest.
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread
(Such are the courts of God), th'Angelic throng,
Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
By living streams among the trees of life,
Pavilions numberless, and sudden reared,
Celestial tabernacles where they slept,
Fanned with cool winds, save those who, in their course,

Melodious hymns about the sov'reign throne
Alternate all night long. But not so waked
Satan—so call him now, his former name
Is heard no more in Heav'n. He of the first,
If not the first Arch-Angel, great in power,
In favor and pre-eminence, yet fraught
With envy against the Son of God, that day
Honored by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.

Deep malice thence conceiving, and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved
With all his legions to dislodge,
Unworshipped, unobeyed, the throne supreme,
Contemptuous. And his next subordinate
Awak'ning, thus to him in secret spoke:
"Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep can close
Thy eye-lids, and rememb'rest what decree
Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips
Of Heav'n's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont t' impart.
Both waking, we were one. How then can now
Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou see'st imposed:
New laws from Him who reigns, new minds may raise
In us who serve, new counsels to debate
What doubtful may ensue. More in this place
To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
Of all those myriads which we lead the chief.
Tell them that by command, ere yet dim night
Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
And all who under me their banners wave,
Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
The quarters of the North, there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our King,
The great Messiah, and his new commands,
Who speedily through all the hierarchies\textsuperscript{3612} to pass triumphant, and give laws. 

“So spoke the false Arch-Angel, and infused\textsuperscript{3613}
Bad influence\textsuperscript{3614} into th’ unwary breast
Of his associate. He\textsuperscript{3615} together calls,
Or several\textsuperscript{3616} one by one,\textsuperscript{3617} the regent\textsuperscript{3618} 
Powers Under him Regent;\textsuperscript{3619} tells, as he was taught,
That the Most High commanding, now ere night,
Now ere dim night had disincumbered\textsuperscript{3620} Heav’n,
The great hierarchal standard\textsuperscript{3621} was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound\textsuperscript{3622}
Or taint\textsuperscript{3623} integrity. But all obeyed
The wonted\textsuperscript{3624} signal and superior voice\textsuperscript{3625}
Of their great Potentate,\textsuperscript{3626} for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree\textsuperscript{3627} in Heav’n.
His count’nce, as the morning-star that guides
The starry flock, allured\textsuperscript{3628} them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of Heav’n’s host.
Meanwhile th’ Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest\textsuperscript{3629} thoughts, from forth His holy mount
And from within the golden lamps that burn
Nightly before Him, saw without their light
Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of morn, what multitudes
Were banded to oppose His high decree
And, smiling, to His only Son thus said:
“‘Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, heir of all my might,
Nearly\textsuperscript{3630} it now concerns us to be sure
Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of deity or empire. Such a foe
Is rising who intends t’ erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North,
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle what our power is, or our right.
Let us advise,\textsuperscript{3632} and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.
To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear,
Ligh’tning divine, ineffable,\textsuperscript{3634} serene,
Made answer:

‘Mighty Father, Thou Thy foe
Justly hast in derision and, secure,\textsuperscript{3635}
Laugh’st at their vain designs and tumults\textsuperscript{3636} vain,
Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
Illustrates,\textsuperscript{3637} when they see all regal power
Giv’n me, to quell their pride, and in event
Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heav’n.

“So spoke the Son. But Satan, with his Powers,
Far was advanced on wingèd speed, an host

Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones
In their triple degrees — regions to which
All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
Than what this garden is to all the earth
And all the sea, from one entire globose
Stretched into longitude — which, having passed,
At length into the limits of the North
They came. And Satan to his royal seat
High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and tow’rs
From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold,
The palace of great Lucifer (so call
That structure, in the dialect of men
Interpreted which, not long after, he
(Affecting all equality with God)
In imitation of that mount whereon
Messiah was declared, in sight of Heav’n,
The Mountain of the Congregation called,
For thither he assembled all his train,
Pretending so commanded to consult
About the great reception of their King,
Thither to come, and with calumnious
Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:
‘Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers—
If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by decree
Another now hath to himself engrossed
All power, and us eclipsed under the name
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight-march and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best,
With what may be devised of honors new,
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!
Too much to one! But double how endured,
To one and to His image now proclaimed?
But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of Heav’n, possessed before
By none, and if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free, for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason, then, or right, assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals, if in power and splendor less,
In freedom equal? Or can introduce
Law and edict on us, who without law
Err not? Much less for this to be our Lord
And look for adoration, to th’ abuse
Of those imperial titles which assert
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve.
Thus far his bold discourse without control
Had audience, when among the Seraphim
Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored
The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus opposed:
‘O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!
Words which no ear ever to hear in Heav’n
Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,
In place thyself so high above thy peers.
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to His only Son, by right endued
With regal scepter, every soul in Heav’n
Shall bend the knee, and in that honor due
Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say’st,
Fiatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give law to God? Shalt thou dispute
With Him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heav’n
Such as He pleased, and circumscribed their being?
Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
And of our good and of our dignity
How provident He is, how far from thought
To make us less, bent rather to exalt
Our happy state, under one head more near
United. But to grant it thee unjust
That equal over equals monarch reign:
Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count—
Or all Angelic nature joined in one
Equal to him, begotten Son? By whom,
As by His Word, the Mighty Father made
All things, ev’n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav’n
By Him created in their bright degrees,
Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers, Essential Powers, nor by His reign obscured
But more illustrious made, since He the head
One of our number thus reduced becomes,
His laws our laws, all honor to Him done
Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
And tempt not these, but hasten to appease
Th' incensed Father and th' incensed Son,
While pardon may be found, in time besought.
“So spoke the fervent Angel, but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash. Whereat rejoiced
Th' apostate and, more haughty, thus replied:
‘That we were formed then, say'st thou? And the work
Of secondary hands, by task transferred
From Father to His Son? Strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learned. Who saw
When this creation was? Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now,
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
By our own quick'ning power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native Heav'n, ethereal sons.
Our puissance is our own: our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt th' Almighty throne
Beseaching or besieging. This report,
These tidings carry to th' anointed King,
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.
“He said, and as the sound of waters deep
Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause,
Through the infinite host. Nor less for that
The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone,
Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:
‘O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,
Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
Determined and thy hapless crew involved
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah. Those indulgent laws
Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall.
That golden scepter, which thou did'st reject,
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise.
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath
Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
Distinguish not. For soon expect to feel
His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn,
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.

“So spoke the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he,
Among innumerable false. Unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal,
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught,
And with retorted scorn, his back he turned
On those proud tow’rs to swift destruction doomed.

The End of the Fifth Book
BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described: Satan and his Powers retire under night; he calls a council, invents devilish engines, which in the second day’s fight put Michael and his Angels to some disorder, but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan.

Yet the tumult not so ending, God on the third day sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He in the power of his Father coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them unable to resist towards the wall of Heaven; which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

1 “All night the dreadless Angel unpursued,
2 Through Heav’n’s wide champaign held his way, till morn,
3 Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
4 Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave
5 Within the mount of God, fast by His throne,
6 Where light and darkness in perpetual round
7 Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav’n
8 Grateful vicissitude, like day and night.
9 Light issues forth, and at the other door
10 Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
11 To veil the Heav’n, though darkness there might well
12 Seem twilight here. And now went forth the morn
13 Such as in highest Heav’n, arrayed in gold
14 Empyreal. From before her vanished night,
15 Shot through with orient beams. When all the plain
16 Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
17 Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
18 Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view,
19 War he perceived, war in procinct, and found
20 Already known what he for news had thought
21 To have reported. Gladly then he mixed
22 Among those friendly Powers, who him received
23 With joy and acclamations loud—that one
24 That of so many myriads fall’n—yet one
25 Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill
26 They led him, high applauded, and present
27 Before the seat supreme, from whence a voice,
28 From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
29 “Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
30 The better fight, who single hast maintained
31 Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence. For this was all thy care,
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now
Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return
Than, scorned, thou didst depart, and to subdue
By force, who reason for their law refuse,
Right reason for their law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.

“Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
And thou, in military prowess next,
Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons
Invincible, lead forth my armèd Saints,
By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,
Equal in number to that Godless crew
Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms
Fearless assault, and to the brow of Heav’n
Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,
Into their place of punishment, the gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
His fiery chaos to receive their fall.

“So spoke the Sov’reign Voice, and clouds began
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awakened, nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal trumpet from on high ‘gan blow.
At which command the Powers militant
That stood for Heav’n, in mighty quadrate joined
Of union irresistible, moved on
In silence their bright legions, to the sound
Of instrumental harmony that breathed
Heroic ardor to advent’rous deeds
Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
Of God and His Messiah. On they move
Indissolubly firm, nor obvious hill,
Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides
Their perfect ranks, for high above the ground
Their march was, and the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread. As when the total kind
Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
Came summoned over Eden to receive
Their names of thee, so over many a tract
Of Heav’n they marched, and many a province wide,
Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
Far in the horizon to the north appeared
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched
In battailous aspect, and nearer view
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged and shields
Various, with boastful argument portrayed
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition, for they weened
That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,
To win the mount of God, and on His throne
To set the envier of His state, the proud
Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond and vain
In the mid way, though strange to us it seemed
At first, that Angel should with Angel war,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in festivals of joy and love
Unanimous as sons of one great Sire,
Hymning th’ Eternal Father. But the shout
Of battle now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst, exalted as a god,
Th’ apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
With flaming Cherubim, and golden shields.
Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
’Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval and front to front
Presented stood in terrible array
Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van
On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,
Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
Came tow’ring, armed in adamant and gold.
Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
“O Heav’n! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and reality
Remain not. Wherefore should not strength and might
There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove
Where boldest, though to fight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in th’Almighty’s aid,
I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
Unsound and false, nor is it aught but just
That he, who in debate of truth hath won,
Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
Victor, though brutish that contest and foul,
When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
Most reason is that reason overcome.
So pondering, and from his armèd peers
Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incensed, and thus securely him defied:

"Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
The height of thy aspiring unopposed,
The throne of God unguarded, and His side
Abandoned, at the terror of thy power
Or potent tongue. Fool! Not to think how vain
Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms,
Who out of smallest things could, without end,
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly, or with solitary hand,
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed
Thy legions under darkness. But thou see'st
All are not of thy train. There be who faith
Prefer, and piety to God, though then
To thee not visible when I alone
Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
From all. My sect thou see'st. Now learn too late
How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.
Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,
Thus answered: "Ill for thee, but in wished hour
Of my revenge, first sought for. Thou return'st
From flight, seditious Angel! to receive
Thy merited reward, the first assay
Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose
A third part of the gods, in synod met
Their deities to assert, who while they feel
Vigor divine within them, can allow
Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
From me some plume, that thy success may show
Destruction to the rest. This pause between
(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know:
At first I thought that liberty and Heav'n
To Heav'nly souls had been all one, but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Minist'ring Spirits, trained up in feast and song!
Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of Heav'n,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.
To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied:
"Apostate! Still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote.
Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled.
Yet lewdly dar'st our minist'ring upbraid.
Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom! Let me serve
In Heav'n God ever blest, and His divine
Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect. Meanwhile,
From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.
"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee,
His massy spear upstaid, as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battle. Whereat Michael bid sound
The Arch-Angel trumpet. Through the vast
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest.
Nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous, joined,
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamor such as heard in Heav'n till now
Was never. Arms on armor clashing brayed
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots raged. Dire was the noise
Of conflict. Overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rushed
Both battles main, with ruinous assault
And inextinguishable rage. All Heav’n
Resounded, and had earth been then, all earth
Had to her center shook.

“What wonder, when
Millions of fierce encount’ring Angels fought
On either side, the least of whom could wield
These elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions? How much more of power
Army against army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
Though not destory, their happy native seat,
Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent,
From His stronghold of Heav’n high, over-ruled
And limited their might, though numbered such
As each divided legion might have seemed
A numerous host, in strength each armèd band
A legion. Led in fight, yet leader seemed
Each warrior single as in chief, expert
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war. No thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argued fear. Each on himself relied,
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame
Were done, but infinite, for wide was spread
That war and various. Sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight; then soaring on main wing
Tormented all the air. All air seemed then
Conflicting fire.

“Long time in even scale
The battle hung, till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled
Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed sway
Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down
Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
A vast circumference. At his approach
The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil
Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end
Intestine war in Heav’n, th’ arch-foe subdued
Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown
And visage all inflamed first thus began:

"‘Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
Unnamed in Heav’n, now plenteous, as thou see’st—
These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
Though heaviest by just measure on thyself
And thy adherents! How hast thou disturbed
Heav’n’s blessèd peace, and into Nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy rebellion! How hast thou instilled
Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now proved false! But think not here
To trouble holy rest.
Heav’n casts thee out
From all her confines.
Heav’n, the seat of bliss,
Brooks not the works of violence and war.
Hence then, and evil go with thee along,
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell,
Thou and thy wicked crew! There mingle broils,
Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.
“So spoke the Prince of Angels, to whom thus
The adversary:

“‘Nor think thou with wind
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquished? Easier to transact with me
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence? Err not, that so shall end
The strife which thou call’st evil, but we style
The strife of glory, which we mean to win,
Or turn this Heav’n itself into the Hell
Thou fablest, here however to dwell free,
If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force
(And join Him named Almighty to thy aid)
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.
“‘They ended parle, and both addressed for fight
Unspeakable, for who, though with the tongue
Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such height
Of godlike power? For likest gods they seemed,
Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great Heav’n.
Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields
Blazed opposite, while expectation stood
In horror. From each hand with speed retired,
Where erst was thickest fight, th'Angelic throng,
And left large field unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion—such as, to set forth
Great things by small, if Nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound
Together both with next to almighty arm
Up-lifted imminent, one stroke they aimed
That might determine, and not need repeat,
As not of power at once, nor odds appeared
In might or swift prevention. But the sword
Of Michael from the armory of God
Was giv'n him tempered so that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge. It met
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stayed,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring, shared
All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,
And writhed him to and fro convolved, so sore
The gridding sword with discontinuous wound
Passed through him. But the ethereal substance closed,
Not long divisible, and from the gash
A stream of nectarous humor issuing flowed
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his armor stained, erewhile so bright.
Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
By Angels many and strong, who interposed
Defence, while others bore him on their shields
Back to his chariot, where it stood retired
From off the files of war. There they him laid
Gnashing for anguish and despite, and shame
To find himself not matchless, and his pride
Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
His confidence to equal God in power.
Yet soon he healed, for Spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins
Cannot but by annihilating die,
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air.
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense, and as they please
They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserved Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought, And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied, And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound Threat’ned, nor from the Holy One of Heav’n Refrained his tongue blasphemous. But anon Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms And uncouth pain, fled bellowing. On each wing Uriel and Raphael his vaunting foe, Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed, Vanquished Adramelech and Asmadai, Two potent Thrones that to be less than gods Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight, Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail. Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence Of Ramiel scorched and blasted, overthrew. “I might relate of thousands, and their names Eternize here on earth, but those elect Angels, contented with their fame in Heav’n, Seek not the praise of men. The other sort, In might though wondrous and in acts of war, Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom Cancelled from Heav’n and sacred memory, Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell. For strength from truth divided, and from just, Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise And ignominy, yet to glory aspires, Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame. Therefore eternal silence be their doom. “And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved, With many an inroad gored. Deformèd rout Entered, and foul disorder, all the ground With shivered armor strewn, and on a heap Chariot and charioteer lay overturned, And fiery-foaming steeds. What stood, recoiled O’er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised (Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain) Fled ignominious, to such evil brought By sin of disobedience, till that hour Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain. Far otherwise th’ inviolable Saints,
In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
Invulnerable, impenetrably armed,
Such high advantages their innocence
Gave them above their foes, not to have sinned,
Not to have disobeyed. In fight they stood
Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained
By wound, though from their place by violence moved.

"Now Night her course began and, over Heav’n
Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,
And silence on the odious din of war.
Under her cloudy covert both retired,
Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field
Michael and his Angels prevalent,
Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
Cherubic waving fires. On th’ other part,
Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
Far in the dark dislodged and, void of rest,
His potentates to council called by night,
And in the midst thus, undismayed, began:

"O now in danger tried, now known in arms
Not to be overpowered, companions dear,
Found worthy not of liberty alone,
Too mean pretence! but what we more affect,
Honor, dominion, glory, and renown,
Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight
(And if one day, why not eternal days?
What Heaven’s Lord had powerfallest to send
Against us from about His throne, and judged
Sufficient to subdue us to His will,
But proves not so. Then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem Him, though till now
Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed,
Some disadvantage we endured and pain,
Till now not known, but known, as soon contemned.
Since now we find this our empyreal form
Incapable of mortal injury,
Imperishable, and though pierced with wound,
Soon closing, and by native vigor healed.
Of evil then so small, as easy think
The remedy. Perhaps more valid arms,
Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
May serve to better us, and worse our foes,
Or equal what between us made the odds,
In Nature none. If other hidden cause
Left them superior, while we can preserve
Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
Due search and consultation will disclose.
“He sat; and in the assembly next upstood
Nisroch, of Principalities the prime.
As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
And cloudy thus answering spoke:
‘Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
Enjoyment of our right as gods! Yet hard
For gods, and too unequal work we find,
454 Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
455 Against unpained, impassive, from which evil
456 Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
457 Valor or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain
458 Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
459 Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
460 Spare out of life, perhaps, and not repine,
461 But live content, which is the calmest life.
462 But pain is perfect misery, the worst
463 Of evils and, excessive, overtures
464 All patience. He who therefore can invent
465 With what more forcible we may offend
466 Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
467 Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
468 No less than for deliverance what we owe.
469 Where to with look composed Satan replied:
470 “‘Not uninvented that, which thou aright
471 Believ’st so main to our success, I bring.
472 Which of us who beholds the bright surface
473 Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,
474 This continent of spacious Heav’n, adorned
475 With plant, fruit, flow’r ambrosial, gems, and gold—
476 Whose eye so superficially surveys
477 These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
478 Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,
479 Of spiritous and fiery spume, till touched
480 With Heav’n’s ray, and tempered they shoot forth
481 So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
482 These in their dark nativity the deep
483 Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame,
484 Which into hollow engines, long and round,
485 Thick rammed, at th’ other bore with touch of fire
486 Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
487 From far, with thund’ring noise, among our foes
488 Such implements of mischief as shall dash
489 To pieces and o’erwhelm whatever stands
490 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed
491 The Thunderer of His only dreaded bolt.
492 Nor long shall be our labor: yet ere dawn,
493 Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive,
494 Abandon fear, to strength and counsel joined
495 Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.
496 “He ended, and his words their drooping cheer
497 Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.
498 Th’ invention all admired, and each, how he
499 To be the inventor missed, so easy it seemed
500 Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
501 Impossible. Yet, haply, of thy race
502 In future days, if malice should abound,
503 Someone intent on mischief, or inspired
With devilish machination, might devise
Like instrument to plague the sons of men
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from council to the work they flew.
None arguing stood; innumerable hands
Were ready. In a moment up they turned
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
The originals of Nature in their crude
Conception. Sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled and, with subtle art,
Concocted and adjusted, they reduced
to blackest grain, and into store conveyed.
Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin, part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.

“Now when fair morn orient in Heav’n appeared,
Up rose the victor-Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded. Others from the dawning hills
Look round, and scouts each coast light-armèd scour,
Each quarter to descry the distant foe,
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,
In motion or in halt. Him soon they met
Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,
Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:

“Arm, warriors, arm for fight! The foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day. Fear not his flight: so thick a cloud
He comes, and settled in his face I see
Sad resolution, and secure. Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, grip fast his orbèd shield,
Borne ev’n or high, for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.
“So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment,
Instant without disturb they took alarm,
And onward moved embattled.
Not distant far with heavy pace the foe
Approaching, gross and huge, in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginery, impaled
On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
A while, but suddenly at head appeared
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:

"'Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,
That all may see, who hate us, how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse.
But that I doubt. However, witness, Heav'n!
Heav'n, witness thou anon! while we discharge
Freely our part. Ye who appointed stand
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear!
"So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front
Divided, and to either flank retired,
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
A triple mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopped, in wood or mountain felled)
Brass, iron, stony mould had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving, tipped with fire, while we, suspense
Collected stood, within our thoughts amused.
Not long, for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke all Heav'n appeared,
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar
Emboweled with outrageous noise the air
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes which, on the victor host
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote
That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell
The sooner for their arms. Unarmed, they might
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove, but now
Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout,
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse
Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubled, would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter, for in view
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displace their second tire
Of thunder. Back defeated to return
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision called:
“O friends! Why come not on, these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming, and when we,
To entertain them fair, with open front
And breast (what could we more?), propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance. Yet for a dance they seemed
Somewhat extravagant and wild—perhaps
For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,
We should compel them to a quick result.
To whom thus Belial, in like gameesome mood:
“Leader! the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many. Who receives them right
Had need from head to foot well understand.
Not understood, this gift they have besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.
“So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory. Eternal Might
To match with their inventions they presumed
So easy, and of His thunder made a scorn,
And all His host derided, while they stood
A while in trouble. But they stood not long.
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
Against such hellish mischief fit t’ oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in His mighty Angels placed!
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For earth hath this variety from Heav’n,
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale)
Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew.
From their foundations loos’ning to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Up-lifting bore them in their hands. Amaze,
Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
Till on those cursed engines’ triple-row
They saw them whelmed and all their confidence
Under the weight of mountains buried deep,
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.
Their armor helped their harm, crushed in and bruised
Into their substance pent which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
The rest, in imitation, to like arms
Betook them, and the neighboring hills uptore.
So hills amid the air encountered hills,
Hurtled to and fro with jaculation dire,
That under ground they fought in dismal shade.
Infernal noise! War seemed a civil game
To this uproar. Horrid confusion heaped
Upon confusion rose.

“And now all Heav’n
Had gone to wrack with ruin overspread,
Had not th’Almighty Father, where He sits
Shrined in His sanctuary of Heav’n secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advised
That His great purpose He might so fulfil,
To honor His anointed Son avenged
Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferred. Whence to His Son,
The assessor of His throne, He thus began:
‘Effulgence of my glory, Son belov’d,
Son, in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am,
And in whose hand what by decree I do,
Second Omnipotence! Two days are past,
Two days, as we compute the days of Heav’n,
Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was, when two such foes met armed,
For to themselves I left them, and thou know’st
Equal in their creation they were formed,
Save what sin hath impaired, which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom.
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War weariest hath performed what war can do,
And to disordered rage let loose the reins
With mountains, as with weapons, armed, which makes
Wild work in Heav’n, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are therefore past, the third is thine,
For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
Have suffered that the glory may be thine
Of ending this great war, since none but thou
Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
Immense I have transfused, that all may know
In Heav’n and Hell thy power above compare
And, this perverse commotion governed thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be heir
Of all things, to be heir, and to be King
By sacred unction thy deservèd right.
Go then, thou mightiest, in thy Father’s might.
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels
That shake Heav’n’s basis, bring forth all my war,
My bow and thunder. My almighty arms
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh.
Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out
From all Heav’n’s bounds into the utter deep.
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.
“He said, and on His Son with rays direct
Shone full. He all his Father full expressed
Ineffably into his face received,
And thus the Filial Godhead, answering, spoke:
‘O Father, O Supreme of Heav’ny Thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best! Thou always seek’st
To glorify Thy Son, I always Thee,
As is most just. This I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That Thou, in me well pleased, declar’st Thy will
Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
Scepter and power, Thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in Thee
Forever, and in me all whom Thou lov’st.
But whom Thou hat’st, I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put Thy mildness on,
Image of Thee in all things, and shall soon,
Armed with Thy might, rid Heav’n of these rebelled,
To their prepared ill mansion driven down,
To chains of darkness, and th’ undying worm,
That from Thy just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey is happiness entire.
Then shall Thy Saints unmixed, and from th’ impure
Far separate, circling Thy holy mount,
Unfeignèd Halleluiahs to Thee sing,
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.
“So said, he o’er his scepter bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat.
And the third sacred morn began to shine,
Dawning through Heav’n. Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
The chariot of paternal Deity,
Flash ing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with Spirit, but convoyed.
By four Cherubic shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous. As with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes, with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering \(^{4042}\) fires between.
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colors of the showery \(^{4043}\) arch, \(^{4044}\)
He in celestial panoply all armed
Of radiant Urim, \(^{4045}\) work divinely wrought,
Ascended. At his right hand victory
Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored,
And from about him fierce effusion \(^{4046}\) rolled
Of smoke, and bickering \(^{4047}\) flame, and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came. Far off his coming shone,
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen.
He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,
Illustrious, \(^{4049}\) far and wide, but by his own
First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised,
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heav’n,
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced \(^{4050}\)
His army, circumfused \(^{4051}\) on either wing,
Under their head \(^{4052}\) embodied \(^{4053}\) all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepared;
At his command the uprooted hills retired \(^{4054}\)
Each to his place. They heard his voice, and went
Obsequious, \(^{4055}\) Heav’n his wonted \(^{4056}\) face renewed,
And with fresh flow’rets hill and valley smiled.
This saw his hapless \(^{4057}\) foes, but stood obdured, \(^{4058}\)
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
Insensate, \(^{4059}\) hope conceiving \(^{4060}\) from despair.
“In Heav’nly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what signs avail,
Or wonders move th’ obdurate to relent?
They, hardened more by what might most reclaim, \(^{4061}\)
Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
Took envy and, aspiring to his height,
Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
Weening \(^{4062}\) to prosper, and at length prevail
Against God and Messiah, or to fall
In universal ruin last \(^{4063}\) And now
To final battle drew, disdaining flight,
Or faint retreat. When the great Son of God
To all his host on either hand thus spoke:
“‘Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,
Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest.
Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
Accepted, fearless in His righteous cause,
And as ye have received, so have ye done,
Invincibly. But of this cursèd crew
The punishment to other hand belongs.
Vengeance is His, or whose He sole appoints.
Number to this day’s work is not ordained,
Nor multitude. Stand only, and behold
God’s indignation on these godless poured
By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,
Yet envied. Against me is all their rage,
Because the Father, to whom in Heav’n supreme
Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains,
Hath honored me, according to His will.
Therefore to me their doom He hath assigned,
That they may have their wish, to try with me
In battle which the stronger proves, they all,
Or I alone against them, since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels.
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe. “So spoke the Son, and into terror changed
His count’nance, too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.
At once the Four spread out their starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host
He on his impious foes right onward drove,
Gloomy as night. Under his burning wheels
The steadfast empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived, in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infixed
Plagues. They astonished all resistance lost,
All courage. Down their idle weapons dropped.
O’er shields, and helms, and helmèd heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
That wished the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.
Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes.
One Spirit in them ruled; and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,
And of their wonted vigor left them drained,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall’n.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
His thunder in mid volley, for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav’n.
The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued
With terrors, and with furies, to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heav’n, which op’ning wide,
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep. The monstrous sight
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind. Headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heav’n. Eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

“Hell heard th’ unsufferable noise, Hell saw
Heav’n ruining from Heav’n, and would have fled
Affrighted, but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell. Confounded Chaos roared,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last
Yawning received them whole, and on them closed,
Hell their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
Disburdened Heav’n rejoiced, and soon repaired
Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.

“This sole victor, from th’ expulsion of his foes,
Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,
With jubilee advanced and, as they went,
Shaded with branching palm, each Order bright
Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
Son, heir, and Lord, to him dominion giv’n,
Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode
Triumphant through mid Heav’n, into the courts
And temple of his Mighty Father throned
On high, who into glory him received,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

“Thus, measuring things in Heav’n by things on earth,
At thy request, and that thou may’st beware
By what is past, to thee I have revealed
What might have else to human race been hid,
The discord which befell, and war in Heav’n
Among th’ angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled
With Satan—he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou may’st partake
His punishment, eternal misery,
Which would be all his solace and revenge,
As a despite done against the Most High,
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
But listen not to his temptations, warn
Thy weaker. Let it profit thee t’ have heard,
By terrible example, the reward
Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,
Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress.

The End of the Sixth Book
BOOK VII

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael at the request of Adam relates how and wherefore this world was first created; that God, after the expelling of Satan and his Angels out of Heaven, declared His pleasure to create another world and other creatures to dwell therein; sends His Son with glory and attendance of Angels to perform the work of Creation in six days.

The Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and His re-ascention into Heaven.

1. Descend from Heav’n, Urania, by that name
2. If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
3. Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
4. Above the flight of Pegasean wing!
5. The meaning, not the name, I call, for thou
6. Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
7. Of old Olympus, dwell’st, but Heav’nly-born,
8. Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed,
9. Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,
10. Wisdom thy sister, and with her did’st play
11. In presence of th’Almighty Father, pleased
12. With thy celestial song. Up led by thee
13. Into the Heav’n of Heav’n’s I have presumed,
14. An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
15. Thy temp’ring. With like safety guided down,
16. Return me to my native element
17. Lest from this flying steed unreined (as once
18. Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
19. Dismounted on the Aleian field I fall,
20. Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.
21. Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
22. Within the visible diurnal sphere.
23. Standing on earth, not rap above the pole,
24. More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
25. To hoarse or mute, though fall’n on evil days,
26. On evil days though fall’n, and evil tongues,
27. In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
28. And solitude. Yet not alone while thou
29. Visit’st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
30. Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,
31. Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
32. But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
33. Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
34. Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
35. In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamor drowned
Both harp and voice. Nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores,
For thou art Heav’nly, she an empty dream.
Say, goddess, what ensued when Raphael,
The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarned
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heav’n
To those apostates, lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obeyed amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wand’ring. He with his consorted Eve
The story heard, attentive, and was filled
With admiration and deep muse to hear
Of things so high and strange—things to their thought
So unimaginable, as hate in Heav’n,
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
With such confusion but the evil, soon
Driv’n back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung, impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed
The doubts that in his heart arose, and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him, how this world
Of Heav’n and earth conspicuous first began,
When, and whereof created, for what cause,
What within Eden, or without, was done
Before his memory—as one whose drought
Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard, new thirst excites,
 Proceeded thus to ask his Heav’nly guest:
“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this world, thou hast revealed,
Divine interpreter! by favor sent
Down from the empyrean, to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach.
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and His admonishment
Receive, with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably His sov’reign will, the end
Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed
Gently, for our instruction, to impart
Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned
Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seemed,
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us, known,
How first began this Heav’n which we behold
Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
Innumerable, and this which yields or fills
All space, the ambient air wide interfused
Embracing round this florid earth. What cause
Moved the Creator, in His holy rest
Through all eternity, so late to build
In Chaos, and the work begun, how soon
Absolved. If unforbid thou may’st unfold
What we, not to explore the secrets, ask
Of His eternal empire, but the more
To magnify His works, the more we know.
And the great light of day yet wants to run
Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in Heav’n,
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His generation, and the rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent deep.
Or if the star of ev’ning and the moon
Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring
Silence—and sleep, list’ning to thee, will watch,
Or we can bid his absence till thy song
End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.
Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought,
And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:
“This also thy request, with caution asked,
Obtain, though to recount Almighty works
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing. Such commission from above
I have received, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds. Beyond, abstain
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
Only Omnipotent, hath suppressed in night,
To none communicable in earth or Heaven:
Enough is left besides to search and know.
But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temp’rance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

“Know then, that after Lucifer from Heav’n
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host
Of Angels than that star \textsuperscript{4158} the stars among)
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep
Into his place, and the great Son returned
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent
Eternal Father from His throne beheld
Their multitude, and to His Son thus spoke:

“At last our envious foe hath failed, who thought
\textsuperscript{4159} like himself rebellious, by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, as dispossessed,
He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
Drew many, whom their place knows here no more.
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station.\textsuperscript{4160} Heaven, yet populous, retains
Number sufficient to possess\textsuperscript{4161} her realms
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent\textsuperscript{4162}
With ministeries\textsuperscript{4163} due, and solemn rites.
But lest his heart exalt him in the harm
Already done, to have dispeopled Heav’n,
My damage fondly\textsuperscript{4164} deemed,\textsuperscript{4165} I can repair
That detriment,\textsuperscript{4166} if such it be to lose
Self-lost, and in a moment will create
Another world, out of one man a race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here, till by degrees of merit raised
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tried,\textsuperscript{4167}
And earth be changed to Heav’n, and Heav’n to earth,
One kingdom, joy and union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax,\textsuperscript{4168} ye Powers of Heav’n,
And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform. Speak thou, and be it done!
My overshadowing\textsuperscript{4169} Spirit and Might with thee
I send along. Ride forth, and bid the deep
Within appointed bounds be Heav’n and earth—
Boundless the deep, because I Am who fill
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire,
And put not forth my goodness, which is free
To act or not, necessity and chance
Approach not me, and what I will is fate.

“So spoke th’Almighty and, to what He spoke,
His Word, the Filial Godhead gave effect.
Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
Than time or motion, but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.
Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heav’n,
When such was heard declared th’Almighty’s will.
Glory they sung to the Most High, good will
To future men, and in their dwellings peace
Glory to Him, whose just avenging ire
Had driven out the ungodly from His sight
And th’ habitations of the just; to Him
Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordained
Good out of evil to create, instead
Of Spirits malign a better race to bring
Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
His good to worlds and ages infinite.

So sang the Hierarchies.

“Meanwhile the Son
On his great expedition now appeared,
Girt with Omnipotence, with radiance crowned
Of Majesty Divine. Sapience, and love
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot numberless were poured
Cherub, and Seraph, Potentates, and Thrones,
And Virtues, wingèd Spirits, and chariots winged
From th’ armory of God, where stand of old
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
Celestial equipage, and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord. Heav’n op’ned wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.
On Heav’nly ground they stood, and from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heav’n’s height, and with the center mix the pole.
“Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou, deep: peace!
Said then the Omnific Word. ‘Your discord end!
Nor stayed but on the wings of Cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos and the world unborn,
For Chaos heard His voice. Him all his train
Followed in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of His might.
Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in His hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God’s eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things.
One foot He centered, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure.
And said: ‘Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world!
Thus God the Heav’n created, thus the earth,
Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound
Covered the abyss, but on the wat’ry calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
The black tartareous cold infernal dregs,
Adverse to life. Then founded, then conglobed
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air,
And earth self-balanced on her center hung.
‘Let there be light,’ said God, and forthwith light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep, and from her native east
To journey through the airy gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle sojourned the while. God saw the light was good,
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided; light the Day, and darkness Night
He named. Thus was the first day, ev’n and morn,
Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the celestial choirs, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld,
Birth-day of Heav’n and earth. With joy and shout
The hollow universal orb they filled,
And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised
God and His works. Creator Him they sung,
Both when first ev’n was, and when first morn.
Again, God said: ‘Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters. ’And God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round, partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing, for as earth, so He the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes Contiguous might distemper the whole frame.
And Heav’n He named the firmament. So ev’n And morning chorus sung the second day.
“The earth was formed, but in the womb as yet Of waters, embryon immature involved, Appeared not. Over all the face of earth Main ocean flowed, not idle but with warm Prolific humor soft’ning all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive, Satiate with genial moisture, when God said: ‘Be gathered now ye waters under Heav’n Into one place, and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains huge appear Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky,
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of waters. Thither they Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled As drops on dust conglobing from the dry.
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
For haste: such flight the great command impressed On the swift floods. As armies at the call Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard) Troop to their standard, so the wat’ry throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing, nor withstood them rock or hill,
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
With serpent error wand’ring, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where rivers now Stream and perpetual draw their humid train
The dry land, earth, and the great receptacle Of congregated waters, He called seas,
And saw that it was good. And said: ‘Let th’ earth Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the earth.
He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green.
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered
Op'ning their various colors, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet, and these scarce blown,
Forth flourished thick the clust'ring vine, forth crept
The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit.
Last Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed
Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were crowned,
With tufts the valleys, and each fountain-side,
With borders long the rivers, that earth now
Seemed like to Heav'n, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades, though God had yet not rained
Upon the earth, and man to till the ground
None was. But from the earth a dewy mist
Went up, and watered all the ground, and each
Plant of the field, which ere it was in th' earth
God made, and every herb, before it grew
On the green stem. God saw that it was good.
So ev'n and morn recorded the third day.
“Again th'Almighty spoke: 'Let there be lights
High in th' expanse of Heaven, to divide
The day from night, and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years,
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of Heav'n,
To give light on the earth. 'And it was so.
And God made two great lights, great for their use
To man, the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, altern. And made the stars,
And set them in the firmament of Heav'n
T' illuminate the earth, and rule the day
In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying His great work, that it was good,
For of celestial bodies first the sun
A mighty sphere He framed, unlightsome first
Though of ethereal mould, then formed the moon
Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
And sowed with stars the Heav'n, thick as a field.
Of light by far the greater part He took,
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed
In the sun’s orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light, firm to retain
Her gathered beams, great palace now of light.
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning-planet gilds her horns.
By tincture or reflection they augment
Their small peculiar, though from human sight
So far remote, with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day, and all th’ horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
His longitude through Heav’n’s high road. The gray
dawn and the Pleiades before him danced,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,
But opposite in levelled west was set,
His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him, for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night, then in the east her turn she shines,
Revolved on Heav’n’s great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared
Spangling the hemisphere. Then first adorned
With their bright luminaries that set and rose,
Glad ev’ning and glad morn crowned the fourth day.
“And God said: ‘Let the waters generate
Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul,
And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Displayed on the open firmament of Heav’n.
And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by their kinds,
And every bird of wing after his kind,
And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying:
‘Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill,
And let the fowl be multiplied on th’ earth.
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft
Bank the mid sea, part single, or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray, or sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold,
Or in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
In jointed armour watch. On smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play, part huge of bulk,
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait
Tempest the ocean. There Leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land, and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores
Their brood as numerous hatch, from th’ egg that soon
Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed
Their callow young, but feathered soon and fledge
They summed their pens, and, soaring the air sublime,
Part loosely wing the region, part more wise
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their airy caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight. So steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage, borne on winds. The air
Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till ev’n, nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
Their downy breast; the swan with archèd neck,
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
The dank and, rising on stiff pennons, tow’r
The mid aereal sky. Others on ground
Walked firm, the crested cock whose clarion sounds
The silent hours, and th’ other whose gay train
Adorns him, colored with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With fish replenished, and the air with fowl,
Evn’ning and morn solemnized the fifth day.
“The sixth, and of Creation last, arose
With ev’n harps, and matin, when God said:
‘Let th’ earth bring forth soul living, in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of th’ earth,
Each in their kind. 'The earth obeyed, and straight
Op'ning her fertile womb teemed at a birth
Innumerous living creatures, perfect forms,
Limbed and full grown. Out of the ground up rose,
As from his lair, the wild beast where he won
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den.
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked,
The cattle in the fields and meadows green,
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved: now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane. The ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks. The swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head. Scarce from his mould
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness. Fleeced the flocks, and bleating rose
As plants. Ambiguous between sea and land
The river-horse and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm. Those waved their limber fans
For wings, and smallest lineaments exact
In all the liveries decked of summer’s pride
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green.
These as a line their long dimension drew,
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace. Not all
Minims of Nature: some of serpent-kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet, provident
Of future, in small room large heart enclosed,
Pattern of just equality perhaps
Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes
Of commonality. Swarming, next appeared
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know’st, and gav’st them names,
Needless to thee repeated. Nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific, though to thee
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
“Now Heav’n in all her glory shone, and rolled
Her motions, as the great first Mover’s hand
First wheeled their course. Earth in her rich attire
Consummate\textsuperscript{4336} lovely smiled. Air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
Frequent, and of the sixth day yet remained.
There wanted yet the master-work, the end \textsuperscript{4337}
Of all yet done, a creature who not prone\textsuperscript{4339} and brute \textsuperscript{4339} as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity \textsuperscript{4340} of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front \textsuperscript{4341} serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous \textsuperscript{4342} to correspond\textsuperscript{4343} with Heav’n,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all His works. Therefore th’ Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not He
Present?) thus to His Son audibly spoke:
“‘Let us make now man in our image, man
In our similitude, \textsuperscript{4344} and let them\textsuperscript{4345} rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.
This said, He formed thee, Adam, thee, O man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life. In His own image He
Created thee, in the image of God
Express,\textsuperscript{4346} and thou becam’st a living soul.
Male He created thee, but thy consort
Female, for race, \textsuperscript{4347} then blessed mankind, and said:
‘Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;
Subdue \textsuperscript{4348} it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,
And every living thing that moves on th’ earth.
Wherever thus created, for no place
Is yet distinct\textsuperscript{4349} by name, thence, as thou know’st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden, planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste,
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee. All sorts are here that all th’ earth yields,
Variety without end. But of the tree
Which tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,
Thou may’st not. In the day thou eat’st, thou di’st.\textsuperscript{4350} Death is the penalty imposed. Beware,
And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin
Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.
“Here finished He, and all that He had made
Viewed, and behold all was entirely good.
So ev’n and morn accomplished the sixth day.
“Yet not till the Creator from His work
Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
Up to the Heav’n of Heav’ns, His high abode,
Thence to behold this new created world,
Th’ addition of His empire, how it showed
In prospect from His throne, how good, how fair,
Answering His great idea. Up He rode
Followed with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonies. The earth, the air
Resounded (thou rememb’rest, for thou heard’st)
The Heav’ns and all the constellations rung,
The planets in their station listening stood,
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
‘Open, ye everlasting gates!’ they sung,
‘Open, ye Heav’ns! your living doors! Let in
The great Creator from His work returned
Magnificent, His six days work, a world!
Open, and henceforth oft, for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just men,
Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send His wingèd messengers
On errands of supernal grace. ’So sung
The glorious train ascending. He through Heav’n,
That opened wide her blazing portals, led
To God’s eternal house direct the way,
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the galaxy, that milky way
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou see’st
Powdered with stars. And now on earth the seventh
Ev’ning arose in Eden, for the sun
Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
Forerunning night, when at the holy mount
Of Heav’n’s high-seated top, the imperial throne
Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,
The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
With his great Father, for he also went
Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
Hath Omnipresence), and the work ordained,
Author and End of all things, and from work
Now resting, blessed and hallowed the sev’nth day,
As resting on that day from all His work,
But not in silence holy kept. The harp
Had work and rested not, the solemn pipe,
And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,
All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice
Choral or unison. Of incense clouds,
Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.
Creation and the six days acts they sung:
"Great are thy works, Jehovah! Infinite
Thy power! What thought can measure Thee, or tongue
Relate thee? Greater now in Thy return
Than from the giant Angels. Thee that day
Thy thunders magnified, but to create
Is greater than created to destroy.
Who can impair Thee, Mighty King, or bound
Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt
Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from Thee withdraw
The number of Thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen Thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more Thy might. His evil
Thou usest, and from thence creat’st more good.
Witness this new-made world, another Heav’n
From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea,
Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
Of destined habitation. But thou know’st
Their seasons. Among these the seat of men,
Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced!
Created in His image, there to dwell
And worship Him, and in reward to rule
Over His works, on earth, in sea, or air,
And multiply a race of worshippers
Holy and just. Thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright!
“So sung they, and the empyrean rung
With hallelujahs. Thus was sabbath kept.
And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
How first this world and face of things began,
And what before thy memory was done
From the beginning, that posterity,
Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek’st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, 4321 say.

The End of the Seventh Book
BOOK VIII

THE ARGUMENT

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions, is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation, his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society, his first meeting and nuptials with Eve, his discourse with the Angel thereupon, who after admonitions repeated departs.

1. The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
2. So charming left his voice, that he a while
3. Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear,
4. Then, as new waked, thus gratefully replied:
5. "What thanks sufficient, or what recompence
6. Equal, have I to render thee, divine
7. Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
8. The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
9. This friendly condescension to relate
10. Things else by me unsearchable now heard
11. With wonder, but delight, and as is due
12. With glory attributed to the high
13. Creator! Something yet of doubt remains,
14. Which only thy solution can resolve.
15. When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
16. Of Heav'n and earth consisting, and compute
17. Their magnitudes, this earth, a spot, a grain,
18. An atom, with the firmament compared
19. And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
20. Spaces incomprehensible (for such
21. Their distance argues, and their swift return
22. Diurnal merely to officiate light
23. Round this spaceous earth, this punctual spot,
24. One day and night, in all her vast survey
25. Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire
26. How Nature wise and frugal could commit
27. Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
28. So many nobler bodies to create,
29. Greater so manifold, to this one use
30. (For aught appears), and on their orbs impose
31. Such restless revolution day by day
32. Repeated, while the sedentary earth,
33. That better might with far less compass move,
34. Served by more noble than herself, attains
35. Her end without least motion, and receives,
36 As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
37 Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light—
38 Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.
39 So spoke our sire, and by his count’nance seemed
40 Entering on studious thoughts abstruse, which Eve
41 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
42 With lowliness majestic from her seat,
43 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
44 Rose and went forth among her fruits and flow’rs,
45 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
46 Her nursery. They at her coming sprung
47 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
48 Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
49 Delighted, or not capable her ear
50 Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,
51 Adam relating, she sole auditress.
52 Her husband the relater she preferred
53 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
54 Chose rather. He, she knew, would intermix
55 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
56 With conjugal caresses: from his lip
57 Not words alone pleased her. (O! when meet now
58 Such pairs, in love and mutual honor joined?
59 With goddess-like demeanor forth she went,
60 Not unattended, for on her, as queen,
61 A pomp of winning graces waited still,
62 And from about her shot darts of desire
63 Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
64 And Raphael now, to Adam’s doubt proposed,
65 Benevolent and facile, thus replied:
66 “To ask or search, I blame thee not, for Heav’n
67 Is as the book of God before thee set,
68 Wherein to read His wondrous works, and learn
69 His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.
70 This to attain, whether Heav’n move or earth,
71 Imports not if thou reckon right. The rest
72 From man or Angel the great Architect
73 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
74 His secrets to be scanned by them who ought
75 Rather admire, or if they list to try
76 Conjecture, His fabric of the Heav’n’s
77 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
78 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
79 Hereafter. When they come to model Heav’n
80 And calculate the stars, how they will wield
81 The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive
To save appearances, how gird the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o’er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb orb in orb.
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
That bodies bright and greater should not serve
The less not bright, nor Heav’n such journeys run,
Earth sitting still, when she alone receives
The benefit.

“Consider, first, that great
Or bright infers not excellence. The earth,
Though in comparison of Heav’n so small,
Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the sun that barren shines,
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful earth, there first received,
His beams, unactive else, their vigor find.
Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries
Officious, but to thee, earth’s habitant.
And for the Heav’n’s wide circuit, let it speak
The Maker’s high magnificence, who built
So spacious, and His line stretched out so far
That man may know he dwells not in his own,
An edifice too large for him to fill,
Lodged in a small partition, and the rest
Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
The swiftness of those circles attribute,
Though numberless, to His Omnipotence,
That to corporeal substances could add
Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think’st not slow,
Who since the morning-hour set out from Heav’n
Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived
In Eden—distance inexpressible
By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
Admitting motion in the Heav’n’s, to show
Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved.
Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
To thee who hast thy dwelling here on earth.
God, to remove His ways from human sense,
Placed Heav’n from earth so far, that earthly sight,
If it presume, might err in things too high,
And no advantage gain. What if the sun
Be center to the world? and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
Their wand’ring course now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou see’st? And what if sev’nth to these
The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move,
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,
Or save the sun his labor, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night, which needs not thy belief
If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun’s beam meet night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray? What if that light,
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air,
To the terrestrial moon be as a star,
Enlight’ning her by day, as she by night
This earth, reciprocal, if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou see’st
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
Fruits in her softened soil for some to eat
Allotted there. And other suns perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
Communicating male and female light,
Which two great sexes animate the world,
Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.
For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
Down to this habitable, which returns
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
But whether thus these things, or whether not—
But whether the sun, predominant in Heav’n,
Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the sun—
He from the east his flaming road begin,
Or she from west her silent course advance,
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle, while she paces ev’n,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid.
Leave them to God above. Him serve, and fear!
Of other creatures, as Him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let Him dispose. Joy thou
In what He gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve. Heav’n is for thee too high
To know what passes there. Be lowly wise,
Think only what concerns thee, and thy being.
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition or degree,
Contented that thus far hath been revealed
Not of earth only, but of highest Heav’n.
To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:
“How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
Intelligence of Heav’n, Angel serene!
And, freed from intricacies taught to live
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
And not molest us, unless we ourselves
Seek them with wand’ring thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Unchecked, and of her roving is no end,
Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom. What is more, is fume
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
And renders us, in things that most concern
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful, whence haply, mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favor, deigned.
“Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance. Now, hear me relate
My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard.
And day is not yet spent—till then thou see’st
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate.
Fond! were it not in hope of thy reply,
For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav’n,
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labor, at the hour
Of sweet repast. They satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant, but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued bring to their sweetness no satiety.”
To whom thus Raphael answered, Heav’nly meek,
“Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent. For God on thee
Abundantly His gifts hath also poured
Inward and outward both, His image fair.
Speaking or mute, all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms.
Nor less think we in Heav’n of thee on earth
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with man,
For God, we see, hath honored thee, and set
On man His equal love. Say therefore on,
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,
Squared in full legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a spy
Or enemy, while God was in His work,
Lest He, incensed at such eruption bold,
 Destruction with creation might have mixed.
Not that they durst without His leave attempt—
But us He sends upon His high behests
For state, as Sov’reign King, and to inure
Our prompt obedience.
Fast we found, fast shut,
The dismal gates, and barricado’d strong,
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we returned up to the coasts of light
Ere sabbath-ev’n: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now, for I attend
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.
So spoke the godlike Power, and thus our sire:
“For man to tell how human life began
Is hard, for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flow’ry herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heav’n my wond’ring eyes I turned,
And gazed a while the ample sky, till raised
By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavoring, and upright
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams. By these,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked, or flew,
Birds on the branches warbling—all things smiled.
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Surveyed, and sometimes went and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigor led.
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spoke.
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light,
And thou enlight'ned earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
Ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?
Not of myself—by some great Maker, then,
In goodness and in power preëminent.
Tell me, how may I know Him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.
While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither
From where I first drew air, and first beheld
This happy light—when, answer none returned,
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seized
My drowsèd sense, untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve.
When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being,
And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam. Rise,
First man, of men innumerable ordained
First father! Called by thee, I come thy guide
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.
So saying, by the hand He took me raised,
And over fields and waters, as in air
Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide, enclosed with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks, and bowers, that what I saw
Of earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree,
Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat, whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real as the dream
Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
My wand’ring, had not He, who was my guide
Up hither, from among the trees appeared,
Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at His feet I fell
Submit. He reared me, and ‘Whom thou sought’st I am,
Said mildly, ‘Author of all this thou see’st
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat.
Of every tree that in the garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart, fear here no dearth.
But of the tree whose operation
brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
Amid the garden by the Tree of Life,
Remember what I warn thee: shun to taste,
And shun the bitter consequence. For know,
The day thou eat’st thereof, my sole command
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
From that day mortal, and this happy state
Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
Of woe and sorrow. ’Sternly He pronounced
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur. But soon His clear aspect
Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:
‘Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth
To thee and to thy race I give. As lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live,
Or live in sea, or air, beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof each bird and beast behold
After their kinds; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection. Understand the same
Of fish within their wat’ry residence,
Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
Their element, to draw the thinner air.
As thus he spoke, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two, these cowering low
With blandishment, each bird stooped on his wing.
I named them, as they passed, and understood
Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension.
But in these
I found not what methought I wanted still,
And to the Heav’nly vision thus presumed:
‘O by what name, for Thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming? How may I
Adore Thee, Author of this universe,
And all this good to man? for whose well being
Thou hast provided all things. But with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness? Who can enjoy alone,
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?
Thus I presumptuous, and the Vision bright,
As with a smile more bright’ned, thus replied:
“What call’st thou solitude? Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenished, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Know’st thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly. With these
Find pastime, and bear rule. Thy realm is large.
So spoke the Universal Lord, and seemed
So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,
And humble deprecation, thus replied:
“Let not my words offend Thee, Heav’nly Power.
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
Hast Thou not made me here Thy substitute,
And these inferior far beneath me set?
Among inequal what society
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Giv’n and received. But in disparity
The one intense, the other still remiss.
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight, wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness,
So fitly them in pairs Thou hast combined.
Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape.
Worse then can man with beast, and least of
Whereto the Almighty answer
“A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam! And wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What think’st thou then of me, and this m
Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
Of happiness, or not? who am alone
From all eternity? For none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I then with whom to hold converse,
Save with the creatures which I made
To me inferior, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?
He ceased; I lowly answered:

"To attain
The height and depth of Thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!
Thou in Thyself art perfect, and in Thee
Is no deficiency found. Not so is man,
But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that Thou
Should'st propagate, already Infinite,
And through all numbers Absolute, though One.
But man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective, which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in Thy secrecy although alone,
Best with Thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication, yet, so pleased,
Canst raise Thy creature to what height Thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified.
I by conversing cannot these erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.
Thus I embold’ned spoke, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found, which gained
This answer from the gracious voice Divine:
"Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My image, not imparted to the brute,
Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee
Good reason was thou freely should'st dislike,
And be so minded still. I ere thou spok'st
Knew it not good for man to be alone,
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee—for trial only brought,
To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet.
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart’s desire.
He ended, or I heard no more, for now
My earthly by His Heav’nly overpowered,
Which it had long stood under, strained to the height
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
“Mine eyes He closed, but open left the cell
Of fancy, my internal sight, by which,
Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,
Though sleeping where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood,
Who stooping op’ned my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh. Wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.
The rib He formed and fashioned with His hands.
Under His forming hands a creature grew,
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean or in her summed up, in her contained
And in her looks, which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight.
She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure—
When, out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
With what all earth or Heav’n could bestow
To make her amiable. On she came,
Led by her Heav’nly Maker, though unseen,
And guided by His voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, Heav’n in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I overjoyed could not forbear aloud:
“This turn hath made amends! Thou hast fulfilled
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! But fairest this
Of all Thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me. Woman is her name, of man
For this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.

“She heard me thus, and though divinely brought
Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable—or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so that, seeing me, she turned.
I followed her. She what was honor knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason.
To the nuptial bow’r
I led her blushing like the morn. All Heav’n,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selected influence, the earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the ev’ning-star
On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.

“Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire—these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flow’rs,
Walks, and the melody of birds. But here
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch: here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved, here only weak
Against the charm of beauty’s powerful glance.
Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain;
Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough, at least on her bestowed
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her th’ inferior, in the mind
And inward faculties, which most excel
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion giv’n
O’er other creatures. Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute
she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, wisdom in discourse with her
Looses discount’nanced, and like folly shows.
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally. And, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard Angelic placed.
To whom the Angel with contracted brow:
“Accuse not Nature. She hath done her part;
Do thou but thine, and be not diffident Of wisdom. She deserts thee not, if thou
Of wisdom. She deserts thee not, if thou
Dismiss not her, when most thou need’st her nigh,
By attributing overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv’st.
For what admir’st thou, what transports thee so?
An outside? Fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love.
Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself,
Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know’st
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows.
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful that with honor thou may’st love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
Is propagated, seem such dear delight
Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed
To cattle and each beast, which would not be
To them made common and divulged, if aught
Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
The soul of man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find’st
Attractive, human, rational, love still.
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In reason, and is judicial, is the scale
By which to Heav’nly love thou may’st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure. For which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.
To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:
“Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
(Though higher of the genial
bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence, I deem)
So much delights me as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mixed with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
Union of mind, or in us both one soul.
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to th’ ear.
Yet these subject not. I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
Who meet with various objects from the sense
Variously representing, yet still free
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love, thou blam’st me not, for love, thou say’st,
Leads up to Heav’n, is both the way and guide.
Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask:
Love not the Heav’nly Spirits, and how their love
Express they? by looks only? or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?
To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy red, love’s proper hue,
Answered:
“Let it suffice thee that thou know’st
Us happy, and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy’st
(And pure thou wert created), we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace:
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more. The parting sun
Beyond the earth’s green cape and verdant isles
Hesperian sets: my signal to depart.
Be strong, live happy, and love! But first of all Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
His great command. Take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which else free will
Would not admit. Thine, and of all thy sons,
The weal or woe in thee is placed. Beware!
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the Blest. Stand fast! To stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require,
And all temptation to transgress repel.
So saying, he arose, whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction. “Since to part,
Go, Heav’nly guest, ethereal messenger,
Sent from whose sov’reign goodness I adore!
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honored ever
With grateful memory. Thou to mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return!
So parted they, the Angel up to Heav’n
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bow’r.

The End of the Eighth Book
BOOK IX

THE ARGUMENT

Satan having compassed the earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise, enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labors, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each laboring apart. Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt her, found alone. Eve, loath to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength. Adam at last yields.

The serpent finds her alone; his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking, with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech and such understanding not till now. The serpent answers that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the Tree of Knowledge, forbidden.

The serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat. She, pleased with the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not, at last brings him of the fruit, relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam at first amaz’d, but perceiving her lost, resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit.

The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness, then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

1. No more of talk where God or Angel guest
2. With man, as with his friend, familiar used
3. To sit indulgent, and with him partake
4. Rural repast, permitting him the while
5. Venial discourse unblamed
6. I now must change
7. Those notes to tragic, foul distrust, and breach
8. Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
9. And disobedience; on the part of Heav’n,
10. Now alienated distance and distaste,
11. Anger and just rebuke, and judgment giv’n,
12. That brought into this world a world of woe,
13. Sin and her shadow Death, and misery,
14. Death’s harbinger — sad task, yet argument
15. Not less but more heroic than the wrath
16. Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
17. Thrice fugitive about Troy wall, or rage
18. Of Turnus or Neptune’s ire, or Juno’s, that so long
19. Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea’s son
20. If answerable style I can obtain
21. Of my celestial patroness, who deigns her nightly visitation unimplored,
22. And dictates to me slumb’ring, or inspires
23. Easy my unpreamedinated verse,
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing, and beginning late,
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feigned—the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung—or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament, then marshalled
Served up in hall with sewers and senechals
The skill of artifice or office mean
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem. Me, of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing
Depressed. And much they may, if all be mine,
Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
The sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter 'twixt day and night. And now from end to end
Night's hemisphere had veiled th' horizon round,
When Satan, who late fled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
By night he fled, and at midnight returned
From compassing the earth, cautious of day,
Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim
That kept their watch. Thence full of anguish driv'n,
The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness. Thrice the equinoctial line
He circled, four times crossed the car of night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure.
On the eighth returned and, on the coast averse
From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way.

There was a place,
Now not, though Sin, not time, first wrought the change,
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.
In with the river sunk, and with it rose
Satan, involved in rising mist, then sought
Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched, and land,
From Eden over Pontus and the pool
Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob.
Downward as far Antarctic, and in length
West from Orontes to the ocean barred
At Darien, thence to the land where flows
Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roamed
With narrow search, and with inspection deep
Considered every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field.
Him after long debate, irresolute
Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose
Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight, for in the wily snake,
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding, which in other beasts observed
Doubt might beget diabolic power
Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:
"O earth, how like to Heav’n, if not preferred
More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
For what god, after better, worse would build?
Terrestrial Heav’n, danced round by other Heav’ns
That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concent’ring all their precious beams
Of sacred influence! As God in Heav’n
Is center, yet extends to all, so thou,
Cent’ring, receiv’st from all those orbs. In thee,
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
Of creatures animate with gradual life
Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in man.
With what delight could I have walked thee round
(If I could joy in aught), sweet interchange.
Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
Now land, now sea and shores with forest crowned,
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
Find place or refuge, and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries. All good to me becomes bane—
—and in Heav’n much worse would be my state,
“But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heav’n
To dwell, unless by mast’ring Heav’n’s Supreme,
Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts and, him destroyed,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe.
In woe then. That destruction wide may range:
To me shall be the glory sole among
Th’ infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
What He, Almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making—and who knows how long
Before had been contriving? Though perhaps
Not longer than since I, in one night, freed
From servitude inglorious well nigh half
Th’Angelic name, and thinner left the throng
Of His adorers. He, to be avenged,
And to repair His numbers thus impaired,
Whether such virtue spent of old now failed
More Angels to create (if they at least
Are His created) or, to spite us more,
Determined to advance into our room
A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With Heav’nly spoils—our spoils. What He decreed,
He effected. Man He made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service angel-wings,
And flaming ministers to watch and tend
Their earthly charge. Of these the vigilance
I dread and, to elude, thus wrapped in mist
Of midnight vapor glide obscure, and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap may find
The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
“O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
Into a beast and, mixed with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute.
That to the height of Deity aspired!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils.
Let it. I reck not, so it light well aimed,
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favorite
Of Heav’n, this man of clay, son of despite.
Whom us the more to spite his Maker raised
From dust. Spite then with spite is best repaid.
So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight-search, where soonest he might find
The serpent. Him fast-sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles,
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,
Fearless unfeared he slept. In at his mouth
The Devil entered and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
With act intelligential, but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.
Now when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humid flow’rs, that breathed
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe
From th’ earth’s great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and His nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair
And joined their vocal worship to the choir
Of creatures wanting voice. That done, partake
The season prime for sweetest scents and airs,
Then communed how that day they best may ply,
Their growing work, for much their work out-grew
The hands’ dispatch of two gard’ning so wide.
And Eve first to her husband thus began:
“Adam, well may we labor still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flow’r,
Our pleasant task enjoined, but till more hands
Aid us the work under our labor grows
Luxurious by restraint. What we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides,
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present.
Let us divide our labors—thou where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbor, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb, while I,
In yonder spring of roses intermixed
With myrtle, find what to redress till noon.
For while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
Our day’s work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and th’ hour of supper comes unearned?
To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:
“Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed,
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass
Unpraised, for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labor, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles, for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food—
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight
He made us, and delight to reason joined.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
Assist us. But if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield,
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
“But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee, severed from me, for thou know’st
What hath been warned us, what malicious foe
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault. And somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder.
Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need,
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more.
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.
To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
“Offspring of Heav’n and earth, and all earth’s lord!
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,
And from the parting Angel over-heard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then returned at shut of evening flow’rs.
But that thou should’st my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear’st not, being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers
Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced,
Thoughts which how found they harbor in thy breast,
Adam, mis-thought of her to thee so dear?
To whom with healing words Adam replied:
“Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!
For such thou art, from sin and blame entire.
Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
Th’ attempt itself, intended by our foe.
For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The tempted with dishonor foul, supposed
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn
And anger would’st resent the offered wrong,
Though ineffectual found. Misdeem not, then,
If such affront I labor to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare,
Or daring, first on me th’ assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn.
Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
Angels, nor think superfluous others’ aid.
I, from the influence of thy looks, receive
Access in every virtue, in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength, while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or over-reached,
Would utmost vigor raise, and raised unite.
Why should’st not thou like sense within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?
So spoke domestic Adam in his care
And matrimonial love. But Eve, who thought
Less attributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:
“If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit, straitened by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met,
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin. Only our foe
Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity. His foul esteem
Sticks no dishonor on our front, but turns
Foul on himself. Then wherefore shunned or feared
By us? who rather double honor gain
From his surmise proved false, find peace within,
Favor from Heav’n, our witness, from th’ event.
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustained?
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise
As not secure single or combined.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.
To whom thus Adam fervently replied:
“O woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordained them! His creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that He created, much less man,
Or ought that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force. Within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power.
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the will, for what obeys
Reason, is free; and reason He made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
She dictate false, and mis-inform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
Since reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborned,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not. Trial will come unsought.
Would'st thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience. Th' other who can know,
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
Go, for thy stay not free absents thee more.
Go in thy native innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue, summon all!
For God towards thee hath done His part. Do thine.
So spoke the patriarch of mankind. But Eve
Persisted, yet submiss, though last replied:
“With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touched only, that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepared,
The willing I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek.
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew and, like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or dryad or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
Likest she seemed, Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime, yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Her long with ardent look his eye pursued, delighted, but desiring more her stay.

Oft he to her his charge of quick return repeated; she to him as oft engaged to be returned by noon amid the bow’r, and all things in best order to invite noontide repast, or afternoon’s repose.

O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve, of thy presumed return! Event perverset of thine from that hour in Paradise foundst either sweet repast, or sound repose.

Such ambush, hid among sweet flow’rs and shades, waited with hellish rancor imminent to intercept thy way, or send thee back.

Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss! For now, and since first break of dawn the fiend, mere serpent in appearance, forth was come.

And on his quest, where likeliest he might find the only two of mankind, but in them the whole included race, his purposed prey.

In bow’r and field he sought, where any tuft of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay, their tendance or plantation for delight.

By fountain or by shady rivulet he sought them both, but wished his hap might find Eve separate. He wished, but not with hope of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish, beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies, veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood, half spied, so thick the roses bushing round about her glowed, oft stooping to support each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay.

Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold, hung drooping unsustained. Them she upstays gently with myrtle band, mindless the while herself, though fairest unsupported flower, from her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.

Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm, then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen among thick-woven arborets and flow’rs imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve spot more delicious than those gardens feigned of revived Adonis, or renowned.
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son,
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
Much he the place admired, the person more.
As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound.
If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums all delight.
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone. Her Heav'nly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overawed his malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved his fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
That space the Evil One abstracted stood From his own evil, and for the time remained Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed, Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees Of pleasure, not for him ordained. Then soon Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites: "Thoughts, whither have ye led me! with what sweet Compulsion thus transported, to forget What hither brought us! Hate, not love, nor hope Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy, Save what is in destroying. Other joy To me is lost. Then let me not let pass.
Occasion which now smiles. Behold alone The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,
Foe not informidable! exempt from wound,
I not, so much hath Hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heav’n.
She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods!
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned,
The way which to her ruin now I tend.
So spoke the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Addressed his way, not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that tow’red
Fold above fold, a surging maze! His head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes,
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape
And lovely, never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus, or the god
In Epidaurus, nor to which transformed
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,
He with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access but feared
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river’s mouth or foreland, where the wind
Vees oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound
Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field,
From every beast, more duteous at her call
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,
Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turned at length
The eye of Eve to mark his play. He, glad
Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began:
“Welloner not, sov’ reign mistrees, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole wonder! Much less arm
Thy looks, the Heav’n of mildness, with disdain,
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld! There best beheld,
Where universally admired, but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? And what is one? Who should be seen
A goddess among gods, adored and served
By Angels numberless, thy daily train.
So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned.
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling. At length,
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spoke:
“What may this mean? Language of man pronounced
By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?
The first, at least, of these I thought denied
To beasts, whom God, on their creation-day,
Created mute to all articulate sound.
The latter I demur, for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endued.
Redouble then this miracle, and say
How cam’st thou speakable of mute, and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:
“Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command’st, and right thou should’st be obeyed.
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food, nor ought but food discerned,
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high.
Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold,
Loaden with fruit of fairest colors mixed,
Ruddy and gold. I nearer drew to gaze,
When from the boughs a savory odor blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at ev’n,
Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer. Hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quick’ned at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon,
For high from ground the branches would require
Thy utmost reach, or Adam’s. Round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
I spared not, for such pleasure till that hour,
At feed or fountain never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers, and speech
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered all things visible in Heav’n,
Or earth, or middle, all things fair and good.
But all that fair and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty’s Heav’ny ray,
United I beheld: no fair to thine
Equivalent or second! Which compelled
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
Sov’ reign of creatures, universal Dame!
So talked the spirited sly snake, and Eve,
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:
“Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved.
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
To us. In such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her birth.”
To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad:
“Empress, the way is ready, and not long.
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing myrrh and balm. If thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.
“Lead then,” said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Bright’ns his crest, as when a wand’ring fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environ round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends.
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads th’ amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
There swallowed up and lost, from succor far.
So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition, root of all our woe,
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spoke:
“Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee,
Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch.
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of His voice. The rest, we live
Law to ourselves. Our reason is our law.
To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:
“Indeed! Hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless:

Of each tree in the garden we may eat,
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The Tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely and in act
Raised as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned,
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute! to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected, while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue,
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right.
So standing, moving, or to height up grown,
The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:
“O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science! Now I feel thy power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
Queen of this universe! Do not believe
Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die.
How should you? By the fruit? It gives you life
To knowledge. By the threat’ner. Look on me,
Me, who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attained than Fate
Meant me, by vent’ring higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast
Is open? Or will God incense His ire
For such a petty trespass? and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
Deterred not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil?
Of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just—
Not just, not God. Not feared then, nor obeyed:
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe?
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Op’ned and cleared, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye should be as gods, since I as man,
Internal man, is but proportion meet—
1 of brute, human; ye of human, gods.
So ye shall die, perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods—death to be wished,
Though threat’ned, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are gods, that man may not become
As they, participating godlike food?
The gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief that all from them proceeds.
I question it, for this fair earth I see,
Warmed by the sun, producing every kind,
Them nothing. If they all things, who enclosed
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? And wherein lies
Th’ offence, that man should thus attain to know?
What can your knowledge hurt Him, or this tree
Impart against His will, if all be His?
Or is it envy? and can envy dwell
In Heav’nly breasts? These, these, and many more
Causes your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste!
He ended, and his words replete with guile
Into her heart too easy entrance won.
Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
With reason (to her seeming) and with truth.
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savory of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclined now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye. Yet first
Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:

“Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired,
Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
Thy praise He also, who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil,
Forbids us then to taste! But His forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want
For good unknown sure is not had or, had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids He but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not. But if death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!
How dies the serpent? He hath eaten and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? Or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
For beasts it seems. Yet that one beast which first
Hath tastered envies not, but brings with joy
The good befall'n him, author unsuspect,
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then? Rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,
Of God or death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise. What hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?”
So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate!
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent, and well might, for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else
Regarded. Such delight till then, as seemed,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge, nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death. Satiate at length,
And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:
"O sov’reign, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise! Of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created. But henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offered free to all,
Till dieted by thee I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know,
Though others envy what they cannot give—
For had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,
Best guide. Not following thee, I had remained
In ignorance. Thou op’nest wisdom’s way,
And giv’st access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret. Heav’n is high,
High and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on earth. And other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our great Forbidder, safe with all His spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without co-partner? So to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal, and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior—for inferior, who is free?
This may be well. But what if God have seen,
And death ensue? Then I shall be no more!
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct:
A death to think! Confirmed then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe!
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life."
So saying, from the tree her step she turned,
But first low reverence done, as to the power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
Into the plant sciential sap, derived
From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while,
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest flow’rs a garland, to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labors crown,
As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delayed,
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
    Misgave him. He the fault’ring measure felt,
    That morn when first they parted. By the Tree
    Of Knowledge he must pass. There he her met,
    Scarce from the tree returning, in her hand
    A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
    New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.
    To him she hasted. In her face excuse
    Came prologue, and apology too prompt,
    Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:
    “Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
    Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
    Thy presence. Agony of love till now
    Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more
    Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
    The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
    Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear.
    This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
    Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
    Op’ning the way, but of divine effect
    To open eyes, and make them gods who taste,
    And hath been tasted such. The serpent wise,
    Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
    Hath eaten of the fruit, and is become—
    Not dead, as we are threat’ned, but thenceforth
    Endued with human voice and human sense,
    Reasoning to admiration, and with me
    Persuasively hath so prevailed, that I
    Have also tasted, and have also found
    Th’ effects to correspond. Opener mine eyes,
    Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
    And growing up to godhead—which for thee
    Chiefly I sought—without thee can despise.
    For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss.
    Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
    Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
    May join us, equal joy, as equal love,
    Lest thou not tasting, different degree
    Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
    Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit.”
    Thus Eve with count’nance blithe her story told,
    But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
    On th’ other side Adam, soon as he heard
    The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
    Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
    Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.
    From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
    Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed.
    Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke:

"O fairest of Creation, last and best
Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost! How on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflow'red, and now to death devote!
The sacred fruit forbidden! Some cursèd fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die!
How can I live without thee? How forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart. No, no, I feel
The link of Nature draw me. Flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturbed
Submitting to what seemed remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:
"Bold deed thou hast presumed, advent'rous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate. Yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous, now, foretasted fruit,
Profaned first by the serpent, by him first
Made common and unhallowed, ere our taste,
Nor yet on him found deadly. Yet he lives,
Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live, as man,
Higher degree of life—inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent, which cannot be
But to be gods, or Angels, demi-gods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threat'ning, will in earnest so destroy
Us His prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all His works, which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labor lose—
Not well conceived of God, who though His power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loath
Us to abolish, lest the adversary
Triumph, and say: ‘Fickle their state whom God
Most favors. Who can please Him long? Me first
He ruined, now mankind. Whom will He next?’
Matter of scorn, not to be giv’n the foe.
However, I with thee have fixed my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom. If death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life,
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of Nature draw me to my own,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine,
Our state cannot be severed. We are one,
One flesh. To lose thee were to lose myself.”
So Adam, and thus Eve to him replied:
“O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate. But short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both—whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit,
Whose virtue, for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion, hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known?
Were it I thought death menaced would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful, love unequalled. But I feel
Far otherwise th’ event. Not death, but life
Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds.
So saying, she embraced him, and for joy
Tenderly wept, much won that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompence (for such compliance bad,
Such recompence best merits) from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
Sky loured and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original—while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society, that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming. He on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him
As wantonly repaid. In lust they burn,
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:
"Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, sapience no small part.
Since to each meaning savor we apply,
And palate call judicious, I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish tasting. If such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wished
For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come, so well refreshed, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare,
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever—bounty of this virtuous tree!
So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of amorous intent, well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,
Thick overhead with verdant roof embow’red,
He led her, nothing loath. Flow’rs were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
Thick overhead with verdant roof embow’red,
He led her, nothing loath. Flow’rs were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth, earth’s freshest softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love’s disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapor bland
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honor, from about them, naked left
To guilty shame. He covered, but his robe
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistine Dalilah, and waked
Shorn of his strength. They destitute and bare
Of all their virtue, silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute,
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:"O Eve, in evil hour thou did'st give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice, true in our fall,
False in our promised rising, since our eyes
Op'ned we find, indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil—good lost, and evil got!
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence, whence evil store,
Ev'n shame, the last of evils. Of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heav'nly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
Insufferably bright. O! might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening. Cover me, ye pines!
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more!
"But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen.
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sewed,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts, that this newcomer, shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.
So counselled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood. There soon they chose
The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillared shade
High over-arched, and echoing walks between.
There of the Indian herdsman, stunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those leaves
They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe
And, with what skill they had, together sewed,
To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found th’American, so girt
With feathered cincture, naked else, and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced and, as they thought, their shame in part
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep, nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent,
For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sov’reign reason claimed
Superior sway. From thus distempered breast,
Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:
“Would thou had’st hearkened to my words, and stayed
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wand’ring, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possessed thee. We had then
Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled
Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless causet’ approve
The faith they owe! When earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.”
To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
“What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe!
Imput’st thou that to my default, or will
Of wand’ring, as thou call’st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happened thou being by—
Or to thyself perhaps? Had’st thou been there,
Or here th’ attempt, thou could’st not have discerned
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spoke.
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm?
Was I t’ have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why did’st not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger as thou said’st?
Too facile then, thou did’st not much gainsay—
Nay, did’st permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Had’st thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.
To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:
“Is this the love, is this the recompence
Of mine to thee, ungrateful Eve! expressed
Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I,
Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint. What could I more?
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait. Beyond this had been force,
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial And perhaps
I also erred, in overmuch admiring
What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue
The error now, which is become my crime,
And thou th’ accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lets her will rule. Restraint she will not brook
And left t’ herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

The End of the Ninth Book
BOOK X

THE ARGUMENT

Man’s transgression known, the Guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved, God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors, who descends and gives sentence accordingly, then in pity clothes them both, and reascends.

Sin and Death sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new world, and the sin by man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan their sire up to the place of man. To make the way easier from Hell to this world, to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made. Then preparing for earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation.

Satan arrives at Pandemonium, in full assembly relates with boasting his success against man. Instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed—with himself also—suddenly into serpents, according to his doom, given in Paradise. Then deluded with show of the forbidden tree springing up before them, they greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes.

The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things, but for the present commands his Angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen condition heavily bewails, rejects the condolement of Eve. She persists and at length appeases him, then to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not, but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent, and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.
All were who heard. Dim sadness did not spare,
That time, celestial visages, yet mixed
With pity violated their bliss.
About the new-arrived in multitudes
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell. They towards the Throne Supreme
Accountable, made haste to make appear
With righteous plea their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved when the Most High
Eternal Father, from His secret cloud,
Amidst in thunder, uttered thus His voice:
“Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed,
Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand. Man should be seduced
And flattered out of all, believing lies
Concurring to necessitate his fall
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse of impulse
His free will, to her own inclining left
In ev’n scale. But fall’n he is. And now
What rests but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, death denounced that day,
Which he presumes already vain and void
Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquaintice, ere day end.
Justice shall not return as bounty scorned.
But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,
Vice-gerent Son? To thee I have transferred
All judgment, whether in Heav’n, or earth, or Hell.
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee
Man’s friend, his mediator, his designed
Both ransom and redeemer voluntary,
And destined, man himself, to judge man fallen.
So spoke the Father and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand His glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded Deity. He full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:
“Father Eternal, Thine is to decree,
Mine, both in Heav’n and earth, to do Thy will
Supreme, that Thou in me, Thy Son beloved,
May’st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On earth these Thy transgressors, but Thou know’st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
When time shall be, for so I undertook
Before Thee, and not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me derived.
Yet I shall temper so Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most
Them fully satisfied, and Thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgment but the judged,
Those two. The third best absent is condemned,
Convict by flight, and rebel to all law.
Conviction to the serpent none belongs.
Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral glory. Him Thrones, and Powers,
Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant
Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence
Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.
Down he descended straight: the speed of gods
Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.
Now was the sun in western cadence low
From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,
To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
The ev’ning cool, when He, from wrath more cool,
Came the mild Judge and Intercessor both,
To sentence man. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears, while day decline. They heard,
And from His presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,
Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:
“Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.
Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth.
He came, and with him Eve, more loath, though first
T’ offend. Discount’anced both, and discomposed.
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
Whence Adam, falt’ring long, thus answered brief:

“I heard Thee in the garden, and of Thy voice
Afraid, being naked hid myself.” To whom

The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:

“My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,
But still rejoiced, How is it now become
So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? Hath thou eaten of the tree
Whereof I gave thee charge thou should’st not eat?
To whom thus Adam sore beset replied:

“O Heav’n! In evil strait this day I stand
Before my Judge, either to undergo Myself the total crime, or to accuse
My other self, the partner of my life,
Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
I should conceal, and not expose to blame
By my complaint. But strict necessity Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,
Lest on my head both sin and punishment, However insupportable, be all
Devolved Though should I hold my peace, yet Thou
Would’st easily detect what I conceal.

“This woman, whom Thou mad’st to be my help,
And gav’st me as Thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seemed to justify the deed.
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
To whom the sov’reign Presence thus replied:

“Was she thy God, that her thou did’st obey
Before His voice? Or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou did’st resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled
Hers in all real dignity Adorned
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts
Were such, as under government well seemed,
Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part
And person, had’st thou known thyself aright.
So having said, He thus to Eve in few:

“Say, woman, what is this which thou hast done?
To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:

"The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.
Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgment He proceeded on th' accused
Serpent (though brute, unable to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation), justly then accursed,
As vitiated in Nature. More to know
Concerned not man (since he no further knew)
Nor altered his offense. Yet God at last
To Satan (first in sin) his doom applied,
Though in mysterious terms, judged
And on the serpent thus His curse let fall:
"Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed
Above all cattle, each beast of the field.
Upon thy belly groveling thou shalt go,
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed.
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.
So spoke this oracle, then verified
When Jesus, Son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heav'n,
Prince of the air. Then rising from his grave
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air,
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet,
Ev'n he, who now foretold his fatal bruise,
And to the woman thus His sentence turned:
"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception Children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit. He over thee shall rule.
On Adam last thus judgment He pronounced:
"Because thou hast heark'ned to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree, concerning which
I charged thee, saying, 'Thou shalt not eat thereof,
Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life.
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid and thou shalt eat th' herb of the field.
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground, for thou
Out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth,  
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.  
So judged He man, both Judge and Savior sent,  
And th’ instant stroke of death denounced \[5269\] that day,  
Removed far off. Then pitying how they stood  
Before Him, naked to the air, that now  
Must suffer change, disdained not to begin  
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,  
As when He washed His servant’s feet. So now,  
As Father of His family, He clad  
Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,  
Or as the snake with youthful coat \[5270\] repaid \[5271\]  
And thought not much \[5272\] to clothe His enemies.  
Nor He their outward only with the skins  
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more  
Opprobrious, \[5273\] with His robe of righteousness  
Arraying, covered from His Father’s sight.  
To Him with swift ascent he up returned,  
Into His blissful bosom reassumed  
In glory, as of old. To Him appeased \[5274\]  
All (though all-knowing) what had passed with man  
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.  
Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on earth,  
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,  
In counterview \[5275\] within the gates, that now  
Stood open wide, belching outrageous \[5276\] flame  
Far into Chaos, since the fiend passed through,  
Sin opening, \[5277\] who thus now to Death began:  
“O son, why sit we here, each other viewing  
Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives  
In other worlds, and happier seat \[5278\] provides  
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be  
But that success attends him. If mishap,  
Ere this he had returned, with fury driv’n  
By his avengers, since no place like this  
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.  
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,  
Wings growing, and dominion \[5279\] giv’n me large \[5280\]  
Beyond this deep. Whatever draws me on, \[5281\]  
Or \[5282\] sympathy, \[5283\] or some connatural \[5284\] force,  
Powerful \[5285\] at greatest distance to unite,  
With secret amity, things of like kind,  
By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade  
Inseparable, must with me along,  
For Death from Sin no power can separate.  
But lest the difficulty of passing back  
Stay his return, perhaps, over this gulf \[5286\]
Impassable, impervious, let us try
Advent'rous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this main from Hell to that new world
Where Satan now prevails, a monument
Of merit high to all th' infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.
Whom thus the meager shadow answered soon:
“Go whither Fate and inclination strong
Leads thee. I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading—such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savor of death from all things there that live.
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest be wanting,
but afford thee equal aid.
So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
Against the day of battle, to a field
Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured
With scent of living carcasses designed
For death the following day, in bloody fight,
So scented the grim feature, and upturned
His nostril wide into the murky air,
Sagacious of his quarry from so far.
Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste,
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse, and with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell,
As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian sea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way
Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich Cathanian coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident, smote, and fixed as firm
As Delos, floating once. The rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigor not to move,
And with asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on
Over the foaming deep high-arched, a bridge
Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
Immoveable of this now fenceless world,
Forfeit to Death. From hence a passage broad,
Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.
So (if great things to small may be compared)
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the sea, and over Hellespont
Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,
And scourged with many a stroke th’ indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical a ridge of pendant rock
Over the vexed abyss, following the track
Of Satan to the self-same place where he
First lighted from his wing, and landed safe
From out of Chaos, to the outside bare
Of this round world. With pins of adamant
And chains they made all fast—too fast they made
And durable! And now in little space
The confines met of empyrean Heav’n
And of this world, and on the left hand Hell
With long reach interposed. Three sev’ral ways
In sight, to each of these three places led.
And now their way to earth they had descried,
To Paradise first tending—when, behold!
Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,
Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose.
Disguised he came, but those his children dear
Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
Into the wood fast by and, changing shape
T’ observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
Upon her husband, saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures, but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrified
He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
The present, fearing, guilty, what His wrath
Might suddenly inflict. That past, returned
By night, and list’ning where the hapless pair
Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
Thence gathered his own doom, which understood
Not instant, but of future time. With joy
And tides fraught\(^{5349}\) to Hell he now returned,
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous pontifex, unhoped
Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendious bridge his joy increased.
Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:
"O parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies! which thou view’st as not thine own.
Thou art their author and prime architect,
For I no sooner in my heart divined
(My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet)
That thou on earth had’st prospered, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt
(Though distant from thee worlds between), yet felt
That I must after\(^{5349}\) thee, with this thy son,
Such fatal\(^{5350}\) consequence\(^{5351}\) unites us three!
Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
Within Hell-gates till now. Thou us empowered
To fortify\(^{5352}\) thus far, and overlay,
With this portentous\(^{5353}\) bridge, the dark abyss.
Thine now is all this world. Thy virtue hath won
What thy hands builded not, thy wisdom gained
With odds\(^{5354}\) what war hath lost, and fully avenged
Our foil\(^{5355}\) in Heav’n. Here thou shalt monarch reign,
There did’st not. There let Him still victor sway,
As battle hath adjudged, from this new world
Retiring, by His own doom\(^{5357}\) alienated,\(^{5359}\)
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature,\(^{5359}\) from thy orbicular\(^{5360}\) world—
Or try\(^{5361}\) thee, now more dang’rous to His throne.
Whom thus the Prince of darkness answered glad:
"Fair daughter, and thou son and grandchild both:
High proof ye now have giv’n to be the race
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of Heaven’s Almighty King)
Amply have merited of me, of all
Th’ infernal empire, that so near Heav’n’s door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
Mine\(^{5362}\) with this glorious work, and made one realm,
Hell and this world, one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice,
You two this way, among these numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend.
There dwell, and reign in bliss, thence on the earth
Dominion exercise and in the air,
Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared.
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My substitutes I send ye, and create
Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might
Issuing from me. On your joint vigor now
My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
If your joint power prevail, th' affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear. Go, and be strong!
So saying he dismissed them. They with speed
Their course through thickest constellations held,
Spreading their bane.
The blasted stars looked wan,
And planets, planet-struck real eclipse
Then suffered. Th' other way Satan went down
The causey to Hell-gate. On either side
Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed
And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,
That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,
Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
And all about found desolate, for those
Appointed to sit there had left their charge,
Flown to the upper world. The rest were all
Far to the inland retired about the walls
Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat
Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.
There kept their watch the legions, while the grand
In council sat, solicitous what chance
Might intercept their emperor sent. So he
Departing gave command, and they observed.
As when the Tartar from his Russian foe
By Astrakhan over the snowy plains
Retires, or Bactrin Sophi from the horns
Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
To Tauris or Casbeen so these, the late
Heav'n-banished host left desert in utmost Hell
Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
Round their metropolis, and now expecting
Each hour their great adventurer, from the search
Of foreign worlds. He through the midst unmarked,
In show plebeian Angel militant
Of lowest order, passed, and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
Ascended his high throne, which under state
Of richest texture spread, at th’ upper end
Was placed in regal luster. Down a while
He sat, and round about him saw unseen.
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian throng
Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,
Their mighty chief returned. Loud was th’ acclaim!
Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers,
Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy
Congratulant approached him, who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention won:
“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers!
For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye and declare ye now, returned
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe
And dungeon of our tyrant. Now possess,
As lords, a spacious world, t’ our native Heav’n
Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
What I have done, what suffered, with what pain
Voyaged th’ unreal, vast, unbounded deep
Of horrible confusion, over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
To expedite your glorious march. But I
Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride
The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme. Thence how I found
The new created world, which fame in Heav’n
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
Of absolute perfection, therein man
Placed in a Paradise, by our exile
Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced. From his Creator and, the more to increase your wonder, with an apple. He, threat Offended (worth your laughter!) hath given up both His belovèd man and all his world to Sin and Death a prey, and so to us, without our hazard, labor, or alarm, to range in, and to dwell, and over man to rule, as over all He should have ruled. "True is, me also He hath judged, or rather Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape Man I deceived. That which to me belongs is enmity, which He will put between me and mankind. I am to bruise his heel. His seed (when is not set) shall bruise my head. A world who would not purchase with a bruise, or much more grievous pain? “Ye have th’ acc

Of my performance. What remains, ye Gods, but up, and enter now into full bliss? So having said, a while he stood, expecting their universal shout and high applause to fill his ear—when, contrary, he hears on all sides, from innumerable tongues, a dismal universal hiss, the sound of public scorn. He wondered, but not long had leisure, wond’ring at himself now more. His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare; his arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining each other, till supplanted down he fell, a monstrous serpent on his belly prone, reluctant, but in vain. A greater power now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned, according to his doom. He would have spoke, but hiss for hiss returned with forkèd tongue to forkèd tongue, for now were all transformed alike, to serpents all, as accessories to his bold riot. Dreadful was the din of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now with complicated monsters head and tail, scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena dire, cerastes hornèd, hydrius, and elops drear, and dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil bedropped with blood of Gorgon, or the isle ophiussa), but still greatest he the midst, now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime,

Huge python, and his power no less he seemed

Above the rest still to retain. They all

Him followed, issuing forth to th’ open field,

Where all yet left of that revolted rout,

Heav’n-fall’n, in station stood or just array,

Sublime with expectation when to see

In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief.

They saw, but other sight instead! a crowd

Of ugly serpents. Horror on them fell,

And horrid sympathy, for what they saw

They felt themselves now changing. Down their arms,

Down fell both spear and shield, down they as fast,

And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form

Caught by contagion, like in punishment

As in their crime. Thus was th’ applause they meant

Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame

Cast on themselves from their own mouths.

There stood

A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change

(His will who reigns above, to aggravate their penance), laden with fair fruit, like that

Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the Tempter. On that prospect strange

Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
For one forbidden tree a multitude
Now ris’n, to work them further woe or shame.
Yet parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
But on they rolled in heaps, and up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curled Megaera. Greedily they plucked
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed—
This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived. They fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which th’ offended taste
With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed,
Hunger and thirst constraining, drugged as oft,
With hatestilest disrelish writhed their jaws,
With soot and cinders filled. So oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as man
Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they plagued
And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed,
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain numbered days,
To dash their pride and joy for man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the heathen, of their purchase got,
And fabled how the serpent, whom they called
Ophion, with Eurynome (the wide-
Encroaching Eve, perhaps), had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Encroaching Eve, perhaps, had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n
And Ops, ere yet Dictaean Jove was born.
Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corpse."
To whom th’ incestuous mother thus replied:
“Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and flow’rs
Feed first. On each beast next, and fish, and fowl—
No homely morsels! And whatever thing
The scythe of Time mows down, devour unspared.
Till I, in man residing through the race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.
This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature.
Sooner or later. Which th’ Almighty seeing,
From His transcendent seat the Saints among,
To those bright orders uttered thus His voice:
“See with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
So fair and good created, and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of man
Let in these wasteful Furies, who impute
Folly to me! So doth the Prince of Hell
And his adherents, that with so much ease
I suffer them to enter and possess
A place so Heav’nly, and conniving seem
To gratify my scornful enemies,
That laugh, as if transported with some fit
Of passion, I to them had quitted all,
At random yielded up to their misrule,
And know not that I called, and drew them thither,
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
Which man’s polluting sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure, till crammed and gorged,
night burst
With sucked and glutted offal at one sling
Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
Both Sin and Death, and yawning grave at last
Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
Forever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
Then Heav’n and earth renewed shall be made pure
To sanctity that shall receive no stain:
Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes.
He ended, and the Heav’nly audience loud
Sung Hallelujah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung:

“Just are Thy way
Righteous are Thy decrees on all Thy works.
Who can extenuate Thee?” Next, to the Son,
Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom
New Heav’n and earth shall to the ages rise,
While the Creator, calling forth by name
His mighty Angels, gave them several charge
As sorted best with present things. The sun
Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
Solstitial summer’s heat. To the bland moon
Her office they prescribed; to th’ other five
Their planetary motions, and aspects
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign, and taught the fixed
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
Their corners, when with bluster to confound
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terror through the dark aereal hall.
Some say He bid his Angels turn askance
The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more
From the sun’s axle. They with labor pushed
Oblique the centric globe. Some say the sun
Was bid turn reins from th’ equinoctial road
Like distant breadth to Taurus with the Sev’n
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins
Up to the Tropic Crab, thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales
As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime. Else had the Spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles: to them day
Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west, which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit
The sun, as from Thyestean banquet turned
His course intended: else how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
These changes in the heav’ns, though slow, produced
Like change on sea and land, sideral blast,
Vapor, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore, Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw, Boreas, and Cæcias, and Argestes loud,
And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn. With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus, and Afer, black with thund'rous clouds From Serraliona. Thwart of these, as fierce,
Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds, Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libeccio. Thus began

Outrage from lifeless things, but Discord first, Daughter of Sin, among th' irrational
Death introduced, through fierce antipathy. Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish. To graze the herb all leaving, Devoured each other, nor stood much in awe
Of man, but fled him or, with count'nance grim, Glared on him passing.

These were from without The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,
And in a troubled sea of passion tossed,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:

"O miserable of happy! Is this the end Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory, who now become Accursed, of blessèd? Hide me from the face Of God, whom to behold was then my height
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end The misery. I deserved it, and would bear My own deservings. But this will not serve: All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard Delightfully, 'Increase and multiply,
Now death to hear! For what can I increase Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all ages to succeed, but feeling The evil on him brought by me, will curse My head? 'Ill fare our ancestor impure, For this we may thank Adam!' But his thanks Shall be the exclamation. So, besides Mine own that bide upon me, all from me Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—
On me, as on their natural center, light Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit Thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurred not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust,
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received, unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty: why hast Thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy Justice seems. Yet to say truth, too late
I thus contest. Then should have been refused
Those terms whatever, when they were proposed.
Thou didst accept them. Wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? And though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient, and reproved, retort,
'Wherefore did'st thou beget me? I sought it not.
Would'st thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? Yet him not thy election
But natural necessity begot.
God made thee of choice His own, and of His own
To serve Him: thy reward was of His grace,
Thy punishment then justly is at His will.
"Be it so, for I submit: His doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return.
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
His hand to execute what His decree
Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive,
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
Insensible! How glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,
And sleep secure. His dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears. No fear of worse
To me, and to my offspring, would torment me
With cruel expectation.

"Yet one doubt

Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die,
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod.

Then in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinned. What dies but what had life
And sin? The body properly had neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease the doubt, since human reach no further knows.

For though the Lord of all be infinite, Is His wrath also? Be it, man is not so, But mortal doomed. How can He exercise Wrath without end on man, whom death must end? Can He make deathless death? That were to make Strange contradiction, which to God Himself Impossible is held, as argument Of weakness, not of power. Will He draw out, For anger’s sake, finite to infinite, In punished man, to satisfy His rigor, Satisfied never? That were to extend His sentence beyond dust and Nature’s law, By which all causes else, according still To the reception of their matter, act Not to th’ extent of their own sphere.

That death be not one stroke, as I supposed, Bereaving sense, but endless misery From this day onward, which I feel begun From in me, and without—and so last To perpetuity. Aye me, that fear Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution On my defenceless head. Both Death and I Am found eternal, and incorporate both, Nor I on my part single. Posterity stands cursed: fair patrimony That I must leave ye, sons. O were I able To waste it all myself, and leave ye none! So disinherited, how would you bless Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind, For one man’s fault, thus guiltless be condemned— If guiltless? But from me what can proceed, But all corrupt, both mind and will depraved Not to do only, but to will the same With me? How can they then acquitted stand In sight of God? Him after all disputes, Forced I absolve. All my evasions vain, And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still But to my own conviction: first and last On me, me only, as the source and spring Of all corruption, all the blame lights due. So might the wrath. Fond wish! Could’st thou support That burden, heavier than the earth to bear, Than all the world much heavier, though divided With that bad woman. Thus what thou desir’st, And what thou fear’st, alike destroys all hope Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future.

To Satan only like both crime and doom.

O Conscience! Into what abyss of fears And horrors hast thou driv’n me, out of which I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud

Through the still night—not now, as ere man fell,

Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,

Which to his evil conscience represented.

All things with double terror. On the ground Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft Cursed his creation, Death as oft accused Of tardy execution, since denounced.

The day of his offence. “Why comes not Death, Said he, “with one thrice-acceptable stroke To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word, Justice Divine not hasten to be just?

But Death comes not at call, Justice Divine Mend not her slowest pace for prayers or cries. O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bow’rs!

With other echo late I taught your shades To answer, and resound far other song!

Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld, Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed:

But her with stern regard he thus repelled:

“Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best Befits thee, with him leagued thyself as false And hateful. Nothing wants but that thy shape, Like his, and color serpentine, may show Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee Henceforth, lest that too Heav’nly form, pretended To hellish falsehood, snare them! But for thee I had persisted happy, had not thy pride And wand’ring vanity, when least was safe, Rejected my forewarning and disdained Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,

Though by the Devil himself, him overweening

To over-reach, but with the serpent meeting Fooled and beguiled. By him, thou, I by thee.

To trust thee from my side, imagined wise, Constant, mature, proof against all assaults, And understood not all was but a show Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib

Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears, More to the part sinister, from me drawn.

Well if thrown out, as supernumerary To my just number found. O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heav'n
With Spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of Nature, and not fill the world at once
With men, as Angels without feminine,
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not been befallen,
And more that shall befall, innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex. For either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness but shall see her gained
By a far worse, or if she love, withheld
By parents, or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame.
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.
He added not, and from her turned, but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing
And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fell humble and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
"Forsake me not thus, Adam! Witness Heav'n
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees. Bereave me not
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace, both joining,
As joined in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
That cruel serpent. On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befall’n,
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable! Both have sinned, but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heav’n that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe
Me, me only, just object of His ire!
She ended weeping, and her lowly plight.
Immoveable, till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored in Adam wrought
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress,

Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid.
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:
“Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
So now of what thou know’st not, who desir’st
The punishment all on thyself! Alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel’st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear’st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiv’n,
To me commited and by me exposed.
But rise, let us no more contend,
or blame each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other’s burden in our share of woe,
Since this day’s death denounced if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden but a slow-paced evil,
A long day’s dying, to augment our pain,
And to our seed (O hapless Seed!) derived.”

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:
“Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous, thence by just event
Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless,
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart
Living or dying, from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are ris’n,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour’d
By Death at last (and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursèd world a woeful race,
That after wretched life must be at last
Food for so foul a monster), in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art: childless remain. So Death
Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love’s due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire, which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread,
Then both ourselves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short
Let us seek Death, or he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.
Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death, and have the power
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy?
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts
Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Laboring had raised, and thus to Eve replied:
“Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns.
But self-destruction therefore sought refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier armed His vengeful ire, than so
To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death,
So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay. Rather, such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live. Then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
The serpent’s head. Piteous amends! unless
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,
Satan, who in the serpent hath contrived
Against us this deceit. To crush his head
Would be revenge indeed! Which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved, as thou proposest. So our foe shall 'scape his punishment ordained, and we instead shall double ours upon our heads. No more be mentioned then of violence against ourselves, and wilful barrenness, that cuts us off from hope, and savors only Rancor and pride, impatience and despite.

Reluctance against God and His just yoke laid on our necks. Remember with what mild and gracious temper He both heard and judged, without wrath or reviling. We expected immediate dissolution which we thought was meant by death that day, when lo, to thee pains only in child-bearing were foretold, and bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy, fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope glanced on the ground: with labor I must earn my bread. What harm? Idleness had been worse. My labor will sustain me and, lest cold or heat should injure us, His timely care hath, unbesought, provided, and His hands clothed us unworthy, pitying while He judged. How much more, if we pray Him, will His ear be open, and His heart to pity incline, and teach us further by what means to shun th' inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow, which now the sky, with various face, begins to show us in this mountain, while the winds blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks of these fair spreading trees—which bids us seek some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish our limbs benumbed, ere this diurnal star leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams reflected may with matter sere foment or, by collision of two bodies, grind the air attrite to fire; as late the clouds jostling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock, tine the slant lightning, whose thwart flame, driv'n down, kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine and sends a comfortable heat from far, which might supply the sun. Such fire to use, and what may else be remedy or cure to evils which our own misdeeds have wrought, He will instruct us, praying, and of grace beseeching Him, so as we need not fear to pass commodiously this life, sustained by Him with many comforts, till we end in dust, our final rest and native home.
What better can we do than, to the place
Repairing where He judged us, prostrate fall
Before Him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly He will relent and turn
From His displeasure, in whose look serene,
When angry most He seemed, and most severe,
What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone?”
So spoke our father penitent, nor Eve
Felt less remorse. They forthwith to the place
Repairing where He judged them, prostrate fell
Before Him reverent, and both confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

The End of the Tenth Book
BOOK XI

THE ARGUMENT

The son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents, now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things.

Michael’s coming down.

Adam shews to Eve certain ominous signs; he discerns Michael’s approach, goes out to meet him. The Angel denounces their departure.

Eve’s lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits. The Angel leads him up to a high Hill, sets before him in vision what shall happen till the Flood.

Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying, for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable, which the spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heav’n with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory. Yet their port
Not of mean suitors, nor important less
Seemed their petition than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heav’n their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds
Blown vagabond or frustrate. In they passed
Dimensionless through Heav’nly doors, then clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father’s throne. Them the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began:
“See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung
From Thy implanted grace in man! These sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer mixed
With incense, I Thy priest, before Thee bring,
Fruits of more pleasing savor (from Thy seed,
Sown with contrition in his heart) than those
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fall’n
From innocence. Now therefore bend Thine ear
To supplication. Hear his sighs, though mute.
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him—me, his advocate
And propitiation. All his works on me,
Good, or not good, engraft. My merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me and, in me, from these receive
The smell of peace toward mankind. Let him live
Before Thee reconciled, at least his days
Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him, where with me
All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,
Made one with me, as I with Thee am one."
To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
“All thy request for man, accepted, Son,
Obtain. All thy request was my decree.
But longer in that Paradise to dwell
The law I gave to Nature him forbids.
Those pure immortal elements that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off
As a distemper—gross—to air as gross,
And mortal food—as may dispose him best
For dissolution, wrought by sin, that first
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts
Created him endowed: with happiness
And immortality. That fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe,
Till I provided death. So death becomes
His final remedy and, after life
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life,
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heav’n and earth renewed.
“But let us call to synod all the Blest
Through Heav’n’s wide bounds. From them I will not hide
My judgments, how with mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant Angels late they saw,
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.”
He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright minister that watched. He blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The Angelic blast
Filled all the regions. From their blissful bow’rs
Of amaranthine shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where’er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the sons of light
Hasted, resorting to the summons high,
And took their seats, till from His throne supreme
Th’ Almighty thus pronounced His sov’reign will:
“O Sons, like one of us man is become
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended fruit. But let him boast
His knowledge of good lost, and evil got,
Happier, had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all.
He sorrow now, repents, and prays contrite,
My motions in him. Longer than they move,
His heart I know, how variable and vain,
Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
And live forever—dream at least to live
Forever—to remove him I decree,
And send him from the Garden forth to till
The ground whence he was taken: fitter soil.
“Michael, this my behest have thou in charge.
Take to thee from among the Cherubim
Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend,
Or in behalf of man, or to invade
Vacant possession, some new trouble raise.
Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
Without remorse drive out the sinful pair,
From hallowed ground th’ unholy, and denounce
To them, and to their progeny, from thence
Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint,
At the sad sentence rigorously urged
(For I behold them softened, and with tears
Bewailing their excess), all terror hide.
If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate.
To Adam what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten; intermix
My cov’nant in the Woman’s seed renewed.
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace,
And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch, and of a sword the flame
Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the Tree of Life,
Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,
With those stolen fruit man once more to delude."
He ceased, and th’ Arch-Angelic Power prepared
For swift descent, with him the cohort 5811 bright
Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each
Had, like a double Janus, 5812 all their shape
Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus, 5813 and more wakeful than to drowse,
Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
Of Hermes, 5814 or his opiate rod. 5815 Meanwhile,
To re-salute the world with sacred light,
Leucothea 5816 waked, and with fresh dews embalmed 5817
The earth, when Adam and first matron Eve
Had ended now their orisons, 5818 and found
Strength added from above, new hope to spring
Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked,
Which thus to Eve his 5819 welcome words renewed:
“Eve, easily may faith admit that all
The good which we enjoy from Heav’n descends;
But that from us aught should ascend to Heav’n
So prevalent 5820 as to concern the mind
Of God high-blest, or to incline His will,
Hard to belief may seem, yet this will 5821 prayer
Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
Ev’n to the seat of God. For since I sought
By prayer th’ offended 5822 Deity to appease,
Kneed and before Him humbled all my heart,
Methought I saw him placable 5823 and mild,
Bending his ear. Persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favor, peace returned
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy seed shall bruise 5824 our foe—
Which, then not minded 5825 in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,
Eve rightly called, mother of all mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live, and all things live for man.”
To whom thus Eve, with sad 5826 demeanor meek:
“Ill-worthy I such title should belong,
To me transgressor, who for thee ordained
A help, became thy snare. To me reproach
Rather belongs, distrust, all dispraise.
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
The source of life, next favorable 5827 thou, 5828
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf’st, 

Far other name deserving. But the field 

To labor calls us, now with sweat imposed, 

Though after sleepless night, for see! the morn, 

All unconcerned with our unrest, begins 

Her rosy progress smiling. Let us forth, 

I never from thy side henceforth to stray, 

Where’er our day’s work lies, though now enjoined 

Laborious, till day droop. While here we dwell, 

What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks? 

Here let us live, though in fall’n state, content.” 

So spoke, so wished much humbled Eve, but Fate 

Subscribed not. Nature first gave signs, impressed 

On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed, 

After short blush of morn. Nigh in her sight 

The bird of Jove, stooped from his airy tour, 

Two birds of gayest plume before him drove. 

Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods, 

First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace, 

Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind. 

Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight. 

Adam observed, and with his eye the chase 

Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spoke: 

“O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh, 

Which Heav’n, by these mute signs in Nature, shows 

Forerunners of His purpose, or to warn 

Us, haply too secure of our discharge 

From penalty, because from death released 

Some days. How long, and what till then our life, 

Who knows? Or more than this, that we are dust, 

And thither must return, and be no more? 

Why else this double object in our sight 

Of flight pursued in th’ air, and o’er the ground, 

One way the self-same hour? Why in the east 

Darkness ere day’s mid-course, and morning-light 

More orient in yon western cloud, that draws 

O’er the blue firmament a radiant white, 

And slow descends with something Heavenly fraught?** 

He erred not, for by this the Heav’nly bands 

Down from a sky of jasper lighted now 

In Paradise, and on a hill made halt— 

A glorious apparition, had not doubt 

And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam’s eye. 

Not that more glorious when the Angels met 

Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw 

The field pavilioned with His guardians bright,
Nor that, which on the flaming mount appeared
In Dothan,\textsuperscript{216} covered with a camp of fire,
Against the Syrian king, who to surprise
One man,\textsuperscript{219} assassin-like,\textsuperscript{242} had levied\textsuperscript{243} war,
War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch,\textsuperscript{5863}
In their bright stand\textsuperscript{5864} there left his Powers, to seize
Possession of the Garden. He alone,
To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
Not unperceived of Adam, who to Eve,
While the great visitant approached, thus spoke:
"Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine,\textsuperscript{5865} or impose
New laws to be observed, for I descry,
From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
One of the Heav’nly host and, by his gait,
None of the meanest,\textsuperscript{5866} some great Potentate
Or of the Thrones above, such majesty
Invest,\textsuperscript{5867} him coming, yet not terrible
(That I should fear) nor sociably\textsuperscript{2868} mild
As Raphael (that I should much confide)\textsuperscript{5869}
But solemn and sublime,\textsuperscript{5870} whom not t’ offend
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire."
He ended, and the Arch-Angel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape celestial, but as man
Clad to meet man. Over his lucid\textsuperscript{240} arms
A military vest\textsuperscript{5871} of purple flowed,
Livelier\textsuperscript{5874} than Meliboean\textsuperscript{5875} or the grain\textsuperscript{5876}
Of Sarra,\textsuperscript{5877} worn by kings and heroes old
In time of truce. Iris\textsuperscript{5878} had dipped the woof.
His starry helm,\textsuperscript{5879} unbuckled, showed him prime
In manhood where youth ended; by his side,
As in a glittering zodiac,\textsuperscript{5881} hung the sword,
Satan’s dire dread,\textsuperscript{5882} and in his hand the spear.
Adam bowed low; he,\textsuperscript{5883} kingly, from his state
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:
"Adam, Heav’n’s high beh’est\textsuperscript{5885} no preface needs.
Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days
Giv’n thee of grace, wherein thou may’st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May’st cover.\textsuperscript{5886} Well may then thy Lord, appeased,
Redeem thee quite\textsuperscript{5887} from Death’s rapacious\textsuperscript{5888} claim.
But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not: to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the garden forth to till.\textsuperscript{5889}
The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil."

He added not, for Adam at the news
Heart-struck with chilling grip of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound. Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discovered soon the place of her retire:
"O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? Thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hope to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flow'rs
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation and my last
At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first op'ning bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye to the sun? or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bow'r, by me adorned
With what to sight or smell was sweet: from thee
How shall I part? and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild? How shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?"
Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:
"Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond on that which is not thine.
Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
Thy husband, whom to follow thou art bound.
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."
Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,
To Michael thus his humble words addressed:
"Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named
Of them the highest, for such of shape may seem
Prince above Princes, gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us. What besides
Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes. All places else
In hospitable appear, and desolate,
Nor knowing us, nor known. And if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary Him with my assiduous cries.
But prayer against His absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth.
Therefore to His great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me that, departing hence,
As from His face I shall be hid, deprived
His blessèd count’rance. Here I could frequent
With worship place by place where He vouchsafed
Presence Divine, and to my sons relate
On this mount He appeared, under this tree
Stood visible, among these pines His voice
I heard, here with Him at this fountain talked.
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of luster from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to ages, and theron
Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flow’rs.
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or foot-step trace?
For though I fled Him angry, yet recalled
To life, prolonged and promised race,
Gladly behold though but His utmost skirts
Of glory, and far off His steps adore.”
To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:
Adam, thou know’st Heav’n His, and all the earth,
Not this rock only. His omnipresence fills
Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by His virtual power and warmed.
All th’ earth He gave thee to possess and rule:
No despicable gift. Surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confined
Of Paradise, or Eden. This had been
Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
All generations, and had hither come
From all the ends of th’ earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.
But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons.
Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain,
God is as here, and will be found alike
Present, and of His presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal love, His face
Express, and of His steps the track divine.
Which that thou may’st believe, and be confirmed
356 Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent
357 To show thee what shall come in future days
358 To thee, and to thy offspring. Good with bad
359 Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
360 With sinfulness of men, thereby to learn
361 True patience, and to temper joy with fear
362 And pious sorrow, equally inured
363 By moderation either state to bear,
364 Prosperous or adverse. So shalt thou lead
365 Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
366 Thy mortal passage when it comes.

“Ascend
367 This hill. Let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)
368 Here sleep below, while thou to foresight wak’st,
369 As once thou slept’st, while she to life was formed.”
370 To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:
371 “Ascend, I follow thee, safe guide, the path
372 Thou lead’st me, and to th’ hand of Heav’n submit,
373 However chast’ning. To the evil turn
374 My obvious breast, arming to overcome
375 By suffering, and earn rest from labor won,
376 If so I may attain.”

So both ascend
377 In the visions of God. It was a hill,
378 Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
379 The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken, Stretched out to ampest reach of prospect lay.
380 Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
381 Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set
382 Our second Adam, in the wilderness,
383 To show him all earth’s kingdoms, and their glory.
384 His eye might there command wherever stood
385 City of old or modern fame, the seat
386 Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
387 Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
388 And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir’s throne,
389 To Paquin of Sinaean kings, and thence
390 To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul,
391 Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
392 The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
393 In Hispahan, or where the Russian Tsar
394 In Moscow, or the Sultan in Bizance, Turkestan-born, nor could his eye not ken
395 The empire of Negus to his utmost port
396 Erco, and the less maritime kings
397 Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melinda,
And Sofala, thought Ophir to the realm
Of Congo, and Angola farthest south,
Or thence, from Niger flood to Atlas mount,
The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,
Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen,
On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway
The world. In spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa and yet unspoiled
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred, then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
And from the well of life three drops instilled.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight,
That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced.
But him the gentle Angel by the hand
Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:
"Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
Th' effects, which thy original crime hath wrought
In some to spring from thee, who never touched
Th' excepted tree, nor with the snake conspired,
Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive
Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds."
His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,
Part arable and tith, whereon were sheaves
New reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds.
In th' midst an altar as the landmark stood,
Rustic, of grassy sord. Thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
Unculled as came to hand. A shepherd next,
More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
Choicest and best, then sacrificing, laid
The inwards and their fat, with incense strewn,
On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed.
His offering soon propitious fire from Heav'n
Consumed with nimble glance and grateful steam;
The other's not, for his was not sincere,
Whereat he inly raged and, as they talked,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life. He fell, and deadly pale
Groaned out his soul with gushing blood effused.

Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
Dismayed, and thus in haste to th’ Angel cried:

“O Teacher, some great mischief hath befall’n
To that meek man, who well had sacrificed.
Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?”
T’ whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:
“These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins. Th’ unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother’s offering found
From Heav’n acceptance. But the bloody fact
Will be avenged, and th’ other’s faith, approved,
Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore.”
To which our sire:
“Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!”
To whom thus Michael:
“Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on man, but many shapes
Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim cave, all dismal, yet to sense
More terrible at th’ entrance, than within.
Some, as thou saw’st, by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear, that thou may’st know
What misery th’ inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men.”
Immediately a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark,
A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased, all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Daemoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmata, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans. Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch,
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born. Compassion quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess
And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:
“O miserable mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!
To be thus wrested from us? Rather, why
Obtruded on us thus? Who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus
The image of God in man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debased
Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,
Retaining still divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free
And, for his Maker’s image sake, exempt?"
“Theyir Maker’s image,” answered Michael, “then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungoverned appetite, and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God’s likeness, but their own,
Or if His likeness, by themselves defaced,
While they pervert pure Nature’s healthful rules
To loathsome sickness—worthily, since they
God’s image did not reverence in themselves.”
“I yield it just,” said Adam, “and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To Death, and mix with our connatural dust?”
“There is,” said Michael, “if thou well observe
The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,
In what thou eat’st and drink’st, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return.
So may’st thou live till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother’s lap, or be with ease
Gathered, nor harshly plucked, for Death mature:
This is old age. But then thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To withered, weak, and gray. Thy senses, then
Obtuse all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life.” To whom our ancestor:
“Henceforth I fly not Death, nor would prolong
Life much, bent rather how I may be quit,”
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge, Which I must keep till my appointed day Of rend’ring up, and patiently attend My dissolution.” Michael replied: “Nor love thy life, nor hate, but what thou liv’st Live well. How long, or short, permit to Heav’n. And now prepare thee for another sight.”

He looked, and saw a spacious plain whereon Were tents of various hue. By some, were herds Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound Of instruments, that made melodious chime. Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved Their stops and chords was seen, his volant touch, Instinct through all proportions, low and high, Fleed and pursued transverse the resonant fugue. In other part stood one who, at the forge Laboring, two massy clods of iron and brass Had melted (whether found where casual fire Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale, Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot To some cave’s mouth, or whether washed by stream From underground). The liquid ore he drained Into fit moulds prepared, from which he formed First his own tools, then what might else be wrought, Fusil or graven in metal. After these, But on the hither side, a different sort From the high neighboring hills, which was their seat, Down to the plain descended. By their guise Just men they seemed, and all their study bent To worship God aright, and know His works Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve Freedom and peace to men. They on the plain Long had not walked when, from the tents, behold! A bevy of fair women, richly gay In gems and wanton dress! To th’ harp they sung Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on. The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes Rove without rein till, in the amorous net Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose, And now of love they treat, till the ev’ningstar, Love’s harbinger, appeared. Then all in heat They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked: With feast and music all the tents resound. Such happy interview and fair event Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flow’rs, And charming symphonies, attached the heart Of Adam, soon inclined t’ admit delight,
The bent of Nature, which he thus expressed:
“True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
Much better seems this vision, and more hope
Of peaceful days portends, than those two past.
Those were of hate and Death, or pain much worse.
Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends.”
To whom thus Michael:

“Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
Created, as thou art, to nobler end
Holy and pure, conformity divine.
Those tents thou saw’st so pleasant were the tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race
Who slew his brother. Studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare.
Unmindful of their Maker, though His Spirit
Taught them, but they His gifts acknowledged none.
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget,
For that fair female troop thou saw’st, that seemed
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman’s domestic honor and chief praise,
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and trot the tongue, and roll the eye.
To these that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains, and to the smiles
Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy
(Erelong to swim at large), and laugh, for which
The world erelong a world of tears must weep.”

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:

“O pity and shame, that they who to live well
Entered so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint!
But still I see the tenor of man’s woe
Holds on the same, from woman to begin.”
“From man’s effeminate slackness it begins,”
Said th’ Angel, “who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
But now prepare thee for another scene.”
He looked, and saw wide territory spread
Before him, towns, and rural works between,
Cities of men with lofty gates and tow’rs,
Concourse in arms, fierce faces threat’ning war,
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.
Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,
Single or in array of battle ranged
Both horse and foot, nor idly must’ring stood.
One way a band select from forage drives...
A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
From a fat meadow ground, or fleecy flock,
Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,
Their booty. Scarce with life the shepherds fly,
But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray;
With cruel tourname the squadrons join.

Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms th’ ensanguined field,
Deserted. Others to a city strong
Lay siege, encamped, by battery, scale, and mine,
Assaulting; others from the wall defend
With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire;
On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.

In other part the sceptered heralds call
To council, in the city-gates. Anon
Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
Assemble, and harangues are heard, but soon
In factious opposition, till at last
Of middle age one rising, eminent
Of justice, or religion, truth, and peace,
And judgment from above. Him old and young
Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,
Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence
Unseen amid the throng. So violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.

Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
Lamenting turned full sad:

“O what are these,
Death’s ministers, not men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew
His brother, for of whom such massacre
Make they, but of their brethren, men of men?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heav’n
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?”

To whom thus Michael:

“These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw’st,
Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves
Abhor to join and, by imprudence mixed,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.

Such were these giants, men of high renown,
For in those days might only shall be admired,
And valor and heroic virtue called
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory, and for glory done
Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods—
Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
And what most merits fame, in silence hid.
But he the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st
The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just
And utter odious truth: that God would come
To judge them with His Saints. Him the Most High,
Rap’t in a balmy cloud with wingèd steeds
Did, as thou saw'st, receive to walk with God,
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death. To show thee what reward
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment,
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."
He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar,
All now was turned to jollity and game,
To luxury and riot, feast and dance,
Marrying or prostituting, as befel.
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them, thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire among them came,
And of their doings great dislike declared,
And testified against their ways. He oft
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached
Conversion and repentance, as to souls
In prison, under judgments imminent.
But all in vain. Which when he saw, he ceased
Contending, and removed his tents far off.
Then from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk,
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and height,
Smeared round with pitch, and in the side a door
Contrived, and of provisions laid in large
For man and beast, when lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens, and pairs, and entered in as taught
Their order. Last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives. And God made fast the door.
Meanwhile the south-wind rose, and with black wings
Wide-hovering all the clouds together drove
From under Heav’n. The hills, to their supply,
Vapor and exhalation, dusk and moist,
Sent up amain, and now the thickened sky
Like a dark ceiling stood, down rushed the rain
Impetuous, and continued till the earth
No more was seen. The floating vessel swum
Uplifted, and secure with beakèd prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves. All dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
Deep under water rolled. Sea covered sea,
Sea without shore, and in their palaces,
Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelpèd
And stabled. Of mankind, so numerous late,
All left, in one small bottom swum embarked.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation? Thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons, till gently reared
By th' Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless, as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroyed at once,
And scarce to th' Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint:
"O visions ill foreseen! Better had I
Lived ignorant of future, so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear. Those now, that were dispensed
The burden of many ages, on me light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
And he the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel,
Grievous to bear. But that care now is past:
Man is not whom to warn. Those few escaped
Famine and anguish will at last consume
Wand'ring that wat'ry desert. I had hope,
When violence was ceased, and war on earth,
All would have then gone well, peace would have crowned
With length of happy days the race of man.
But I was far deceived, for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus? Unfold, celestial guide,
And whether here the race of man will end.”
To whom thus Michael:
"Those, whom last thou saw'st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void,
Who having spilled much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquered also, and enslaved by war,
Shall with their freedom lost all virtue lose
And fear of God, from whom their piety feigned
In sharp contest of battle found no aid
Against invaders. Therefore cooled in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practice how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolve, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy, for th’ earth shall bear
More than enough that temperance may be tried.
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved,
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot—
One man except, the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a world
Offended. Fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
And full of peace, denouncing wrath to come
Of their impenitence, and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observed
The one just man alive. By His command
Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld’st,
To save himself, and household, from amidst
A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life shall in the ark be lodged,
And sheltered round, but all the cataracts
Of Heav’n set open on the earth shall pour
Rain, day and night. All fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise
Above the highest hills. Then shall this mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved
Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd
With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the op’ning gulf,
And there take root an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mew’s clang,
To teach thee that God attributes to place
No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
And now, what further shall ensue, behold."
He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated, for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen north-wind that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed,
And the clear sun on his wide wat’ry glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst, which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopped
His sluices, as the Heav’n his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.
And now the tops of hills as rocks appear.
With clamor thence the rapid currents drive
Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
And after him the surer messenger,
A dove sent forth once and again to spy
Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light.
The second time returning, in his bill
An olive leaf he brings, pacific sign.
Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
The ancient sire descends, with all his train,
Then with uplifted hands and eyes devout,
Grateful to Heav’n, over his head beholds
A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
Conspicuous with three lifted colors gay,
Betok’ning peace from God, and cov’nant new.
Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
Greatly rejoiced, and thus his joy broke forth:
“O thou, who future things canst represent
As present, Heav’nly instructor, I revive
At this last sight, assured that man shall live,
With all the creatures and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole world
Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice
For one man found so perfect, and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another world
From him, and all His anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colored streaks in Heav’n
Distended as the brow of God appeased?
Or serve they, as a flow’ry verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same wat’ry cloud,
Lest it again dissolve and show’r the earth?”
To whom the Arch-Angel:
“Dextrously thou aim’st.
So willingly doth God remit His ire,
Though late repenting Him of man depraved.
Grieved at His heart, when looking down He saw
The whole earth filled with violence, and all flesh
Corrupting each their way. Yet, those removed,
Such grace shall one just man find in His sight,
That He relents not to blot out mankind,
And makes a covenant never to destroy
The earth again by flood, nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world,
With man therein or beast. But when He brings
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-colored bow, whereon to look,
And call to mind His cov’nant. Day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new,
Both Heav’n and earth, wherein the just shall dwell.”

The End of the Eleventh Book
BOOK XII

THE ARGUMENT

The Angel Michael continues from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed; then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that seed of the woman shall be, which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall; his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; the state of the Church till his Second Coming.

Adam, greatly satisfied and recomforted by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who in his journey bates at noon,
    Though bent on speed, so here the Arch-Angel paused
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose
Then with transition sweet, new speech resumes:
“Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end,
And man, as from a second stock, proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense.
Henceforth what is to come I will relate.
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
“This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgment past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,
Laboring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil, and from the herd or flock
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule. Till one shall rise
Of proud ambitious heart, who not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserved
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of nature from the earth,
Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game)
With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous.
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
Before the Lord, as in despite of Heav’n,
Or from Heav’n claiming second sov’reignty,
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
“He with a crew, whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannize,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.
Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
A city and tow’r, whose top may reach to Heav’n,
And get themselves a name, lest far dispersed
In foreign lands, their memory be lost,
Regardless whether good or evil fame.
But God, who oft descends to visit men
Unseen, and through their habitations walks
To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
Obstruct Heav’n-tow’rs, and in derision sets
Upon their tongues a various spirit, to raze
Quite out their native language and, instead,
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown.
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
Among the builders; each to other calls Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mocked they storm. Great laughter was in Heav’n
And looking down, to see the hubbub strange
And hear the din. Thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work named.”
Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:
“O execrable son! so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not giv’n.
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By His donation. But man over men
He made not lord, such title to Himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man! To God his tower intends
Siege and defiance. Wretched man! What food Will he convey up thither, to sustain
Himself and his rash army, where thin air
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
And famish him of breath, if not of bread?”
To whom thus Michael:
Justly thou abhor'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty. Yet know withal, since thy original lapse true liberty
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Twinned, and from her hath no individal being.
Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
Immediately inordinate desires,
And upstart passions, catch the government
From reason, and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords,
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom. Tyranny must be—
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost. Witness th’ irreverent son
Of him who built the ark, who for the shame
Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
‘Servant of servants,’ on his vicious race.
Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,
Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
His presence from among them, and avert
His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth
To leave them to their own polluted ways,
And one peculiar nation to select
From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,
A nation from one faithful man to spring,
Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
Bred up in idol-worship. O that men
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
While yet the patriarch lived who ’scaped the Flood,
As to forsake the living God, and fall
To worship their own work in wood and stone
For gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
To call by vision from his father’s house,
His kindred and false gods, into a land
Which He will show him, and from him will raise
A mighty nation, and upon him show’r
His benediction so that in his seed
All nations shall be blest. He straight obeys,
Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.
"I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith
He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
Ur of Chaldaea, passing now the ford
To Haran, after him a cumbrous train
Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude,
Not wand’ring poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
Pitched about Sechem, and the neighboring plain
Of Moreh. There by promise he receives
Gift to his progeny of all that land,
From Hamath northward to the desert south
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed),
From Hermon east to the great western sea
Mount Hermon—yonder sea—each place behold
In prospect, as I point them. On the shore,
Mount Carmel. Here, the double-founted stream,
Jordan, true limit eastward, but his sons
Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
“This ponder, that all nations of the earth
Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise
The serpent's head, whereof to thee anon
Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,
Whom ‘faithful Abraham’ due time shall call,
A son and of his son a grand-child leaves,
Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.
The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs
From Canaan to a land hereafter called
Egypt, divided by the river Nile.
See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
Into the sea. To sojourn in that land
He comes, invited by a younger son
In time of dearth, a son whose worthy deeds
Raise him to be the second in that realm
Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race
Growing into a nation, and now grown
Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
Too numerous, whence of guests he makes them slaves,
In hospitably, and kills their infant males.
Till by two brethren (these two brethren call
Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
His people from enthralment they return,
With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.

“But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies

To know their God, or message to regard,

Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire.

To blood unshed the rivers must be turned.

Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill

With loath’d intrusion and fill all the land.

His cattle must of rot and murren die,

Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,

And all his people. Thunder mixed with hail,

Hail mixed with fire, must rend th’ Egyptian sky,

And wheel on th’ earth, devouring where it rolls.

What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,

A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down

Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green.

Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,

Palpable darkness, and blot out three days.

Last, with one midnight stroke all the first-born

Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds

The river-dragon tamed at length submits

To let his sojourners depart, and oft

Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice

More hardened after thaw, till in his rage

Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea

Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass

As on dry land, between two crystal walls,

Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand

Divided, till his rescued gain their shore.

“Such wondrous power God to His saint will lend,

Though present in His Angel, who shall go

Before them in a cloud and pillar of fire,

By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire,

To guide them in their journey, and remove

Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues.

All night he will pursue, but his approach

Darkness defends between till morning watch.

Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,

God looking forth will trouble all his host,

And craze their chariot-wheels, when by command

Moses once more his potent rod extends

Over the sea. The sea his rod obeys;

On their embattled ranks the waves return,

And overwhelm their war. The race elect

Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance

Through the wild desert, not the readiest way,

Lest ent’ring on the Canaanite alarmed
War terrify them, and fear. Inexpert, and fear

Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude, for life
To noble (and ignoble) is more sweet
Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.

“This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness. There they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained.
God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top
Shall tremble, He descending, will Himself
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets' sound
Ordain them laws, part such as appertain to civil justice, part religious rites
Of sacrifice, informing them, by types of that destined seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God To mortal ear is dreadful. They beseech That Moses might report to them His will, And terror cease. He grants what they besought, Instructed that to God is no access Without mediator, whose high office now Moses in figure bears, to introduce One greater, of whose day he shall foretell, And all the prophets in their age the times Of great Messiah shall sing.

“Thus, laws and rites
Established, such delight hath God in men Obedient to His will, that he vouchsafes Among them to set up His tabernacle, The Holy One with mortal men to dwell. By His prescript a sanctuary is framed Of cedar, overlaid with gold, therein An ark and in the ark His testimony, The records of His cov'nant. Over these A mercy-seat of gold between the wings Of two bright Cherubim. Before him burn Seven lamps as in a zodiac representing The Heav'nly fires. Over the tent a cloud Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night, Save when they journey. And at length they come, Conducted by His Angel, to the land Promised to Abraham and his seed.

“The rest
Were long to tell, how many battles fought,
How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won,
Or how the sun shall in mid Heav’n stand still
A day entire, and night’s due course adjourn,
Man’s voice commanding, ‘Sun, in Gibeon stand,
And thou moon in the vale of Aialon,
Till Israel overcome!’ So call the third
From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him
His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.”

Here Adam interposed:

“O sent from Heav’n,
Enlight’ner of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concern
Just Abraham and his seed. Now first I find
Mine eyes true-op’ning, and my heart much eased,
Erewhile perplexed with thoughts what would become
Of me and all mankind. But now I see
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest—
Favor unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means.
This yet I apprehend not: why to those
Among whom God will deign to dwell on earth
So many and so various laws are giv’n?
So many laws argue so many sins
Among them. How can God with such reside?”
To whom thus Michael:

“Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot,
And therefore was law giv’n them, to evince
Their natural pravity, by stirring up
Sin against law to fight, that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove
(Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats), they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man,
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed they may find
Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
Perform and, not performing, cannot live.
So law appears imperfect, and but giv’n
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better cov’nant, disciplined
From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
To filial, works of law to works of faith.
And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
Highly belov’d, being but the minister
Of law, his people into Canaan lead,
But Joshua, whom the gentiles Jesus call,
His name and office bearing, who shall quell
The adversary-serpent, and bring back
Through the world’s wilderness long-wand’red man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
Meanwhile, they in their earthly Canaan placed,
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies,
From whom as oft He saves them penitent
By Judges first, then under Kings. Of whom
The second, both for piety renowned
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his regal throne
Forever shall endure. The like shall sing
All prophecy, that of the royal stock
Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
A son, the woman’s seed to thee foretold,
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All nations, and to kings foretold, of kings
The last, for of his reign shall be no end.
But first a long succession must ensue,
And his next son, for wealth and wisdom famed,
The clouded ark of God, till then in tents
Wand’ring, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
Such follow him as shall be registered
Part good, part bad—of bad the longer scroll,
Whose foul idolatries and other faults
Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense
God, as to leave them, and expose their land,
Their city, His temple, and His holy ark,
With all His sacred things, a scorn and prey.
To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw’st
Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.
There in captivity He lets them dwell
The space of seventy years, then brings them back,
Rememb’ring mercy and His cov’nant sworn
To David, stablished as the days of Heav’n.
Returned from Babylon by leave of kings
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
They first re-edify, and for a while
In mean estate live moderate. Till grown
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.
But first among the priests dissention springs,
Men who attend the altar, and should most Endeavor peace. Their strife pollution brings Upon the temple itself. At last they seize The scepter, and regard not David's sons, Then lose it to a stranger that the true Anointed King Messiah might be born Barred of his right. Yet at his birth a star, Unseen before in Heav'n, proclaims him come, And guides the eastern sages, who inquire His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold. His place of birth a solemn Angel tells To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night. They gladly thither haste, and by a choir Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung. A virgin is his mother, but his sire The power of the Most High. He shall ascend The throne hereditary, and bound his reign With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heav'n's.

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy Surcharged as had, like grief, been dewed in tears, Without the vent of words, which these he breathed: "O prophet of glad tidings, finisher of utmost hope! Now clear I understand What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain, Why our great expectation should be called The seed of woman. Virgin Mother, hail, High in the love of Heav'n! Yet from my loins Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the son Of God Most High: so God with man unites!

Needs must the serpent now his capital bruise Expect with mortal pain. Say where and when Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's heel.

To whom thus Michael:

"Dream not of their fight As of a duel or the local wounds Of head or heel. Not therefore joins the Son Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil Thy enemy, nor so is overcome Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise, Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound, Which he, who comes thy Savior, shall recure, Not by destroying Satan but his works In thee, and in thy seed. Nor can this be But by fulfilling that which thou did'st want,

Obedience to the law of God, imposed On penalty of death, and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow.
So only can high Justice rest appaid
The law of God exact he shall fulfill
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfill the law. Thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death,
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption, and that his obedience,
Imputed becomes theirs by faith, his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal works.
For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
Seized on by force, judged and to death condemned,
A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross
By his own nation, slain for bringing life.
But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
The law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction. So he dies,
But soon revives: Death over him no power
Shall long usurp. Ere the third dawning light
Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
Thy ransom paid, which man from death redeems,
His death for man, as many as offered life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works. This God-like act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou should'st have died,
In sin forever lost from life. This act
Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems—a death like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on earth than certain times to appear
To his disciples, men who in his life
Still followed him. To them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learned
And his salvation, them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death, like that which the Redeemer died.
All nations they shall teach. For from that day,
Not only to the sons of Abraham’s loins
Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
Of Abraham’s faith wherever through the world.
So in his seed all nations shall be blest.
Then to the Heav’n of Heav’ns he shall ascend
With victory, triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine. There shall surprise
The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave,
Then enter into glory, and resume
His seat at God’s right hand, exalted high
Above all names in Heav’n, and thence shall come,
When this world’s dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead—
To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in Heav’n or earth, for then the earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days.”
So spoke the Arch-Angel Michael, then paused,
As at the world’s great period; and our sire,
Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:
“O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good, more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our Deliverer up to Heav’n
Must re-ascend, what will betide the few
His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide
His people, who defend? Will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?”
“Be sure they will,” said the Angel, “but from Heav’n
He to his own a comforter will send,
The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the law of faith,
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm
With spiritual armor, able to resist
Satan’s assaults, and quench[6419] his fiery darts—

What man can do against them, not afraid,

Though to the death, against such cruelties

With inward consolations recompensed,

And oft supported[6420] so as shall amaze

Their proudest persecutors. For the Spirit,

Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends

T’ evangelize the nations, then on all

Baptized, shall them with wond’rous gifts endu[6421]

To speak all tongues,[6422] and do all miracles,

As did their Lord before them. Thus they win

Great numbers of each nation to receive

With joy the tidings brought from Heav’n.

“At length

Their ministry performed, and race well run,

Their doctrine and their story written left,

They die, but in their room,[6423] as they forewarn,

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,

Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav’n

To their own vile advantages shall turn

Of lucre[6424] and ambition, and the truth

With superstitions and traditions taint,

Left only in those written records pure,

Though not but[6425] by the Spirit understood.

Then shall they[6426] seek to avail themselves of names,

Places, and titles, and with these to join

Secular power, though feigning still to act

By spiritual, to themselves appropriating

The Spirit of God, promised alike and giv’n

To all believers; and from that pretence,

Spiritual laws by carnal[6427] power shall force

On every conscience, laws which none shall find

Left them enrolled[6428] or what the Spirit within

Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then

But force the spirit of grace itself, and bind

His consort liberty? What but unbuild

His living temples, built by faith to stand,

Their own faith, not another’s—for on earth

Who against faith and conscience can be heard

Infallible?

“Yet many will presume.[6429]

Whence heavy persecution shall arise

On all who in the worship persevere

Of spirit and truth. The rest, far greater part,

Will deem[6430] in outward rites and specious[6431] forms[6432]

Religion satisfied.[6433] Truth shall retire,[6434]

Bestuck with sland’rous darts, and works of faith
Rarely be found. “So shall the world go on,

To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
The woman’s seed, obscurely then foretold,
Now ampler known thy Savior and thy Lord,
Last in the clouds from Heav’n to be revealed
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted world, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
New Heav’ns, new earth, ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness, and peace, and love—
To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.”
He ended, and thus Adam last replied:
“How soon hath thy prediction, seer blest,
Measured this transient world, the race of time,
Till time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly-instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain,
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God; to walk
As in His presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on Him sole depend,
Merciful over all His works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for truth’s sake
Is fortitude to highest victory
And, to the faithful, death the gate of life,
Taught this by his example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.”
To whom thus also th’ Angel last replied:
“This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
Of wisdom. Hope no higher, though all the stars
Thou know’st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature’s works,
Or works of God in Heav’n, air, earth, or sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy’dst,
And all the rule, one empire. Only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
By name to come called charity, the soul
Of all the rest. Then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.

“Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of speculation, for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence. And see the guards,
By me encamped on yonder hill! Expect
Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.
We may no longer stay. Go, waken Eve.
Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,
Portending good, and all her spirits composed
To meek submission. Thou, at season fit,
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard,
Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,
The great deliverance by her seed to come
(For by the woman’s seed) on all mankind,
That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,
With cause, for evils past, yet much more cheered
With meditation on the happy end.”
He ended, and they both descend the hill.
Descended Adam to the bow’r where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before, but found her waked,
And thus with words not sad she him received:
“Whence thou return’st, and whither went’st, I know,
For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,
Which He hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart’s distress
Wearied I fell asleep. But now lead on:
In me is no delay. With thee to go
Is to stay here. Without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwilling. Thou to me
Art all things under Heav’n, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence, though all by me is lost,
Such favor I unworthy am vouchsafed,
By me the promised seed shall all restore.”
So spoke our mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answered not. For now, too nigh
The Arch-Angel stood and, from the other hill
To their fixed station, all in bright array
The Cherubim descended, on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as ev’n’ing-mist
Ris’n from a river o’er the marish glides,  
And gathers ground fast at the laborer’s heel  
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
  The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
  Fierce as a comet, which with torrid heat,
  And vapor as the Libyan air adust,
  Began to parch that temperate clime. Whereat
  In either hand the hast’ning Angel caught
  Our ling’ring parents, and to the eastern gate
  Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
  To the subjected plain, then disappeared
  They looking back, all th’ eastern side beheld
  Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
  Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
  With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
  Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon.
  The world was all before them, where to choose
  Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
  They hand in hand, with wand’ring steps and slow,
  Through Eden took their solitary way.

The End
PARADISE REGAINED

1671
BOOK I

I, who erewhile, the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear through height or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summed, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age—
Worthy t' have not remained so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
"Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptized!" To his great baptism flocked
With awe, the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth, the son of Joseph deemed,
To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure,
Unmarked, unknown. But him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his Heav'nly office. Nor was long
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptized
Heav'n opened, and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heav'n pronounced him His belovèd Son.
That heard the Adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man to whom
Such high attest was giv'n a while surveyed
With wonder. Then with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty Peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,
A gloomy consistory, and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespoke:
"O ancient Powers of air and this wide world
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation), well ye know
How many ages, as 6506 the years of men, 6507
This universe 6507 we have possessed, and ruled 6508
In manner at our will th’ affairs of earth, 6509
Since Adam and his facile 6509 consort Eve 6510
Lost Paradise, deceived by me, though since
With dread attending 6509 when that fatal wound
Shall 6510 be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heav’n
Delay, for longest time to Him is short.
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed 6511 wherein we
Must bid 6512 the stroke of that long-threat’ned wound
(At least, if so we can, and by the head
Broken 6513 be not intended all our power
To be infringed 6514 our freedom and our being
In this fair empire won of earth and air),
For this ill news I bring: the woman’s seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born.
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth’s full flow’r, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger 6515 who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends 6516 to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honor as their King. All come,
And he 6517 himself among them was baptized—
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heav’n, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
The prophet do him reverence. On him, rising
Out of the water, Heav’n above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors, thence on his head
A perfect dove descend (whate’er it meant),
And out of Heav’n the sov’reign voice I heard,
‘This is my Son beloved—in him am pleased.’
His mother, then, is mortal, but his sire
He 6518 who obtains 6519 the monarchy of Heav’n,
And what will He not do t’ advance His Son?
His first-begot we know, 6520 and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep.
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, 6521 though in his face
The glimpses of his Father’s glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard 6522 which admits 6523 no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed
(Not force, but well-couched 6524 fraud, well-woven snares),
Ere in the head 6525 of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal 6526 expedition 6527 to find out
And ruin Adam, and the exploit performed
Successfully. A calmer voyage now
Will waft me, and the way found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success."

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings. But no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thrived
In Adam’s overthrow, and led their march
From Hell’s deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try—
So to subvert whom he suspected raised
To end his reign on earth so long enjoyed.
But contrary unwitting he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,
Of the Most High, who in full frequence
Bright Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spoke:
"Gabriel, this day, by proof, thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on earth
With man or men’s affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and called the Son of God.
Then told’st her (doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin) that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O’ershadow her. This man, born and now upgrown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan. Let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy. He might have learned
Less overweening, since he failed in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate’er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surprised.
“But first I mean
To exercise in the wilderness.
There he shall first lay down the rudiments of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes.
By humiliation and strong sufferance
His weakness shall o’ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh,
That all the Angels and aethereal Powers—
They now, and men hereafter—may discern
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.”

So spoke th’ Eternal Father, and all Heav’n
Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measure moved,
Circling the throne and singing while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:
“Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now ent’ring his great duel not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!
The Father knows the Son, therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against what’er may tempt, what’er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought!”

So they in Heav’n their odes and vigils tuned.

Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara where John baptized,
Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Savior to mankind, and which way first
Publish his godlike office now mature,
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bord’ring desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environed round
His holy meditations thus pursued:
“O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing. All my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good. Myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own,
And was admired by all.

“Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts—one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell, o’er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restored—
Yet held it more humane, more Heav’nly,
First by winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear,
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
Misled. The stubborn only to subdue.

“These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
And said to me apart, ‘High are thy thoughts,
O Son! But nourish them, and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high.
By matchless deeds express thy matchless sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
Though men esteem thee low of parentage.
Thy Father is th’ Eternal King who rules
All Heav’n and earth, Angels and sons of men.
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceived in me a virgin. He foretold
Thou should’st be great, and sit on David’s throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
At thy nativity a glorious choir
Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay’st,
For in the inn was left no better room.
A star, not seen before, in Heav’n appearing,
Guided the Wise Men thither from the East,
To honor thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in Heav’n,
By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
By vision, found thee in the Temple, and spoke
Before the altar and the vested priest
Like things of thee to all that present stood.’

“This having heard, straight I again revolved
The Law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spoke
I am—this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay, ev’n to the death,
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins’
Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
Yet neither thus disheart’ned or dismayed,
The time prefixed I waited, when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare.
I, as all others, to his baptism came,
Which I believed was from above, but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heav’n)—
Me him whose harbinger he was, and first
Refused on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won,
But as I rose out of the laving stream
Heav’n op’ned her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove,
And last—the sum of all—my Father’s voice,
Audibly heard from Heav’n, pronounced me His,
Me His belovèd Son, in whom alone
He was well pleased. By which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
Th’ authority which I derived from Heav’n.

“And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet. Perhaps I need not know,
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.”

So spoke our morning star, then in his rise,
And looking round on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades,
The way he came, not having marked return,
Was difficult, by human steps untrod,
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his breast as well might recommend,
Such solitude before choices society.
Full forty days he passed—whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,
Or harbored in one cave, is not revealed.
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended. Hungered then at last
Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed. His walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof
But now an agèd man in rural weeds,
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow keen
To warm him, wet returned from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spoke:

"Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? For single none
Durst ever, who returned, and dropped not here
His carcass, pined with hunger and with drought?
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late
Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honored so, and called thee Son
Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new. Fame also finds us out."
To whom the Son of God:

"Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence. No other guide I seek."
"By miracle he may," replied the swain.
"What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured
More than the camel, and to drink go far—
Men to much misery and hardship born.
But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread,
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."
He ended, and the Son of God replied:

"Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank,
And forty days Elijah without food
Wandered this barren waste. The same I now.
Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"
Whom thus answered th' arch-fiend, now undisguised:

"'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driv'n
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep.
Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigor, but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in the air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Hath He excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the Sons of God when He
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth.
And when to all His Angels He proposed
To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud,
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets gibbed with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge.
For what He bids I do. Though I have lost
Much luster of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous. I should so have lost all sense.

“What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind. Why should I? They to me
Never did wrong or violence. By them
I lost not what I lost. Rather by them
I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer—lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.

“Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe!
At first it may be but, long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man’s peculiar load.
Small consolation, then, were man adjoined.
This wounds me most (what can it less?) that man,
Man fall’n, shall be restored, I never more.”

To whom our Savior sternly thus replied:
“Deservedly thou griev’st, composed of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,
Who boast’st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heav’n of Heav’ns! Thou com’st indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendor, now deposed,
Ejected, emptied, gazed unpitied, shunned,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of Heav’n. The happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable—
So never more in Hell than when in Heav’n.

“But thou art serviceable to Heav’n’s King!
Wilt thou impute t’ obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflections? But his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths,
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend’st to truth! All oracles
By thee are giv’n, and what confessed more true
Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers? What but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who asked have seldom understood,
And not well understood, as good not known?
Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concerned him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly giv’n the nations up
To thy delusions—justly, since they fell Idolatrous.

“But when His purpose is
Among them to declare His providence,
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from Him, or his Angels president
In every province, who themselves disdaining
T’ approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey’st,
Then to thyself ascrib’st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched.
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The gentiles: henceforth oracles are ceased,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquired at Delphos or elsewhere—
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent His living oracle
Into the world to teach His final will,
And sends His Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know.”

So spoke our Savior. But the subtle fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:
“Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urged me hard with doings which not will
But misery hath wrested from me. Where Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art placed above me, thou art Lord.
From thee I can, and must, submit, endure
Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to th’ ear,
And tunable as sylvan pipe, or song.
What wonder, then, if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? Most men admire
Virtue who follow not her lore. Permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair t’ attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread His sacred courts and minister
About His altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsafed His voice
To Balaam, a prophet yet inspired. Disdain not such access to me.”
To whom our Savior, with unaltered brow:
“Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid. Do as thou find’st
Permission from above. Thou canst not more.”
He added not, and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation disappeared,
Into thin air diffused. For now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade
The desert. Fowls in their clay nests were couched,
And now wild beasts came forth, the woods to roam.
Meanwhile the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus Messiah, Son of God declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged—I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named—
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long,
And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heav’n, yet once again to come.
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara—the city of palms, Aenon, Salem old,
Machaerus and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peraea—but returned in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen (no greater, men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed:
“Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlooked for are we fall’n! Our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers. We have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
‘Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand!
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored!’
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze.
For whither is he gone? What accident
Hath rapt him from us? Will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send Thy Messiah forth. The time is come.
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their pow’r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of Thee. Arise, and vindicate
Thy glory, free Thy people from their yoke!
“But let us wait. Thus far He hath performed,
Sent His anointed, and to us revealed him
By His great prophet pointed at and shown
In public, with him we have conversed.
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on His providence. He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall—
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence.
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return.”

Thus they out of their plaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought.
But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others returned from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:

“Oh what avails me now, that honor high,
To have conceived of God, or that salute,
‘Hail, highly favored, among women blest’?
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
And fears as eminent above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore—
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtained to shelter him or me
From the bleak air. A stable was our warmth,
A manger his, yet soon enforced to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murd’rous king
Were dead, who sought his life and, missing, filled
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.
From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king. But now,
Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
Son owned from Heav’n by his Father’s voice,
I looked for some great change. To honor? No,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against—that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce, this my favored lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high!
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest!
I will not argue that, nor will repine.

“But where delays he now? Some great intent
Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about
His Father’s business. What he meant I mused,
Since understand: much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures,
But I to wait with patience am inured,
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.”

Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling.
The while her son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set—
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high.
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his Potentates in council sat.
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began:

“Princes, Heav’n’s ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones—
Daemonian Spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called,
Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble!)—such an enemy
Is ris’n to invade us, who no less
Threat’n’s than our expulsion down to Hell.
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence was empowered,
Have found him, viewed him, tasted him, but find
Far other labor to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,
Though Adam by his wife’s allurement fell,
However to this man inferior far—
If he be man by mother’s side, at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav’n adorned,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here. I summon all
Rather to be in readiness with hand
Or counsel to assist, lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be overmatched.”

So spoke the old serpent, doubting, and from all
With clamor was assured their utmost aid
At his command, when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissoldest Spirit that fell,
The sensuallest, and after Asmodai
The fleshliest incubus, and thus advised:

“Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found.
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky, more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allayed yet terrible to approach,
Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soft’n and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged ’st brow,
Enervate and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolutest breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build
And made him bow to the gods of his wives.”

To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:
“Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh’st
All others by thyself. Because of old
Thou thyself doat’st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their color; and attractive grace,
None are, thou think’st, but taken with such toys,
Before the Flood, thou with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk’st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain-side,
In valley or green meadow, to waylay
Some beauty rare? Callisto, Clymene, Daphne, or Semele,
Or Amymone, Syrinx—many more
Too long. Then lay’st thy snares
on names adored,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan! But these haunts,
Delight not all. Among the sons of men
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
All her assaults, on worthier things intent?

“Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slighted, viewed, and slightly overpassed.

“How he surnamed of Africa dismissed,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon he lived at ease, and full
Of honor, wealth, high fare aimed not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.

“But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? Or should she, confident as sitting queen adored on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt to enamor, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell), How would one look from his majestic brow
Discount 'nance, her despised, and put to rout all her array, her female pride deject
Or turn to reverent awe? For beauty stands in th' admiration only of weak minds
Led captive. Cease to admire, and all her plumes fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abashed.

"Therefore with manlier objects we must try His constancy—with such as have more show
Of worth, of honor, glory, and popular praise (Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wrecked),
Or that which only seems to satisfy lawful desires of nature, not beyond.
And now I know he hungers, where no food is to be found, in the wide wilderness. The rest commit to me. I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."

He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim, Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band Of Spirits likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand and at his beck appear If cause were to unfold some active scene Of various persons, each to know his part, Then to the desert takes with these his flight, Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God, After forty days' fasting, had remained, Now hung'rering first, and to himself thus said:
"Where will this end? Four times ten days I have passed, Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food Nor tasted, nor had appetite. That fast To virtue I impute not, or count part Of what I suffer here. If Nature need not, Or God support Nature without repast, Though needing, what praise is it to endure? But now I feel I hunger, which declares Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God Can satisfy that need some other way, Though hunger still remain. So it remain Without this body's wasting, I content me, And from the sting of famine fear no harm, Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed Me hung'rering more to do my Father's will."

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son Communed in silent walk, then laid him down Under the hospitable covert nigh Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept, And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream, Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreshment sweet.
Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,
Though ravenous, taught t’ abstain from what they brought.
He saw the prophet also, how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper, then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And ate the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days.
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high tow’ring to descry
The morn’s approach, and greet her with his song.
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Savior, and found all was but a dream:
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd.
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud.
Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene.
Nature’s own work it seemed (Nature taught art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it round—
When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city or court or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him addressed:
  “With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness:
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son,
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing Angel. All the race
Of Israel here had famished, had not God
Rained from Heav’n manna. And that prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wand’ring here, was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
Of thee those forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.”

To whom thus Jesus:
“What conclud’st thou hence?
They all had need. I, as thou see’st, have none.”
“How hast thou hunger then?” Satan replied.
"Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
Would’st thou not eat?”
“Thereafter as I like
The giver,” answered Jesus.

"Why should that

Cause thy refusal?” said the subtle fiend.
"Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
To idols—those young Daniel could refuse.
Nor proffered by an enemy—though who
Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold!
Nature ashamed (or, better to express,
Troubled) that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
From all the elements her choicest store,
To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honor. Only deign to sit and eat.”

He spoke no dream, for as his words had end
Our Savior, lifting up his eyes, beheld
In ample space under the broadest shade
A table richly spread in regal mode,
With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort
And savory, beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Grisamber steamed—all fish, from sea or shore,
Fresher or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine Bay, and Afric coast.
Alas! how simple, compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately sideboard, by the wine
That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymede or Hylas.
Distant more,
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood
Nymphs of Diana’s train, and Naiades
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea’s horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyonesse,
Lancelot, or Pelléas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings or charming pipes, and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odors fanned
From their soft wings, and Flora’s earliest smells.
Such was the splendor. And the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renewed:

“What doubts, the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidd’n. No interdict

“Why should that
Defends the touching of these viands pure.
Their taste no knowledge works (at least of evil)
But life preserves, destroys life’s enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gently ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
What doubt’st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat.”

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:
“Said’st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my pow’r that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
Arrayed in glory, on my cup’ attend.
Why should’st thou, then, obtrude this diligence
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn;
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.”

To whom thus answered Satan, malcontent:
“That I have also power to give thou see’st.
If of that pow’r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
And, rather, opportune in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why should’st thou not accept it? But I see
What I can do or offer is suspect.
Of these things others quickly will dispose,
Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil.”

Both table and provision vanished quite,
With sound of harpies’ wings and talons heard.
Only the importune Tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued:

“By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved.
Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions. But wherewith to be achieved?
Great acts require great means of enterprise.
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.
Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness? Whence authority deriv’st?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honor, friends, conquest, and realms.

With that
What raised Antipater the Edomite, And his son Herod, placed on Judah’s throne (Thy throne), but gold, that got him puissant friends? Therefore, if at great things thou would’st arrive, Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap — Not difficult, if thou hearken to me. Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand. They whom I favor thrive in wealth amain, While virtue, valor, wisdom, sit in want.”

To whom thus Jesus patiently replied: “Yet wealth without these three is impotent To gain dominion, or to keep it, gained. Witness those ancient empires of the earth, In height of all their flowing wealth dissolved, But men endued with these have oft attained, In lowest poverty, to highest deeds: Gideon and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat So many ages, and shall yet regain That seat, and reign in Israel without end. Among the heathen (for throughout the world To me is not unknown what hath been done, Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus? For I esteem those names of men so poor Who could do mighty things, and could contemn Riches, though offered from the hand of kings. And what in me seems wanting but that I May also, in this poverty, as soon Accomplish what they did, perhaps, and more? Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools, The wise man’s cumbrance, if not snare, more apt To slacken virtue and abate her edge Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise. What if with like aversion I reject Riches and realms! Yet not for that a crown, Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns — Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights To him who wears the regal diadem, When on his shoulders each man’s burden lies. For therein stands the office of a king, His honor, virtue, merit, and chief praise That for the public all this weight he bears. “Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king — Which every wise and virtuous man attains. And who attains not, ill aspires to rule Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes, Subject himself to anarchy within, Or lawless passions in him, which he serves. But to guide nations in the way of truth By saving doctrine, and from error lead To know and, knowing, worship God aright, Is yet more kingly. This attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o’er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.

"Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a scepter, oftest better missed."
BOOK III

So spoke the Son of God, and Satan stood
A while as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinced Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift.
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts:
“I see thou know’st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do.
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due: thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron’s breast, or tongue of seers old
Infallible. Or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.

“These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory—glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers, all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose. Young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quelled
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious. But thou yet art not too late.”

To whom our Savior calmly thus replied:
“Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire’s sake, nor empire to affect
For glory’s sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people’s praise—if always praise unmixed?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar and, well weighed, scarce worth the praise?
They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other.
And what delight to be by such extolled,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise—
His lot who dares be singularly good.
Th’ intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
This is true glory and renown—when God,
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heav’n
To all His Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises. Thus He did to Job,
When to extend his fame through Heav’n and earth
(As thou to thy reproach may’st well remember)
He asked thee, ‘Hast thou seen my servant Job?’
Famous he was in Heav’n; on earth less known,
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
   “They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighboring or remote?
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe’er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice!
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other,
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,
Violent or shameful Death their due reward.
   “But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence—
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance. I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure:
Who names not now with honor patient Job?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught and suffered for so doing,
For truth’s sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffered—if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage—
The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,  
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.  
Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,  
Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but His  
Who sent me, and thereby witness  
To whom the Tempter, murmuring, thus replied:

“Think not so slight of glory, therein least  
Resembling thy great Father. He seeks glory,  
And for His glory all things made, all things  
Orders and governs, nor content in Heav’n,  
By all His Angels glorified, requires  
Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,  
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.  
Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,  
Glory He requires, and glory He receives,  
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,  
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declared.  
From us, His foes pronounced, glory He exacts.”

To whom our Savior fervently replied:

“And reason, since His Word all things produced,  
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,  
But to show forth His goodness, and impart  
His good communicable to every soul  
Freely. Of whom what could He less expect  
Than glory and benediction—that is, thanks—  
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense  
From them who could return Him nothing else?  
And not returning that, would likeliest render  
Contempt instead, dishonor, obloquy?  
Hard recompense, unsuitable return  
For so much good, so much beneficence!  

“But why should man seek glory, who of his own  
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs  
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?  
Who for so many benefits received  
Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,  
And so of all true good himself despoiled  
Yet sacrilegious, to himself would take  
That which to God alone of right belongs?  
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,  
That who advances His glory, not their own,  
Them He Himself to glory will advance.”

So spoke the Son of God, and here again.  
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck  
With guilt of his own sin—for he himself,  
Insatiable of glory, had lost all.  
Yet of another plea bethought him soon:

“Of glory, as thou wilt,” said he, “so deem,  
Worth or not worth the seeking. Let it pass.  
But to a kingdom thou art born—ordained  
To sit upon thy father David’s throne,  
By mother’s side thy father, though thy right  
Be now in powerful hands that will not part  
Easily from possession won with arms.  
Judaea now, and all the promised land
Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius, nor is always ruled
With temperate sway. Oft have they violated
The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus. And think’st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Machabeus. He indeed
Retired unto the desert, but with arms,
And o’er a mighty king so oft prevailed
That by strong hand his family obtained,
Though priests, the crown, and David’s throne usurped,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.

“If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty. Zeal and duty are not slow,
But on occasion’s forelock watchful wait.
They themselves, rather, are occasion best,
Zeal of thy Father’s house, duty to free
Thy country from her heathen servitude.
So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify,
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign—
The happier reign the sooner it begins.
Reign then. What canst thou better do the while?”

To whom our Savior answer thus returned:
“All things are best fulfilled in their due time,
And time there is for all things, truth hath said.
If of my reign prophetic writ hath told
That it shall never end, so when begin
The Father in His purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if He hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that He may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do, best reign who first
Well hath obeyed—just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.

“But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou
Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition?
Know’st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?”

To whom the Tempter, inly racked, replied:
“Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost
Of my reception into grace. What worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear.
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst. Worst is my port,
My harbor, and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime, whatever for itself condemned,
And will alike be punished whether thou
Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state
Would stand between me and thy Father’s ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell),
A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition as a summer’s cloud.

“If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world
That thou, who worthiest art, should’st be their king!
Perhaps thou linger’st in deep thoughts detained
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days’
Short sojourn—and what thence could’st thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever
Timorous, and loath, with novice modesty
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom),
Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent’rous.
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of th’ earth, their pomp and state,
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts
And regal mysteries, that thou may’st know
How best their opposition to withstand.”

With that (such power was giv’n him then), he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant. From his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, th’ other straight, and left between
Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine;
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high-tower’d, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
The prospect was that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought
Our Savior, and new train of words began:

“Well have we speeded, and o’er hill and dale,
Forest, and field and flood, temples and towers, 
Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold'st 
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds, 
Araxes and the Caspian lake. Thence on 
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west, 
And oft beyond. To south the Persian Bay, 
And, inaccessible th' Arabian drought.

Here Nineveh of length within her walls 
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old, 
Of that first golden monarchy the seat, 
And seat of Salmanassar whose success 
Israel in long captivity still mourns. 
There Babylon the wonder of all tongues, 
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice 
Judah and all thy father David's house 
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste, 
Till Cyrus set them free. Persepolis, 
His city, thou see'st, and Bactra there. 
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows, 
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates. 
There Susa by Choaspes amber stream, 
The drink of none but kings. Of later fame, 
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands, 
The great Selucia, Nisibis and there 
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon, 
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold. 

“All these the Parthian (now some ages past 
By great Arsaces led, who founded first 
That empire) under his dominion holds, 
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won. 
And just in time thou com'st to have a view 
Of his great power, for now the Parthian king 
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host 
Against the Scythian whose incursions wild 
Have wasted Sogdiana. To her aid 
He marches now in haste. See, though from far, 
His thousands, in what martial equipage 
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms, 
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit— 
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel. 
See how in warlike muster they appear, 
In rhombs and wedges and half-moons and wings.”

He looked, and saw what numbers numberless 
The city gates outpoured, light-armèd troops 
In coats of mail and military pride. 
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong, 
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice 
Of many provinces from bound to bound, 
From Arachosia, from Candaor east, 
And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs 
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales— 
From Atropatia and the neighboring plains 
Of Adiabeen, Media, and the south
Of Susiana to Balsara's hav'n.
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight.
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants endorsed with towers
Of archers, nor of laboring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes armed,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was, raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke.
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries
And wagons fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowrest knights,
Both paynim and the peers of Charlemagne.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry,
At sight whereof the fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Savior thus his words renewed:
"That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety, hear and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither, and show
All this fair sight. Thy kingdom, though foretold
By prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavor, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain. Prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possessed of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew, how could'st thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own. The Parthian first,
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyracanus—bound,
Maugre the Roman. It shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose,
Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor—
Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear.”
To whom our Savior answered thus, unmoved:
“Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use, thou say’st. Prediction else
Will unredict, and fail me of the throne!
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off ), is not yet come.
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack.
On my part aught endeavoring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument,
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call’st them, those Ten Tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David’s true heir, and his full scepter sway
To just extent over all Israel’s sons!
But whence to thee this zeal? Where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood’st up his tempter to the pride
Of numbering Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days’ pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
“As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all th’ idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes.
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers, but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From gentiles but by circumcision vain,
And God with idols in their worship joined.
Should I of these the liberty regard
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
Headlong would follow, and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? No, let them serve
Their enemies who serve idols with God.
Yet He at length, time to Himself best known,
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave th’ Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once He cleft
When to the promised land their fathers passed.
To His due time and providence I leave them.”

So spoke Israel’s true king, and to the fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.
BOOK IV

Perplexed and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked 7058 his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little 7059 here—nay lost! But Eve was Eve.
This far his over-match, who self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own.
But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,
To salve 7060 his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils 7061 him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more—
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
About the wine-press where sweet must 7062 is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound—
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers 7063 dashed, th’ assault renew
(Vain battery! 7064 ) and in froth or bubbles end—
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o’er, though desperate 7065 of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Savior to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, 7066 long, but in breadth not wide,
Washed by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
That screened the fruits of th’ earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion 7067 blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, off whose banks
On each side an imperial city 7068 stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches 7069 and theaters, 7070 baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies 7071 and triumphal arcs, 7072
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes
Above the height of mountains interposed
(By what strange parallax, or optic skill
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious 7073 to enquire).
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:

“*The city which thou see’st no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations. There the capitol 7074 thou see’st,
Above the rest lifting his stately 7075 head*"
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable, and there Mount Palatine,
Th’ imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces, and glittering spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods (so well I have disposed
My airy microscope thou may’st behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
Carved work, the hand of famed artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.

“What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:
Praetors proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state,
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings,
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian, some from farthest south,
Syene and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroë Nilotic isle, and more to west
The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea
From th’ Asian kings (and Parthian among these),
From India and the golden Chersoness
And utmost Indian isle, Taprobane
Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed.
From Gallia Gades and the British west,
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool
All nations now to Rome obedience pay,
To Rome’s great Emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may’st prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.

“This Emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Capri an island small but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favorite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious—
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might’st thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a sty, and in his place ascending,
A victor-people free \textsuperscript{7109} from servile yoke!

“And with my help thou may’st. To me the power
Is giv’n, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim, therefore, at no less than all the world.
Aim at the highest: without the highest attained
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David’s throne, be prophesied what will.”

To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:

“Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though called magnificence,
More than of arms, before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind, though thou should’st add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous\textsuperscript{7110} feasts
On citron\textsuperscript{7111} tables or Atlantic stone\textsuperscript{7112}
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read),
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne\textsuperscript{7113}
Chios and Crete,\textsuperscript{7114} and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups embossed with gems
And studs\textsuperscript{7115} of pearl—to me should’st tell, who thirst
And hunger still. Then embassies thou show’st
From nations far and nigh! What honor that?
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish\textsuperscript{7116} flatteries. Then proceed’st to talk
Of the Emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously. I shall, thou say’st, expel
A brutish monster. What if I withal
Expel a Devil who first made him such?
Let his tormentor, conscience, find him out.
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal—who, once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling\textsuperscript{7117} their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine—first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting\textsuperscript{7118} vanity,
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed,
Luxurious\textsuperscript{7119} by\textsuperscript{7120} their wealth, and greedier still,
And from\textsuperscript{7121} the daily scene\textsuperscript{7122} effeminate.\textsuperscript{7123}
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?

“Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David’s throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides \textsuperscript{7124} throughout the world,
And of my kingdom there shall be no end.
Means there shall be to this, but what the means
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.”

To whom the Tempter, impudent,\textsuperscript{7125} replied:

“I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valu’st, because offered and reject’st.
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,\textsuperscript{2126} Or nothing more than still \textsuperscript{2127} to contradict. On th’ other side, know also thou that I On what I offer set as high esteem, Nor what I part with mean to give for naught. All these, which in a moment thou behold’st, The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give (For, giv’n to me, I give to whom I please), No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else— On this condition, if thou wilt fall down And worship me as thy superior Lord (Easily done), and hold them all of me. For what can less so great a gift deserve?”

Whom thus our Savior answered with disdain:

“I never liked thy talk, thy offers less, Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter Th’ abominable terms, impious condition. But I endure\textsuperscript{2128} the time, till which expired Thou hast permission\textsuperscript{2129} on me. It is written, The first of all commandments, ‘Thou shalt worship The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve.’ \textsuperscript{2130} And dar’st thou to the Son of God propound\textsuperscript{2131} To worship thee, accursed? Now more accursed For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve, And more blasphemous, which expect to rue. The kingdoms of the world to thee were giv’n! Permitted, rather, and by thee usurped. Other donation\textsuperscript{2132} none thou canst produce. If given, by whom but by the King of kings, God over all supreme? If giv’n to thee, By thee how fairly is the giver now Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame As offer them to me, the Son of God— To me my own, on such abhorred pact, That I fall down and worship thee as God? Get thee behind me! Plain thou now appear’st That Evil One, Satan, forever damned.”

To whom the fiend, with fear abashed, replied:

“Be not so sore offended, Son of God— Though Sons of God both Angels are and men— If I, to try\textsuperscript{2133} whether in higher sort \textsuperscript{2134} Than these thou bear’st that title, have proposed What both from men and Angels I receive, Tetrachs\textsuperscript{2135} of fire, air, flood, and on the earth Nations besides, from all the quartered winds—\textsuperscript{2136} God of this world invoked\textsuperscript{2137} and world beneath. Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold To me so fatal, me it most concerns. The trial \textsuperscript{2138} hath endamaged thee no way— Rather more honor left, and more esteem— Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed. Therefore let pass, as they are transitory, The kingdoms of this world. I shall no more Advise thee. Gain them as thou canst, or not.
“And thou thyself seem’st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judged,
When slipping from thy mother’s eye, thou went’st
Alone into the Temple. There wast found
Among the gravest rabbis disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses’ chair,
The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day. Be famous, then,
By wisdom. As thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o’er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couched in Moses’ law,
The Pentateuch or what the prophets wrote.
The gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature’s light,
And with the gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean’st.
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinced.

“Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west. Behold
Where on th’ Aegean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive-grove of Academe,
Plato’s retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.
There flow’ry hill, Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees’ industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whispering stream. Within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages—his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next.
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
Aeolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, hence Homer called,
Whose poem Phoebus challenged for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions and high passions best describing.
Thence to the famous orators repair, \textsuperscript{2123}
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence
Wielded \textsuperscript{2174} at will that fierce democracy,
Shook theArsenal, \textsuperscript{2175} and fulminated \textsuperscript{2176} over Greece
To Macedon \textsuperscript{2177} and Artaxerxes \textsuperscript{2179} throne.
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heav'n descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates—see there his tenement, \textsuperscript{2179}
Whom well inspired the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men, from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous \textsuperscript{2180} streams, that watered all the schools
Of Academicians old and new, with those
Surnamed \textsuperscript{2181} Peripatetics, \textsuperscript{2182} and the sect
Epicurean, \textsuperscript{2183} and the Stoic severe.

“These here revolve \textsuperscript{2184} or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight.
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined.”

To whom our Savior sagely thus replied:
“Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not. Not therefore am I short \textsuperscript{2185}
Of knowing what I ought. He who receives
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
No other doctrine needs, though \textsuperscript{2186} granted \textsuperscript{2187} true.
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest \textsuperscript{2188} of them all professed
To know this only, that he nothing knew.
The next \textsuperscript{2189} to fabling fell and smooth conceits.
A third sort \textsuperscript{2190} doubted all things, though plain sense.
Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life.
In corporal pleasure he \textsuperscript{2191} and careless ease.
The Stoic last, in philosophic pride
(By him called virtue) and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning \textsuperscript{2192} all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life—
Which, when he lists \textsuperscript{2193} he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts, \textsuperscript{2194} conviction to evade.

“Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell,
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the soul they talk, but all avry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, \textsuperscript{2195} to God give none,
Rather accuse Him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these
True wisdom finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome. Who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?),
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace? All our Law and story strewn,
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleased so well our victor’s ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts derived—
Ill imitated while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish on a harlot’s cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion’s songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies and His Saints.
Such are from God inspired, not such from thee,
Unless where moral virtue is expressed
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll’st as those
The top of eloquence—statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem.
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat.
These only, with our Law, best form a king.”
So spoke the Son of God. But Satan, now
Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),
Thus to our Savior, with stern brow, replied:
“Since neither wealth nor honor, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor empire, pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
For thee is fittest place! I found thee there,
And thither will return thee. Yet remember
What I foretell thee. Soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never had'st rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
Now, contrary, if I read aught in Heav'n,
Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows and labors, opposition, hate,
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes and, lastly, cruel death.
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern not,
Nor when. Eternal sure—as without end,
Without beginning, for no date prefixed
Directs me in the starry rubric set.”

So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring night,
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.
Our Savior, meek and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head,
But sheltered, slept in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep. And either Tropic now 'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n. The clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire,
In ruin reconciled, nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaded with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken! Nor yet stayed the terror there.
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee: some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.
Thus passed the night so foul, till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds
And grisly specters, which the fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree. The birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.

Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of darkness—glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Savior came,
Yet with no new device (they all were spent),
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite to be so oft repelled.

Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood.
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said:

"Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle, but myself
Was distant, and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heav’n,
Or to the earth’s dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man’s lesser universe, and soon are gone.
Yet, as being oft-times noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men
(Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point)
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill.

"This tempest at this desert most was bent,
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell’st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of Fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David’s throne no man knows when
(For both the when and how is nowhere told):
Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt,
For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
The time and means. Each act is rightliest done
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel’s scepter get fast hold,
Whereof this ominous night that closed thee round,

So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign.”
So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
And stayed not, but in brief him answered thus:

“Me worse than wet thou find’st not. Other harm
Those terrors which thou speak’st of did me none.
I never feared they could, though noising loud
And threat’ning nigh. What they can do as signs
Betokening or ill-boding I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee,
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obrud’st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious Spirit, and would’st be thought my God,
And storm’st refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,
And toil’st in vain), nor me in vain molest.”

To whom the fiend, now swoll’n with rage, replied:

“Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born!
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the prophets; of thy birth, at length
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of th’ Angelic song in Bethlehem field
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Savior born.

“From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred,
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized), by voice from Heav’n
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am. Relation stands:
All men are Sons of God. Yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declared.

“Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
And followed thee still on to this waste wild,
Where by all best conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is, his wisdom, power, intent,
By parle or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can.

“And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant and as a center, firm
To th’ utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more, for honors, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemned, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming the Son of God by voice from Heav’n,
Another method I must now begin."

So saying, he caught him up and, without wing
Of hippogrif 7266 bore through the air sublime, 7267
Over the wilderness and o’er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared
Her pile, 7268 far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topped with golden spires.
There on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:

“There stand, if thou wilt stand. To stand upright
Will ask 7269 thee skill. I to thy Father’s house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is best.
Now show thy progeny! 7270 If not to stand,
Cast thyself down—safely, if Son of God,
For it is written, ‘He will give command
Concerning thee to His Angels; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash 7271 thy foot against a stone.’” 7272

To whom thus Jesus: “Also it is written,
‘Tempt not the Lord thy God.’” He said, and stood,
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.
As when Earth’s son, Antaeus 7273 (to compare
Small things with greatest), in Irassa 7274 strove
With Jove’s Alcides 7275 and, oft foiled, 7276 still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in th’ air, expired and fell,
So after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see 7277 his victor fall.
And as that Theban monster 7278 that proposed
Her riddle and, him who solved it not, devoured,
That 7279 once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian 7280 steep,
So strook 7281 with dread and anguish fell the fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals 7282 of his hoped success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.

So Satan fell, and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumey vans 7284 received him 7285 soft
From his uneasy 7286 station, 7287 and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe 7288 air,
Then, in a flow’ry valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
That soon refreshed him, wearied, and repaired 7289
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,
Or thirst. And, as he fed, Angelic choirs
Sung Heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the Tempter proud:
“True Image of the Father, whether throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heav’n, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,
Wand’ring the wilderness—whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force endued
Against th’ attempter of thy Father’s throne
And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
Thou didst debel and down from Heav’n cast
With all his army. Now thou hast avenged
Supplanted Adam and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt. His snares are broke.
For though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Savior, art come down to reinstall,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
“But thou, Infernal Serpent! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heav’n, trod down
Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel’st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
By this repulse received, and hold’st in Hell
No triumph. In all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,
Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul—
Thee and thy legions. Yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
“Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan! On thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.”
Thus they the Son of God, our Savior meek,
Sung victor and, from Heav’nly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserved,
Home to his mother’s house private returned.
OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM
WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY

Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, morallest, and most profitable of all other poems—therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions. That is, to temper and reduce them to just, with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated.

Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion, for so, in physic things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humors. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture (I Cor. 15:33), and Paraeus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of Heavenly harpings and song between.

Heretofore men in highest dignity have labored not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, then before of his attaining to the Tyranny. Augustus Caesar also had begun his Ajax, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbe-beeving the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled, Christ Suffering.

This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes—happening through the poets’ error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue (yet using sometimes, in case of self defense or explanation, that which Martial calls an “epistle”), in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be “epistled.”

The chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apolelymenon, without regard had to strophe, antistrophe or epode (which were a kind of stanza framed only for the music, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material or being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be call’d allaestropa. Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found to be produced beyond the fifth act, of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such economy or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum. They only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Aeschulus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavor to write tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole drama begins and ends is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of 24 hours.
THE ARGUMENT

Samson (made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labor as in a common work-house), on a festival day, in the general cessation from labor, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can, then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavors the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom, [and] lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him.

Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavor with the Philistian lords for Samson’s redemption, who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons, and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast, before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come. At length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now, the second time, with great threatenings, to fetch him.

The chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure, ere long, his son’s deliverance, in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly, relating the catastrophe: what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself, wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS

Samson.
Harapha of Gath.
Manoa, the father of Samson.
Public officer.
Messenger.
Dalila, his wife.
Chorus of Danites.

The scene: before the prison in Gaza.
SAM. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on,
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade.
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw the air—imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends,
The breath of Heav’n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born. Here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-Idol, and forbid laborious works. Unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me. Hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from Heav’n foretold
Twice, by an Angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an off ’ring burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham’s race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits, if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze?
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this Heav’n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labor of a beast, debased
Lower than bondsclave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver.
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction. What if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O’ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
God, when He gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation which herein
Happ’ly had ends above my reach to know.
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries,
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail—but of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull’d which might in part my grief have eased,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm. The vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see, I dark in light exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own.
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!

O first created beam, and thou great Word,
“Let there be light, and light was over all,”
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part, why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th’ eye confined?
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried, but O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulcher, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious to all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity Among inhuman foes.

But who are these? For with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way—
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
Their daily practice to afflic me more.
CHOR. This, this is he. Softly a while,
Let us not break in upon him.
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropped,
As one past hope, abandoned
And by himself given over,
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O’er worn and soiled.

Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Samson? Whom unarmed
No strength of man or fiercest wild beast could withstand?
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid?
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,
And weaponless himself
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean tempered steel, and frock of mail Adamantean proof?

But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death—by troops! The bold Ascalonite Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turned Their plated backs under his heel Or, grov’ling, soiled their crested helmets in the dust.

Then with what trivial weapon came to hand—
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone—
A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day.

Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore The Gates of Azza — post and massy bar— Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old, No journey of a sabbath day, and loaded so:

Like whom the gentiles feign to bear up Heav’n.

Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!) The dungeon of thyself! Thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
T’ incorporate with gloomy night,
For inward light alas
Puts forth no visual beam.

O mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on earth unparalleled!

The rarer thy example stands
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall’n.
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth
Or the sphere of fortune raises,

But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crowned with highest praises.

SAM. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHOR. He speaks: let us draw nigh.

Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief!
We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
From Eshtaol and Zora’s fruitful vale.

To visit or bewail thee or, if better, Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores. Apt words have power to suage
The tumors of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to festered wounds.
SAM. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most,)
I would be understood: in prosperous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have enclosed me round.
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
Blindness, for had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a foolish pilot have shipwrecked
My vessel, trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear
—Fool!—have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverbed for a fool
In every street? Do they not say how well
Are come upon him his deserts? Yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean.
This with the other should, at least, have paired;
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.
CHOR. Tax not divine disposal.
Wisest men have erred, and by bad women been deceived,
And shall again, pretend they ne’re so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.
Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou should’st wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe—fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.
SAM. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me (not my parents), that I sought to wed,
The daughter of an infidel. They knew not
That what I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on, that by occasion I might begin Israel’s deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely called.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish, too late)
Was in the Vale of Sorec, Dalila.
That specious monster, my accomplished snare.
I thought it lawful, from my former act
And the same end, still watching to oppress
Israel’s oppressors. Of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself
Who, vanquished with a peal of words (O weakness!),
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.
CHOR. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country’s enemy,
Thou never wast remiss.
I bear thee witness.
Yet Israel still serves, with all his sons.
SAM. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel’s governors and heads of tribes,
Who seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
Deliverance offered. I on th’ other side
Use’d no ambition to commend my deeds:
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer.
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords the Philistines with gathered powers
Entered Judea, seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired,
Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them, what advantaged best.
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round.
I willingly (on some conditions) came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcised, a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords—but cords to me were threads
Touched with the flame. On their whole host I flew,
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve.
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty,
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favor raised
As their deliverer? If he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?
CHOR. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel—
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquished kings.
And how ungrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle when so many died,
Without reprieve adjudged to death
For want of well-pronouncing “shibboleth.”
SAM. Of such examples add me to the roll.
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God’s proposed deliverance not so.
CHOR. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men,
Unless there be who think not God at all
If any be, they walk obscure
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt His ways not just,
As to His own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wand’ring thought,
Regardless of His glory’s diminution,
Till by their own perplexities involved
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th’ interminable,
And tie Him to His own prescript,
Who made our Laws to bind us, not Himself,
And hath full right t’ exempt
Whom so it pleases Him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt,
For with His own Laws He can best dispense.

He would not else (who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of th’ enemy just cause
To set His people free)
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down reason, then—at least, vain reasonings down,
Though reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see, here comes thy reverend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa. Advise
Forthwith how thou ought’st to receive him.

SAM. Aye me, another inward grief awaked:
With mention of that name, renews th’ assault.

MAN. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place: if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

CHOR. As signal now, in low dejected state,
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

MAN. O miserable change! Is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel’s foes, who with a strength Equivalent to Angels walked their streets,
None offering fight? who single combatant Duelled their armies, ranked in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward, armed,
At one spear's length? O ever failing trust
In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
Deceiveable and vain! Nay, what thing good
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach. I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy.
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?
Why are His gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers, then giv'n with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion’s tail behind?
For this did th’ Angel twice descend? For this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men, then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes’ derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas, methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err
He should not so oerwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honor’s sake, of former deeds.
SAM. Appoint not Heav’nly disposition, father.
Nothing of all these evils hath befall’n me
But justly. I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God giv’n me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience. Did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith? who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiat’d with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived
Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know.
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport.
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself.
Yet the fourth time, when must’ring all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults, tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night to storm me, over-watched and wearied out. At times when men seek most repose and rest I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart, who with a grain of manhood well resolved might easily have shook off all her snares. But foul effeminacy held me yoked her bondslave. O indignity, O blot to honor and religion! Servile mind rewarded well with servile punishment! the base degree to which I now am fall’n, these rags, this grinding, is not yet so base as was my former servitude, ignoble, unmanly, ignominious, infamous, true slavery, and that blindness worse than this, that saw not how degenerately I served. man. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son—rather approved them not. But thou didst plead divine impulsion prompting how thou might’st find some occasion to infest our foes. I state not that. This I am sure: our foes found soon occasion thereby to make thee their captive, and their triumph. thou the sooner temptation found’st, or over-potent charms to violate the sacred trust of silence deposited within thee, which’t have kept tacit was in thy power. true: and thou bear’st enought, and more, the burden of that fault. bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying that rigid score. a worse thing yet remains. this day the philistines a popular feast here celebrate in gaza, and proclaim great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud to dagon, as their god who hath delivered thee, samson, bound and blind into their hands, them out of thine, who slew’st them many a slain. so dagon shall be magnified, and god, besides whom is no god, compared with idols, disgraced, blasphemed, and had in scorn by th’ idolatrous rout amidst their wine, which to have come to pass by means of thee, samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest, of all reproach the most with shame that ever could have befall’n thee and thy father’s house. sam. father, I do acknowledge and confess that I this honor, I this pomp have brought to dagon, and advanced his praises high among the heathen round—to god have brought dishonor, obloquy, and opp’t the mouths of idolists, and atheists, have brought scandal to israel, diffidence of god, and doubt in feeble hearts, propense enough before to waver, or fall off and join with idols.
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbor sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end: all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed
(Me overthrown) to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,
But will arise and His great name assert.
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

MAN. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive, for God—
Nothing more certain—will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of His name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not in the meanwhile here forgot
Lie, in this miserable, loathsome plight
Neglected. I already have made way to some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom. Well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries worse than death inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

SAM. Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble
Of that solicitation. Let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment,
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front? But I
God's counsel have not kept, His holy secret
Presumptuously have published impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully, a sin
That gentiles in their parables condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confined
MAN. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, son.
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids,
Or th' execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself. Perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all His debt,
Who evermore approves and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)
Him who imploring mercy sues, for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due,
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offered means (who knows
But God hath set before us) to return thee
Home to thy country and His sacred house,
Where thou may’st bring thy off’ rings, to avert
His further ire with prayers and vows renewed.
SAM. His pardon I implore. But as for life,
To what end should I seek it? When in strength
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heav’n foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anac, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walked about, admired of all and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swoll’n with pride into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softn’d with pleasure and voluptuous life,
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shav’n, and disarmed among my enemies.
CHOR. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Thou could’st repress, nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling, out-poured, the flavor, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.
SAM. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch aetherial of Heav’n’s fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refreshed, nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.
CHOR. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidd’n made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.
SAM. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished? By which means,
Now blind, disheart’ ned, shamed, dishonored, quelled.
To what can I be useful? wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heav’n imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone? to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object, these redundant locks
Robustious to no purpose clust’ring down,
Vain monument of strength, till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
Till vermin or the draft of servile food
Consume me, and oft-invocated death
Hast’n the welcome end of all my pains.
MAN. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly giv’n thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle—
Inglorious, unemployed with age out-worn.
But God who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battle can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve Him better than thou hast.
And I persuade me so. Why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee, not for naught,
Nor shall His wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.
SAM. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor th’ other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand.
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat. Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself,
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.
MAN. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humors black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father’s timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance,
By ransom or how else. Meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.
SAM. O that torment should not be confined
To the body’s wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins,
But must secret passage find
To th’ inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
As a ling’ring disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene
To black mortification.
Thoughts (my tormentors) armed with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
Or med’cinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and giv’n me o’er
to death’s benumbing opium as my only cure.
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heav’n’s desertion.
I was His nursling once, and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by Heav’ny message twice descending.
Under His special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain.
He led me on to mightiest deeds
(Above the nerve of mortal arm)
Against th’ uncircumcised, our enemies,
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by His appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless with th’ irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty, or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope.
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard:
No long petition, speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
CHOR. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of grief and anxious thought.
But with th’ afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers, what is man!
That Thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper’st Thy providence through his short course
Not evenly, as thou rul’st
The Angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,\(^{7629}\)
That wand’ring loose\(^{7630}\) about
Grow up and perish, as\(^{7631}\) the summer fly,
Heads without name no more remembered!
But such as Thou hast solemnly\(^{7632}\) elected,\(^{7633}\)
With gifts and graces eminently adorned
To some great work, Thy glory
And people’s safety,\(^{7634}\) which in part they effect.
Yet toward these thus dignified,\(^{7635}\) Thou oft
Amidst their height of noon
Changest Thy countenance and Thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favors past
From Thee on them, or them to Thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit\(^{7636}\)
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,
But throw’st them lower than Thou did’st exalt them high,
Unseemly falls,\(^{7637}\) in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission—
Oft leav’st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane,\(^{7638}\) their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease Thou bow’st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude\(^{7639}\) old age,
Though not disordinate,\(^{7640}\) yet causeless suff ’ring
The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,\(^{7641}\)
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So\(^{7642}\) deal not, with this once Thy glorious champion,
The image of Thy strength, and mighty minister,\(^{7643}\)
What do I beg? How hast Thou dealt\(^{7644}\) already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labors—for Thou canst—to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus,\(^{7645}\) bound for th’ Isles
Of Javan\(^{7646}\) or Gadier,\(^{7647}\)
With all her bravery\(^{7648}\) on, and tackle\(^{7649}\) trim,\(^{7650}\)
Sails filled, and streamers\(^{7651}\) waving
(Courted by all the winds that hold them play),\(^{7652}\)
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger,\(^{7653}\) a damsel train\(^{7654}\) behind.
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
And now at nearer view, no other, certain,
Than Dalila, thy wife.
SAM. My wife, my traitress, let her not come near me.
CHOR. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fixed,\(^{7655}\)
About t’ have spoke, but now, with head declined
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil.
But now again she makes address to speak.
DAL. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge. Yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw)
My penance hath not slack'ned, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.
SAM. Out, out hyena! These are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech
And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way t' assail,
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits,
That wisest and best men full oft beguiled
With goodness, principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a pois'nous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.
DAL. Yet hear me Samson. Not that I endeavor
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that on th' other side if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults.
Was it not weakness also to make known,
For importunity (that is, for naught),
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou showd'st me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not.
Nor should’st thou have trusted that to woman’s frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret’st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, feared lest one day thou would’st leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest.
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
Why then revealed? I was assured by those
Who tempted me that nothing was designed
Against thee but safe custody, and hold.
That made for me.
I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night,
Mine and love’s prisoner, not the Philistines’,
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love’s law have passed for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some, perhaps.
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.
SAM. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears. I gave, thou say’st, th’ example,
I led the way. Bitter reproach, but true.
I to myself was false ere thou to me.
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed, which when thou see’st
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it—weakness to resist
Philistian gold! If weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrain’d thee! Call it furious rage.
To satisfy thy lust. Love seeks to have love.
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.
DAL. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented,
Which might have awed the best resolved of men,
The constantest t' have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me. Thou know'st the magistrates,
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, pressed how just it was,
How honorable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation. And the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonorer of Dagon. What had I
T' oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest. At length that grounded
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me, and prevailed,
Virtue, as I thought—truth—duty so enjoining.
SAM. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end!
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy.
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st—
Too well—unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but over-pow'ed
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing,
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country, nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of Nature, law of nations,
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear,
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee!
To please thy gods thou didst it—gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes.
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be—
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.
These false pretexts and varnished colors failing,
Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear!
DAL. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.
SAM. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath!
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson!
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided. Only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
T' afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights,
At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eye-sight exposes, daily, men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favorable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, t' abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care,
With nursing diligence (to me glad office),
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.
SAM. No, no, of my condition take no care!
It fits not. Thou and I long since are twain,
Nor think me so unwary or accurst
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost! Thy ginns and toils,
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have power, their force is nulled.
So much of adders' wisdom I have learned
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honored, feared me, thou alone could hate me,
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me,
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceiveable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,
And last neglected? How would'st thou insult?
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thralldom? How again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter!
DAL. Let me approach, at least, and touch thy hand.
SAM. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee, go with that.
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives.
Cherish thy hast'ned widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason. So farewell.
DAL. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas. Yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore.
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate—
Bid go, with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame if not double-faced is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds.
On both his wings, one black, th' other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath
I shall be named among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands — my tomb
With odors visited and annual flowers.
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
Jael, who with inhospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping through the temples nailed.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honor and reward
Conferred upon me, for the piety
Which to my country I was judged t' have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.
CHOR. She’s gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.
SAM. So let her go. God sent her to debase me
And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.
CHOR. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.
SAM. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end.
Not wedlock-treachery, endangering life.
CHOR. It is not virtue, wisdom, valor, wit, 1010
Strength, comeliness of shape, or ampest merit
That woman’s love can win or long inherit.
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit
(Which way soever men refer it),
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.
    If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compared, 1020
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong? 1030
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
    What e’er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all Heav’nly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestate, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent or by her charms 1040
Draws him awry, enslaved
With dotage and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Embarked with such a steer-mate at the helm?
    Favor’d of Heav’n who finds
One virtuous (rarely found),
That in domestic good combines,
Happy that house! His way to peace is smooth.
But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
And all temptation can remove
Most shines and most is acceptable above.
Therefore God’s universal Law
Gave to the man despotic\textsuperscript{7789} power
Over his female in due\textsuperscript{7790} awe, \textsuperscript{7791}
Nor from that right to part\textsuperscript{7792} an hour,
Smile she\textsuperscript{7793} or lour. \textsuperscript{7794}
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, nor dismayed. \textsuperscript{1060}

But had we best retire, I see a storm?
SAM. Fair days have oft contracted\textsuperscript{7795} wind and rain.
CHOR. But this another kind of tempest brings.
SAM. Be less abstruse, \textsuperscript{7796} my riddling days are past.
CHOR. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words. A rougher tongue
Draws hitherward. I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha\textsuperscript{7797} of Gath, his look
Haughty as is his pile\textsuperscript{7798} high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him hither \textsuperscript{1070}
I less conjecture\textsuperscript{7799} than when first I saw
The sumptuous\textsuperscript{7800} Dalila floating this way.
His habit\textsuperscript{7801} carries peace, his brow defiance.
SAM. Or\textsuperscript{7802} peace or not, alike to me he comes.
CHOR. His fraught\textsuperscript{7803} we soon shall know. He now arrives.
HAR. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,\textsuperscript{7804}
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath.
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og\textsuperscript{7805} or Anak\textsuperscript{7806} and the Emims\textsuperscript{7807} old \textsuperscript{1080}
That Kiriathaim\textsuperscript{7808} held: thou knowst me now,
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious\textsuperscript{7809} might and feats performed,
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried\textsuperscript{7810}
Each other’s force in camp\textsuperscript{7811} or listed field;\textsuperscript{7812}
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report. \textsuperscript{7813} \textsuperscript{1090}
SAM. The way to know were not to see but taste.
HAR. Dost thou already single\textsuperscript{7814} me? I thought
Gyves\textsuperscript{7815} and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
T’ have wrought such wonders with an ass’s jaw!
I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From\textsuperscript{7816} the unforeskinned race,\textsuperscript{7817} of whom thou bear’st \textsuperscript{1100}
The highest name for valiant acts. That honor
Certain t’ have won by mortal\textsuperscript{7818} duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.
SAM. Boast not of what thou would’st have done, but do
What then thou would’st. Thou see’st it in thy hand.
HAR. To combat with a blind man I disdain.
And thou hast need much washing to be touched. SAM. Such usage as your honorable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed, Who durst not with their whole united powers In fight withstand me single and unarmed, Nor in the house with chamber ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me—no, not sleeping— Till they had hired a woman with their gold, Breaking her marriage faith to circumvent me. Therefore without feigned shifts let be assigned Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee (Or rather flight) no great advantage on me. Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, Vant-brass and greves, add thy spear, A weaver’s beam, and seven-times-folded shield.
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee, And raise such out-cries on thy clattered iron Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head, That in a little time, while breath remains thee, Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast Again in safety what thou would’st have done To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.
HAR. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms, Which greatest heroes have in battle worn, Their ornament and safety, had not spells And black enchantments, some magician’s art Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from Heav’n Feignd’st at thy birth was giv’n thee in thy hair, Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.
SAM. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts. My trust is in the living God who gave me At my nativity this strength, diffused No less through all my sinews, joints and bones, Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn, The pledge of my unviolated vow. For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god, Go to his temple, invoke his aid With solemnest devotion, spread before him How highly it concerns his glory now To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells, Which I to be the power of Israel’s God Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test, Offering to combat thee, his champion bold, With th’ utmost of his godhead seconded Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine. HAR. Presume not on thy God, what e’er He be. Thee He regards not, owns not, hath cut off Quite from his people and delivered up Into thy enemies’ hand, permitted them To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,
As good for nothing else, no better service
With those thy boist’rous locks. No worthy match
For valor to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honor,
But by the barber’s razor best subdued.
SAM. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of His final pardon
Whose ear is ever open, and His eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant.
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine or whom I with Israel’s sons adore.
HAR. Fair honor that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause—
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. 1180
SAM. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?
HAR. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it, when they took thee
As a league breaker and delivered, bound,
Into our hands—for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Askalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber strip’st them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armèd powers, thee only seeking, 1190
To others did no violence nor spoil.
SAM. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,
And in your city held my nuptial feast.
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threat’ning cruel death constrained the bride
To wring from me and tell to them my secret
That solved the riddle which I had proposed. 1200
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I a private person, whom my country
As a league breaker gave up, bound, presumed
Single rebellion and did hostile acts? 1210
I was no private but a person raised
With strength sufficient, and command from Heav’n,
To free my country. If their servile minds
Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
Th’ unworthier they. Whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heav’n assigned,
And had performed it if my known offense
Had not disabled me—not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant
(Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts)
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.
HAR. With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.
SAM. Cam’st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed—
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.
HAR. O Baal-zebub! Can my ears, unused,
Hear these dishonors and not render death?
SAM. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable: bring up thy van!
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.
HAR. This insolence other kind of answer fits.
SAM. Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains—bulk without spirit vast!—
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To th’ hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.
HAR. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.
CHOR. His giantship is gone, somewhat crestfall’n,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
SAM. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.
CHOR. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.
SAM. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labors,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence:
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may—with mine—
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.
CHOR. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, th’ oppressor,
The brute and boist’rous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honor truth!
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigor armed,
Their armories and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With wingèd expedition, Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who surprised
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of Saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all that tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men. But sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those Whom patience finally must crown.
This idol’s day hath been to thee no day of rest, Laboring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.
For I descry this way Some other tending. In his hand
A scepter or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.
OFF. Hebrews, the pris’ner Samson here I seek.
CHOR. His manacles remark him. There he sits.
OFF. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games.
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honor this great feast and great assembly.
Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
Where I will see thee heartn’d and fresh clad
To appear as fits before th’ illustrious lords.
SAM. Thou know’st I am an Hebrew. Therefore tell them
Our Law forbids at their religious rites
My presence. For that cause I cannot come.
OFF. This answer, be assured, will not content them.
SAM. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners, Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics, But they must pick me out, with shackles tired And over-labored at their public mill, To make them sport with blind activity? Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels On my refusal to distress more, 1330 Or make a game of my calamities? Return the way thou cam’st. I will not come. OFF. Regard thyself: this will offend them highly. SAM. Myself? My conscience and internal peace! Can they think me so broken, so debased With corporal servitude, that my mind ever Will condescend to such absurd commands? Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester, And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief To show them feats, and play before their god, 1340 The worst of all indignities, yet on me Joined with extreme contempt? I will not come. OFF. My message was imposed on me with speed, Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution? SAM. So take it, with what speed thy message needs. OFF. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce. SAM. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed. CHOR. Consider, Samson. Matters now are strained Up to the height, whether to hold or break. He’s gone, and who knows how he may report Thy words by adding fuel to the flame? Expect another message more imperious, More lordly thund’ring than thou well wilt bear. SAM. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift Of strength, again returning with my hair After my great transgression? So requite Favor renewed, and add a greater sin By prostituting holy things to idols? A Nazarite in place abominable Vaunting my strength in honor to their Dagon? Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous, What act more execrably unclean, profane? CHOR. Yet with this strength thou serv’st the Philistines, Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean. SAM. Not in their idol-worship, but by labor Honest and lawful to deserve my food Of those who have me in their civil power. CHOR. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not. SAM. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds. But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, Not dragging? The Philistian lords command! Commands are no constraints. If I obey them, I do it freely, venturing to displease God for the fear of man, and man prefer, Set God behind—which in His jealousy Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness. Yet that He may dispense with me or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.
CHOR. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach. 1380
SAM. Be of good courage. I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me which dispose To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along—
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonor
Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.
CHOR. In time thou hast resolved: the man returns. 1390
OFF. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
And dar'st thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming? Come without delay,
Or we shall find such engines to assail And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmer fast'ned than a rock.
SAM. I could be well content to try their art, Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters’ commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection,
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.
OFF. I praise thy resolution. Doff these links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favor, and perhaps to set thee free.
SAM. Brethren, farewell. Your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends. And how the sight
Of me as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine,
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned. 1420
No less the people on their holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable.
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself.
The last of me or no, I cannot warrant
CHOR. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve
His glory best, and spread His name
Great among the heathen round— 1430
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father’s field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire—that Spirit that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan
Be efficacious in thee, now at need.
For never was from Heav’n imparted
Measure\(^{2971}\) of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wond’rous actions hath been seen. \(^{1440}\)

But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste,
With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile
He seems: supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?
MAN. Peace with you, brethren. My inducement\(^{2972}\) hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play\(^{2973}\) before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came, the city rings
And numbers thither flock. I had no will, \(^{2974}\) \(^{1450}\)
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming, now, was chiefly
To give ye part\(^{2975}\) with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.
CHOR. That hope would much rejoice us to partake\(^{2976}\)
With thee. Say reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.
MAN. I have attempted\(^{2977}\) one by one the lords,
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father’s tears,
T’ accept of ransom for my son, their pris’ner. \(^{1460}\)
Some much averse\(^{2978}\) I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenc’d Dagon and his priests.
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both god and state
They easily would set to sale. A third
More generous\(^{2979}\) far and civil\(^{2980}\) who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears.
The rest\(^{2981}\) was\(^{2982}\) magnanimity\(^{2983}\) to remit, \(^{2984}\) \(^{1470}\)
If some convenient\(^{2985}\) ransom were proposed.

What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.
CHOR. Doubtless the people shouting, to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.
MAN. His ransom, if my whole inheritance\(^{2986}\)
May compass\(^{2987}\) it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down.\(^{2988}\) Much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous\(^{2989}\) prison left. \(^{1480}\)
No, I am fixed\(^{2990}\) not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting\(^{2991}\) him, I shall want nothing.
CHOR. Fathers are wont\(^{2992}\) to lay up\(^{2993}\) for their sons:
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all.
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age:
Thou in old age car’st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age, through eye-sight lost.
MAN. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
And view him sitting in the house, enobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a nation armed the strength contained.
And I persuade me God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up, with his hair
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not His purpose
To use him further yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

CHOR. Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain
Of His delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceived agreeable to a father’s love,
In both which we, as next, participate.
MAN. I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!
Mercy of Heav’n, what hideous noise was that!
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

CHOR. Noise call you it? or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perished.
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.
MAN. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
Oh it continues, they have slain my son!
CHOR. Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
MAN. Some dismal accident it needs must be.
What shall we do, stay here or run and see? 1520
CHOR. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into danger’s mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fall’n:
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel’s God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?
MAN. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
CHOR. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For His people of old. What hinders now?
MAN. He can, I know, but doubt to think He will,
Yet hope would fain subscribe and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.
CHOR. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner,
For evil news rides post while good news baits
And to our wish I see one hither speeding.
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.
MESS. O whither shall I run, or which way fly? The sight of this so horrid spectacle
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold,
For dire imagination still pursues me?
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason (though disturbed, and scarce consulted)
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concerned.
MAN. The accident was loud, and here before thee,
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not.
No preface needs: thou see’st we long to know.
MESS. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.
MAN. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.
MESS. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall’n,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fall’n.
MAN. Sad, but thou know’st to Israelites not saddest, 1560
The desolation of a hostile city.
MESS. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.
MAN. Relate by whom.
MESS. By Samson.
MAN. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.
MESS. Ah Manoa, I refrain too suddenly To utter what will come at last too soon,
Lest evil tidings with too rude eruption Hitting thy agèd ear should pierce too deep.
MAN. Suspense in news is torture: speak them out.
MESS. Then take the worst in brief: Samson is dead. 1570
MAN. The worst indeed. O all my hope’s defeated
To free him hence! But death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived,
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipped with the lagging rear of winter’s frost.
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
How died he? Death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say’st. By whom fell he? 1580
What glorious hand gave Samson his death’s wound?
MESS. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
MAN. Wearied with slaughter, then, or how? Explain.
MESS. By his own hands.
MAN. Self-violence? What cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself,
Among his foes?
MESS. Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy and be destroyed.
The edifice where all were met to see him
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.
MAN. O lastly over-strong against thyself! 1590
A dreadful way thou took’st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know, but while things yet 
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst, 
Eye-witness of what first or last was done, 
Relation more particular and distinct.

MESS. Occasions drew me early to this city, 
And as the gates I entered with sun-rise, 
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed 
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched. 
When all abroad was rumored that this day 1600 
Samson should be brought forth to show the people 
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games. 
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded 
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theater. 
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high, 
With seats where all the lords and each degree 
Of sort might sit in order to behold. 
The other side was open, where the throng 
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand. 
I among these aloof stood. 
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice 
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine, 
When to their sports they turned. Immediately 
Was Samson as a public servant brought, 
In their state livery clad. Before him pipes 
And timbrels, on each side went armèd guards, 
Both horse and foot before him, and behind 
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears. 
At sight of him the people with a shout 
Rifted the air, clamoring their god with praise, 
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall. 
He patient but undaunted where they led him 
Came to the place, and what was set before him 
Which without help of eye, might be assayed, 
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed 
All with incredible, stupendous force, 
None daring to appear antagonist. 
At length for intermission sake they led him 
Between the pillars. He his guide requested 
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard) 
As over-tired to let him lean a while 
With both his arms on those two massy pillars 
That to the archèd roof gave main support. 
He unsuspicous led him, which when Samson 
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined 
And eyes fast fixed he stood, as one who prayed, 
Or some great matter in his mind revolved. 
At last with head erect thus cried aloud, 
"Hitherto, lords, what your commands imposed 
I have performed, as reason was, obeying, 
Not without wonder or delight beheld. 
Now of my own accord such other trial 
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater, 
As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves he bowed.
As with the force of winds and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, councillors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson with these immixed inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself.
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.

CHOR. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious! 1660
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now ly’st victorious
Among thy slain, self-killed
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life had slain before.

SEMICHOR. While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo His bright sanctuary:
Among them He a Spirit of frenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer.
They only set on sport and play
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves t’ invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate
And with blindness internal struck.
SEMICHOR. But he though blind of sight,
Despised and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an ev’ning dragon came,
Assailant on the perchè roosts
And nests, in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue giv’n for lost,
Depressed and overthrown (as seemed),
Like that self-begotten bird.
In th’ Arabian woods embossed
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust
From out her ashy womb now teemed—
Revives, refloresceth, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed.
And though her body die, her fame survives
(A secular bird) ages of lives.

MAN. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning.
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds. To Israel
Honor hath left, and freedom. Let but them
Find courage to lay hold
To himself and father’s house eternal fame.
And which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favoring and assisting to the end. 1720
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies’ blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore.
I with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends
To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father’s house. There will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
to matchless valor, and adventures high. 1740
The virgins also shall on feastful days
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHOR. All is best, though we oft doubt,
What th’ unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft He seems to hide His face,
But unexpectedly returns—1750
And to His faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously. Whence Gaza mourns
And all that band of them to resist
His uncontrollable intent, His servants He with new acquisition of true experience from this great event, with peace and consolation hath dismissed, and calm of mind, all passion spent.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

This cannot be more than a brief, more or less representative glimpse of what Carrithers and Hardy (below, at p. 15) call “the prodigious landscape of relevant scholarship.” All of the listed books contain useful citations to a much wider portion of the landscape.

EDITIONS OF MILTON


HISTORICAL BACKGROUND


LANGUAGE


LITERARY CRITICISM

COLLECTIONS


INDIVIDUAL STUDIES


ASK YOUR BOOKSELLER FOR THESE BANTAM CLASSICS

BEOWULF AND OTHER ENGLISH POEMS, 978-0-553-21347-8
THE BHAGAVAD-GITA: KRISHNA’S COUNSEL IN TIME OF WAR, 978-0-553-21365-2
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, 978-0-553-21482-6
THE FEDERALIST PAPERS, 978-0-553-21340-9
FOUR GREAT AMERICAN CLASSICS (THE SCARLET LETTER; THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN; THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE; BILLY BUDD, SAILOR), 978-0-553-21362-1
GREEK DRAMA, 978-0-553-21221-1
JO’S BOYS, Louisa May Alcott, 978-0-553-21449-9
LITTLE WOMEN, Louisa May Alcott, 978-0-553-21275-4
WINESBURG, OHIO, Sherwood Anderson, 978-0-553-21439-0
THE COMPLETE PLAYS, Aristophanes, 978-0-553-21343-0
EMMA, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21273-0
MANSFIELD PARK, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21276-1
NORTHANGER ABBEY, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21197-9
PERSUASION, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21137-5
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21310-2
SENSE AND SENSIBILITY, Jane Austen, 978-0-553-21334-8
PETER PAN, J. M. Barrie, 978-0-553-21178-8
BRADBURY CLASSIC STORIES, Ray Bradbury, 978-0-553-28637-3
THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, Ray Bradbury, 978-0-553-27822-4
JANE EYRE, Charlotte Brontë, 978-0-553-21140-5
VILLETTE, Charlotte Brontë, 978-0-553-21243-3
WUTHERING HEIGHTS, Emily Brontë, 978-0-553-21258-7
THE SECRET GARDEN, Frances Hodgson Burnett, 978-0-553-21201-3
ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND and THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS, Lewis Carroll, 978-0-553-21345-4
MY ANTONIA, Willa Cather, 978-0-553-21418-5
O PIONEERS!, Willa Cather, 978-0-553-21358-4
THE CANTERBURY TALES, Geoffrey Chaucer, 978-0-553-21082-8
STORIES, Anton Chekhov, 978-0-553-38100-9
THE AWAKENING, Kate Chopin, 978-0-553-21330-0
THE WOMAN IN WHITE, Wilkie Collins, 978-0-553-21263-1
HEART OF DARKNESS and THE SECRET SHARER, Joseph Conrad, 978-0-553-21214-3
LORD JIM, Joseph Conrad, 978-0-553-21361-4
THE DEERSLAYER, James Fenimore Cooper, 978-0-553-21085-9
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, James Fenimore Cooper, 978-0-553-21329-4
MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS AND OTHER SHORT FICTION, Stephen Crane, 978-0-553-21355-3
THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, Stephen Crane, 978-0-553-21011-8
THE INFERNO, Dante, 978-0-553-21399-3
PARADISO, Dante, 978-0-553-21204-4
PUGATORIO, Dante, 978-0-553-21344-7
THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, Charles Darwin, 978-0-553-21463-5
MOLL FLANDERS, Daniel Defoe, 978-0-553-21328-7
ROBINSON CRUSOE, Daniel Defoe, 978-0-553-21373-7
BLEAK HOUSE, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21223-5
A CHRISTMAS CAROL, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21244-0
DAVID COPPERFIELD, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21189-4
GREAT EXPECTATIONS, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21342-3
HARD TIMES, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21016-3
OLIVER TWIST, Charles Dickens, 978-0-553-21102-3
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, Gaston Leroux, 978-0-553-21376-8
BABBITT, Sinclair Lewis, 978-0-553-21486-4
MAIN STREET, Sinclair Lewis, 978-0-553-21451-2
THE CALL OF THE WILD and WHITE FANG, Jack London, 978-0-553-21233-4
THE SEA WOLF, Jack London, 978-0-553-21225-9
TO BUILD A FIRE AND OTHER STORIES, Jack London, 978-0-553-21335-5
THE PRINCE, Niccolò Machiavelli, 978-0-553-21278-5
DEATH IN VENICE AND OTHER STORIES, Thomas Mann, 978-0-553-21333-1
THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 978-0-553-21406-2
OF HUMAN BONDAGE, W. Somerset Maugham, 978-0-553-21392-8
THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER, Carson McCullers, 978-0-553-26963-5
THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING, Carson McCullers, 978-0-553-25051-0
BILLY BUDD, SAILOR AND OTHER STORIES, Herman Melville, 978-0-553-21274-7
ON LIBERTY and UTILITARIANISM, John Stuart Mill, 978-0-553-21414-7
THE ANNOTATED MILTON, John Milton, 978-0-553-58110-2
THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL, Baroness Emmuska Orczy, 978-0-553-21402-4
COMMON SENSE, Thomas Paine, 978-0-553-21465-9
THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO, Plato, 978-0-553-21371-3
THE TELL-TALE HEART AND OTHER WRITINGS, Edgar Allan Poe, 978-0-553-21228-0
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE (29 vols.), William Shakespeare
PYGMALION and MAJOR BARBARA, George Bernard Shaw, 978-0-553-21408-6
FRANKENSTEIN, Mary Shelley, 978-0-553-21247-1
THE JUNGLE, Upton Sinclair, 978-0-553-21245-7
THE WEALTH OF NATIONS, Adam Smith, 978-0-553-58597-1
ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 978-0-553-24777-0
THE COMPLETE PLAYS OF SOPHOCLES, Sophocles, 978-0-553-21354-6
DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, Robert Louis Stevenson, 978-0-553-21277-8
KIDNAPPED, Robert Louis Stevenson, 978-0-553-21260-0
TREASURE ISLAND, Robert Louis Stevenson, 978-0-553-21249-5
DRACULA, Bram Stoker, 978-0-553-21326-3
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, Harriet Beecher Stowe, 978-0-553-21218-1
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND OTHER WRITINGS, Jonathan Swift, 978-0-553-21232-7
VANITY FAIR, William Makepeace Thackeray, 978-0-553-21462-8
WALDEN and OTHER WRITINGS, Henry David Thoreau, 978-0-553-21246-4
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, Alexis de Tocqueville, 978-0-553-21464-2
ANNA KARENINA, Leo Tolstoy, 978-0-553-21346-1
THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYICH, Leo Tolstoy, 978-0-553-21035-4
THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21079-8
THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21128-3
THE COMPLETE SHORT STORIES OF MARK TWAIN, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21195-5
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21143-6
LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21349-2
THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21256-3
PUDD'NHEAD WILSON, Mark Twain, 978-0-553-21158-0
20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, Jules Verne, 978-0-553-21252-5
AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS, Jules Verne, 978-0-553-21356-0
FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON, Jules Verne, 978-0-553-21420-8
THE AENEID OF VIRGIL, Virgil, 978-0-553-21041-5
CANDIDE, Voltaire, 978-0-553-21166-5
THE INVISIBLE MAN, H. G. Wells, 978-0-553-21353-9
THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, H. G. Wells, 978-0-553-21432-1
ETHAN FROME AND OTHER SHORT FICTION, Edith Wharton, 978-0-553-21255-6
THE HOUSE OF MIRTH, Edith Wharton, 978-0-553-21320-1
SUMMER, Edith Wharton, 978-0-553-21422-2
LEAVES OF GRASS, Walt Whitman, 978-0-553-21116-0
THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND OTHER WRITINGS, Oscar Wilde, 978-0-553-21254-9
THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, Johann David Wyss, 978-0-553-21403-1
EARLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN CLASSICS, edited by Anthony Appiah, 978-0-553-21379-9
FIFTY GREAT SHORT STORIES, edited by Milton Crane, 978-0-553-27745-6
FIFTY GREAT AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, edited by Milton Crane, 978-0-553-27294-9
SHORT SHORTS, edited by Irving Howe, 978-0-553-27440-0
GREAT AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, edited by Wallace & Mary Stegner, 978-0-440-33060-8
AMERICAN SHORT STORY MASTERPIECES, edited by Raymond Carver & Tom Jenks, 978-0-440-20423-7
SHORT STORY MASTERPIECES, edited by Robert Penn Warren, 978-0-440-37864-8
THE VOICE THAT IS GREAT WITHIN US, edited by Hayden Carruth, 978-0-553-26263-6
THE BLACK POETS, edited by Dudley Randal, 978-0-553-27563-6
JOHN MILTON was born on December 9, 1608. A brilliant scholar, he received his B.A. and M.A. from Christ’s College, Cambridge, and began writing poetry. Instead of entering the ministry, he retired to his father’s country house and for the next five years read day and night, devouring most of the existing written works in English, Greek, Latin, and Italian. During this period he wrote the masque Comus (1634) and “Lycidas” (1637), an elegy memorializing a college classmate. In 1638 he went on a tour of Europe, spending most of his time in Italy. He returned home prematurely because of the religious unrest in England and began writing tracts that branded him a radical. In 1642 he married Mary Powell, a seventeen-year-old girl. Within six weeks, she returned to her parents’ home, and Milton wrote a series of angry pamphlets advocating divorce on the grounds of incompatibility. Eventually, she returned and bore him four children, three of whom survived. By 1651 Milton’s poor eyesight failed completely, leaving him blind. After his wife’s death, he remarried, only to have his second wife die some months after childbirth. His third marriage, to Elizabeth Minshull, was a longer and happier one. At the Restoration, Milton narrowly escaped execution because of his politics, but was left impoverished. Now he returned to writing poetry and created the masterpieces for which he will be forever remembered, beginning with Paradise Lost (1667). He followed this epic with Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes (jointly published in 1671). Milton died in 1674. Along with Chaucer and Shakespeare, Milton is one of the true giants of our language.
FOOTNOTES

1 celestial
Return to text.
2 hardness
Return to text.
3 Italian: Galileo
Return to text.
4 practical scientist, learned man
Return to text.
5 discover, make known
Return to text.
6 spotted, patchy
Return to text.
7 admiral’s ship, flagship
Return to text.
8 straight slender stick
Return to text.
9 difficult, troublesome
Return to text.
10 soil
Return to text.
11 beat/shone strongly
Return to text.
12 covered, roofed
Return to text.
13 talked idly, lied about
Return to text.
14 steeply, perpendicularly
Return to text.
15 fortifications placed on top of walls
Return to text.
16 directly overhead
Return to text.
17 unpolished, rough
Return to text.
18 streams
Return to text.
19 reeds, pipes, flutes
Return to text.
20 pastoral
Return to text.
21 extended across
Return to text.
22 pulled around him
Return to text.
23 Terah = Abraham’s father
Return to text.
24 Egyptian
Return to text.
i.e., the sea saw the strength of the Almighty’s hand

cowardly

army

defeat

always, forever

who

streams, brooks

proclaim

widely, at large

destroy, kill, overcome

brightly colored

greatness, power, dignity

cruel, terrible, savage

the Hebrew people

the Red Sea

brown-skinned

desolate

the Amorites, pre-Israelite dwellers in Canaan

Amorite king, and an exceedingly large man

generously bold, daring

Jacob

to sing, celebrate in song

blossomed

withered

color vermilion

the north wind (Aquilo = “eagle”)
rough, coarse, violent

Orythia, daughter of the king of Athens

affected injuriously

i.e., unless he too wedded some fair one

notorious

maturity, old age

frisky, sportive

carriage, chariot

dwelling

shamed, disgraced

unknowing, unwitting

once

Zephyr, the west wind, also loved Hyacinth, and in revenge caused a quoit (iron ring thrown at a peg in the ground) thrown by Apollo to swerve, hit, and kill Hyacinth

Eurotas = Laconian river; strand = bank, shore

shallowly dug? or an in-ground grave rather than a properly elevated tomb structure?

explain, clarify

verses, poem

creature, being

benefit, behalf

appropriate, proper

Astraea ("starry maiden"), goddess of justice and the last god to leave the earth

clothing

travel quickly

dirty, repulsive

pain, grief

i.e., in the preceding part, which is a pun-filled "Prolusion"

obvious, bare, plain
suspicion

boxes, chests

thoroughly, all over

Zeus and Hera’s daughter; cupbearer to the gods

layers

old woman, grandmother

see Homer’s *Odyssey* 8:499ff.

within the boundary

an academic pun: predicament = (1) term used in Aristotelian rhetoric, (2) Milton’s difficulty with his “wand’ring muse”

place

unlucky, disastrous, dreadful

chance, luck

prophetess, fortune-teller, witch

apart

oudistance, surpass

attribute, quality, nature

one George Rivers (or his brother, Nizell) played the part of Relation

outermost

on the border of England and Scotland

the Don, in Yorkshire

*trente* = “thirty,” in French, and the Trent takes its name therefrom

see the story of the river nymph Sabrina in *Comus*, lines 824ff.

the river runs past Newcastle, proverbial for its coal

i.e., is supposedly named for a Scythian chief who drowned in that river

the Thames, which runs past various royal castles

crime, fault, penalty
105 unbearable, intolerable
106 was accustomed
107 residence/offices of a sovereign
108 style, talent
109 effect, accomplish
110 style, tone
111 the horses pulling the sun god’s chariot
112 impression, stamp
113 the three Magi/wise men
114 come before [pre= before, venir= come]
115 poorly, shabbily
116 rough, coarse, inelegant
117 feeding trough in stable/barn
118 reverential wonder
119 laid aside, taken away, taken off
120 brilliant, fine
121 adornment
122 joyful, lively, lustful
123 forehead, face
124 corrupted, foul, filthy, stained [adjective]
125 abashed, ashamed
126 forerunner (advance person)
127 with hook/scythelike protrusions? a hook-shaped chariot?
128 respectful, reverential
129 hushed, silent
130 rage, roar
131 the morning star, not (in this usage) Satan
place
as if
moment, instant
simple, humble
gripped, seized, charmed (the “stringèd noise” took “all their souls in blissful rapture”)
cadence
the moon
prepared, dressed
inexpressible
rolling, tossing, tumbling
full of moral blemishes/defects
suffering, mourning
houses, tents
similar
delicate, gauzy texture
meeting of a deliberative council [trisyllabic]
fearful, awe-inspiring
narrower, tighter
wrathful, indignant
lashes, brandishes, whips
prognosticate
slope
prompts, animates
silver-leafed?
local spirit (pagan)
Roman household and hearth gods
Roman priests
odd, strange
separate
spiritual/divine being
mountain/Phoenician sun god
followers of Baal
Phoenician moon goddess
encircled
Ammon, Egyptian god with the head of a ram
wethers
Phoenician Adonis
deity associated with Baal
into which babies were thrown, as sacrifices to Moloch
animal-like/shaped
Egyptian earth goddess, horned like a cow
Egyptian sun god, Isis’ son
son of Orus, dog/ jackal-headed
chief of the Egyptian gods, portrayed as a black bull
see line 220, below
percussion instrument, tambourinelike
songs of praise/gladness
robed
eyes
hundred-headed fire-breathing giant, a serpent below the waist
coils
eastern
separate, individual
fairies
labyrinth (as in a fairy ring?)

long and wearisome (used in a jocund rather than literal sense)

youngest-born/produced

i.e., wearing gleaming body armor

ready to be useful [four syllables, first and third accented]

once, formerly, some time ago

to sing in counterpoint

fasten upon, clutch, take hold of

gaviest, most severe

peril, danger, risk

creature, being

temporary dwelling, place, abode

put up with, endure

Phoebus Apollo, god of (among other things) poetry

Marco Girolamo Vida’s Christiad; he was a native of Cremona

proper to

subdued

Ezekiel

Jerusalem (Shalem = ancient Semitic god)

anxiously thoughtful

absorption

mood? seizure?

treasures

i.e., as in prayer

mass of stone

mark, engrave

lamenting
vivid, fresh, brightly gay
letters of the alphabet
i.e., infections being carried by some germlike agent, the poet’s tears of sorrow, like a sort of sickly semen, spawn “a race of mourners” on that which carries water down on men, namely, a cloud
forerunner (literally)
attiring, arraying
valley, hollow
Sonnets 2–6, written in Italian, are not here included
(arranged by compositional order rather than chronologically; dates of composition are, as usual, indicated with the title of each poem
twig, shoot
gracious, favorably inclined
song
soon/soon enough (opportune)
barbarous, ignorant
the cuckoo, linked to sexual jealousy/betrayal
retinue, attendants
ingenious, cunning, tricky
speed, impetus
are invested with
yet? always?
equal, proportionate
destiny
jow
[trisyllabic]
luck, fortuitous circumstance
In October 1642, during the early days of England’s civil war, the royalist army almost reached London; Milton’s house lay just outside the city walls
Milton himself
Return to text.

239 repay

240 noble, honorable, gentlemanly

241 dwelling

242 Alexander the Great: Emathia was a Macedonian province

243 Pindar, Greek poet

244 music: in Athenian Greece, the chorus referred to in the next footnote would have been sung

245 Euripides: a chorus from the play is said to have persuaded the Spartans not to sack Athens, in 404 B.C.

246 the lady is unknown

247 “I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him” (Song of Solomon 3:2)

248 conspicuously

249 “And Jesus…said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one good thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41–42); see also Ruth 1:8–18

250 are arrogant, presumptuous

251 gnaw, wear away at

252 compassion, pity

253 concern

254 follows, waits upon

255 Lady Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Marlborough

256 Marlborough died four days after King Charles dissolved his third Parliament, in 1629

257 Philip of Macedon’s defeat of Thebes and Athens in 338 B.C.

258 Chaeronea marked the end of Greek independence; Isocrates committed suicide four days after hearing the news

259 recount, tell

260 block of wood attached to the feet of men or horses, to impede movement

261 by the writing of two tracts on divorce, one of which was entitled Tetrachordon: see Sonnet 12, below

262 surrounds, besieges, besets

263 rustics, boors
Apollo and Diana, twin children of Latona and Jupiter; peasants who refused water to Latona were turned into frogs by Jupiter

Milton’s 1645 book on divorce was shaped by the “four chief places in Scripture which treat of Marriage”

Milton’s 1645 book on divorce was shaped by the “four chief places in Scripture which treat of Marriage”

James Gordon, Lord Aboyne, Scots royalist

Alexander MacDonnell, known also as MacColkitto and MacGillespie, general in the royalist army of James Graham, Earl Montrose

Henry Lawes, 1596–1662, master musician, who composed the music for Comus

Catherine, wife of George Thomason, London bookseller and publisher; died in 1646

Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander in chief of the Parliamentarian army

Scotland

a covenant of friendship made in 1643 between Parliament and the Scots was broken a month later by a Scottish invasion

to engraft new feathers onto damaged wings
the covenant with Parliament, being unserpentlike, broke Scotland’s “serpent wings,” but invading England and breaking that covenant restored her native serpentlike qualities.

plunder, pillage, robbery

slander, defamations, calumnies

course

battle of 1648

soaked

battle of 1650

battle of 1651 [bisyllabic, as if written “WOOS ter”]

mouth, appetite

Sir Henry Vane (the Younger), statesman and councilor

i.e., the togas worn by the senators of Rome

Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, invaded Rome in the third century B.C.

Hannibal of Carthage, in Africa, also invaded Rome in the third century B.C.

purpose, intent

pun on “Holland”

gibe at the spelling and pronunciation of Dutch

equipment

the Vaudois, Swiss Protestants, attacked and killed by Catholic partisans in 1655

[verb]

sheep pen: here, of course, metaphorical

the Pope

flee

the papacy

used up, exhausted

before

in biblical times, “talent” also meant a monetary unit: see Matthew 25:14ff, the parable of the talents
devoted, bound
Return to text.
bring/show to God [verb]
Return to text.
as per the parable of the talents
Return to text.
cold, rebuke
Return to text.
hurry
Return to text.
Edward Lawrence, member of Parliament; his father, Henry Lawrence, was president of Cromwell’s Council of State
Return to text.
roads, lanes, paths
Return to text.
boggy, slushy, muddy
Return to text.
gloomy, dark, dismal, dull
Return to text.
a day that
Return to text.
winter, with its ice
Return to text.
which is gaining on us/coming closer and closer
Return to text.
the west wind
Return to text.
“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin”: Matthew 6:28
Return to text.
dainty, elegant
Return to text.
Italian
Return to text.
afford? spare time for? leave off, forbear?
Return to text.
introduce, or delay
Return to text.
Cyriack Skinner, 1627–1700, Milton’s student, friend, helper, and more than likely his amanuensis
Return to text.
Sir Edward Coke, 1552–1634, chief justice of the King’s Bench and a legendary figure in the law to this day
Return to text.
goddess of justice
Return to text.
petty, insignificant
Return to text.
as a judge handing down (“pronouncing”) decisions
Return to text.
notably The Institutes of the Law of England
Return to text.
i.e., other lawyers, members of the bar
Return to text.
twist, stretch, alter
Return to text.
soak, drown
Return to text.
343 moves
Return to text.
344 Sweden
Return to text.
345 speedily, in good time
Return to text.
346 sober, sound, practical
Return to text.
347 deprived
Return to text.
348 useless, inactive; unemployed
Return to text.
349 lessen, reduce
Return to text.
350 the smallest of small amounts
Return to text.
351 overworked/employed/worked/used
Return to text.
352 probably, but not certainly, Milton’s second wife, Katherine Woodcock, to whom he was married in 1656, and who died in 1658, not long after giving birth to a daughter
Return to text.
353 Admetus, her husband, had his life extended in return for her voluntarily dying in his stead; Hercules, Jove’s son, successfully wrestled with Death, and then brought her back to life
Return to text.
354 stain, blemish
Return to text.
355 see Leviticus 12:5
Return to text.
356 limitation, reserve
Return to text.
357 clothed, dressed
Return to text.
358 bent, leaned
Return to text.
359 the Muses were the daughters of Memory
Return to text.
360 slow-striving
Return to text.
361 prosody
Return to text.
362 invaluable, priceless
Return to text.
363 inspired by Apollo, god of poetry, who lived in the city of Delphi
Return to text.
364 (1) heavy, (2) profound: see footnote 46, below
Return to text.
365 (1) mold, cast, copy (as in printing), (2) effect, influence
Return to text.
366 depriving, stripping
Return to text.
367 (1) stone, such as is used in tombs and gravestones, or rigid/cold/white like marble, (2) the marbled pattern or paper used in ornamenting/binding books
Return to text.
imagining

buried (metaphorical: “absorbed”)

splendor, magnificence

deliveryman

temporary idleness

also a renter of horses: the proverbial phrase “Hobson’s choice” stems from his insisting that a would-be customer either accepted whatever horse was nearest to the door or else got no horse at all

belt or band (leather or cloth) around a horse’s body, securing saddle/pack/etc.; possibly also a pun on Hobson’s own girt(h) and Death having broken him

roads

muddy ditch

trickster, con man

entire

to dodge = to give (someone) the slip, to avoid, to baffle

inn in London, located on a main thoroughfare

habitual path, route

Death = the “kind…chamberlain,” or inn servant

a candle—but Death extinguishes a person’s light

decompose, die

the indestructible stuff of which stars and other heavenly bodies are formed

just as the stars revolve, so too did Hobson, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth….

stopped

measures, assigns values to

any mechanical contrivance/machine

primary cause, which was movement

at once—but also “straight” in the sense of no longer revolving

one sense of the word “breathe,” as in “to take breath,” is “to rest”
“term” = when college is in session, “vacation” = when college is not in session

“drive the time away” as in “killing time”—but he was literally a “driver” (coachman)

(1) brought to life, (2) made to go faster

“fetch and carry” = common phraseology

abolished, done away with—but also “put down” in the ground, buried

i.e., six men will be required/used to carry him to his grave

boredom, sorrow

involving unconcern with time

load = burden

so that

as if

a form of torture

transformed, like so many classical figures, into a star/constellation?

the “date” of a document is the “time” assigned to it (by the calendar)

i.e., as regular as the moon

“wain” = wagon; “wane” = decrease

written on his tomb, or as his funereal inscription generally, just as letters too have their “superscriptions,” or inside addresses

hold/enclose the corpse of

dead in childbirth, together with her child, in 1631, at age twenty-three

Thomas, Viscount of Rock-Savage

on her mother’s side, heir of Lord Darcy, Earl of Rivers

counted, reckoned up

dwell

proper, fit

Hymen

she had been married at sixteen; at twenty-three she died

cypress = a funereal wood, its branches and twigs a symbol of mourning
born in 1629
goddess of childbirth
childbirth labor
one of the three Fates, who cut the thread of life
the child was dead before delivery
a cutting from a plant/flower
retinue?
careless
youth, rustic, lover
pluck, cut
springtime, like springtime
predictive, warning
the mountain where the Muses dwelled
twigs/sprays used as wreaths
roads
the River Cam, for which Cambridge is named
Rachel
the child she bore was Benjamin
happiness (in heaven)
(in Italian) lively, cheerful, gay, merry
monstrous dog, guardian of the entrance to Hades
Styx = underground river across which Charon ferried the souls of the dead into Hades
unknown
small, solitary chamber
projecting cliff edges
according to Homer, a people who live at the outer edge of the world and thus are in perpetual darkness
named, called
the three Graces are Agalia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne [four syllables, the second and fourth accented]

exhales

jolly, lively, unresisting

merry, gay

affable, graceful

fanciful turns of speech, conceits

sportive/cunning/amorous tricks

nod of the head, signaling either assent or command

goddess of youth [bisyllabic]

divert, diversion

uncensured

slow, listless

speckled

“rear” as in “rear guard”: the image is military

as in “haystack”

brave, fierce, vigorous

“struts his dames before” = struts in front of his lady folk

light gray

in plain view, openly

elevated, distinguished, of high rank

display of high dignity/rank/wealth

elaborate costumes/uniforms

equipped, ordered

sharpens

appraises

reddish brown

farmland ploughed and harrowed but left uncultivated for a period (usually a year)
spotted, variegated

indented parapets at the tops of walls

i.e., some beautiful woman
dwells

center of attraction

Corydon and Thyrsis = prototypical names for characters in Greek pastorals

leafy edible plants

food
deft, dexterous

prepares

abode, cottage

tie up

bundles made after reaping (usually of grains)
i.e., before harvest time (autumn)

conduct, guide, show the way

browned by exposure

conical heaps of hay, in the fields/pastures

meadow

free from care/doubt/worry

highland

small villages or groups of houses, having no church

merry, joyful, light-hearted

primitive three-stringed fiddle

a principal fairy

cakes, sweetmeats, dainties

threshing tool: a wooden handle to which is tied a free-swinging clublike swingle (or “swipple”)
beneficent goblin
stuffed with food
morning call
garments
public spectacle/festivity
sufficient/abundant supply
god of marriage
orange-red/yellow
wax candle
splendor, magnificence
Ben Jonson, 1572–1637, poet, dramatist, critic; friend/colleague of Shakespeare
comedy (in which the actors wore low-heeled slippers, or “socks”)
imagination
corrosive
the Lydian (ancient Greek) mode (musical scale) was soft, often melancholy; air = melodies
gentle
round
see footnote 36 to line 27, above
attention, care
whirling, intoxicated
skill, craft
legendary poet/musician
raise, lift
Elysian Fields/Elysium = legendary island of the blessed
melodies
lord of the underworld
Orpheus had won her right to live again, provided he not look back at her as she followed him up into the world
of the living. He finally did look back, at her urgent request, and she disappeared forever [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

Return to text.

529 The reference is to Marlowe’s “Passionate Shepherd” see also lines 37–40, above

Return to text.

530 (in Italian) thoughtful, serious, grave

Return to text.

531 help, assist

Return to text.

532 resolved, determined

Return to text.

533 whims

Return to text.

534 foolish, credulous, idiotic

Return to text.

535 showy

Return to text.

536 minute particle (of dust)

Return to text.

537 hirelings, mercenaries, tools, creatures

Return to text.

538 son of Hypnos (Sleep), and god of dreams

Return to text.

539 reach, light upon

Return to text.

540 a handsome Ethiopian prince; his sister’s name is Himera—but the allusion remains obscure

Return to text.

541 suit

Return to text.

542 Cassiopeia, queen of Ethiopia, boasted that Andromeda, her daughter, was more beautiful than the Nereids, who responded by turning Andromeda into a constellation [“Ethiope” = bisyllable—i.e., first syllable stressed, second syllable elided]

Return to text.

543 virgin daughter of Saturn (Chronos) and goddess of the hearth

Return to text.

544 in Crete? where Jove (Zeus) lived—and plotted against Saturn (Chronos)

Return to text.

545 priestess of a pagan deity

Return to text.

546 sober, grave, serious, reserved

Return to text.

547 color

Return to text.

548 sable-colored: black

Return to text.

549 mantelike vestment, worn over the shoulders

Return to text.

550 fine linen fabric; unlike most linens, cypress lawn is black

Return to text.

551 comely

Return to text.

552 usual, habitual, customary

Return to text.

553 to communicate/hold intercourse with
transported, carried away, enraptured
steadfast, firm, grave, serious
heavy
glance, look
i.e., her eyes
with equal firmness
lean
fasting (abstinence from food)
always
withdrawn
well-ordered
“the Cherub Contemplation” (line 54, below)
Ezekiel’s vision of a heavenly chariot: see Ezekiel 10:1–2 and 9–22
[five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]
summon (with a whisper)
unless
the nightingale
mood, manner
moon goddess
curbs, restrains
yoke = wooden device for coupling more than one horse or other dray animal to one vehicle
singer (the nightingale)
solicit, entreat
not by lawn cutting but by sheep nibbling
a piece/patch of ground, usually small
deep mournful tone
quiet
remote, secluded

the night watchman/town crier

incantation

the constellation Ursa Major ("Great Bear"), which never sets

Hermes Trismegistus ("thrice great Hermes"), third-century Neoplatonist

Plato’s spirit is assumed, here, to now reside in a planetary sphere: Plato argued that great men’s souls do in fact so ascend after their bodies die

explain

dwelling

a being intermediate between god and man: an inferior deity

accord, agreement

brilliant, showy

scepter = ornamental rod/wand

rich purple cloth

of which Oedipus was king

i.e., Agamemnon, Orestes, Electra, Iphigenia

high thick-soled boots worn in tragedies, as opposed to the “sock” (low slipper) worn in comedies

mythical Greek poet, said to have been taught by Orpheus

Geoffrey Chaucer, “Squire’s Tale" (in Canterbury Tales): the first two parts were finished, but we have only the first two lines of part three

[two lines, first and third accented]

tournaments

not ironic, but a reference to Spenser, one of Milton’s favorite poets, who (in Book IV, canto 2, of The Fairie Queene) added allegory to the tale Chaucer left unfinished

path

sober
decked, adorned
pleated, curled
Cephalus, husband of Procris, trapped in an ultimately fatal human-deity triangle when Eos ("dawn") fell in love with him
god of forests
harsh, violent, rugged
lifted, raised
frequently visited place
shelter, covering
unhallowed, polluted, alien
glaringly bright
company? harmony?
tutelary god/spirit
proper
ornamented with scenes ("stories") from history, legend, etc.
made, ordered, arrayed
resounding, sounding forth
ponder
show
catch sight of
Leto, a Titan, mother of twins, Apollo and Artemis, whose father is Zeus
the Great Mother [trisyllabic, first and third syllables accented]
i.e., give her any further competitive advantage
gentlemanly, noble, high-born, aristocratic
shepherds, rustics
Arcadia: region of Greece which Virgil's *Eclogues* made the traditional locale of the pastoral ideal

river, stream

river that fell in love with the nymph Arethusa and, after Diana transformed her into a fountain, flowed under the sea to reach her

buskin halfboot

generous, noble, honorable

choice of

skillful, dainty, pretty, elegant

profuse, extravagant, sportive, fanciful

noxious, harmful

blighting, infectious

from

crossing, traversing (the sky)

Saturn

ulcerative, decaying

go

hunting horn

count

rows

potent, powerful

vital shears = shears of life

unbreakable

the Fates, daughters of Necessity

fickle, changeable

(1) below, (2) of humble rank

rhythmical, regular

coarse
unpurified

try, attempt

direct one’s attention

stock

clothing

glossy, variegated

i.e., providing shelter against the malign influence of evil stars

the River Ladon runs through Arcadia and joins the Alpheus

Arcadian mountain, birthplace of Pan, associated with the worship of Zeus

Arcadian mountain

gray/grayish white

Arcadian mountain range, where Hercules hunted and killed a fierce wild boar

Arcadian mountain, associated with Pan

nymph beloved by Pan

written to celebrate the Earl of Bridgewater’s election as Lord President of Wales. As performed at Lord Bridgewater’s Ludlow castle, 29 September 1634, the lady was played by Bridgewater’s daughter and the brothers by her brothers. Thyrsis/attendant spirit was played by the composer of the masque’s music (and music tutor to the family), Henry Lawes.

cattle pen

Pluto, lord of the underworld, as Jove was lord of that above ground

custom, practice

i.e., the mainsea, the ocean

much, great

temperate

power

intricate, entangled

Bacchus

free

with
menacing, inauspicious
brilliant, precious
foolish
lynx
fair, pleasing, proper
goddess of the rainbow
garments
male servant, attendant, rustic, shepherd
reed flute
magical, enchanting
band, crowd, herd
having the heads of
commands
to shut up sheep in a fold (pen, enclosure)
(1) temper, abate, mitigate, (2) lay down
sloping, slanting
threads, cords
sprinkling down
proverbs, maxims
channels, inlets
herd, flock, multitude
morris dance: traditional English country dance, especially associated with May Day celebrations
lively, skilled
lively, spruce
rippling
festivals, holidays
Thracian goddess of orgies
except
black
Hecate [trisyllabic], ghost-world goddess
blabbering
spy
fussy, overly refined
announce
i.e., they dance
shelter, hiding place
thickets
overtaken by darkness
tricks, traps, snares
elastic, impressionable
dim
appearances, form
crafty, clever, skillful
flattering, coaxing, specious
prosperity
maintains in connection with
(1) completely, (2) becomingly
merry
sportive
rustics, farmhands
frisky, unregulated
uncivilized/coarse behavior
drinkers
devotee
pilgrim
clothing, garments, dress
wagon
abundant
complete
unbroken, absolute
supporting
glittering, gleaming
river in western Asia Minor, flowing into the Aegean
beloved by Echo, and punished for rejecting her
speech
resounding
drop in pitch
water nymphs [trisyllabic, first and third syllables accented]
powerful, mighty
multiheaded, voracious monster
deadly whirlpool, located opposite Scylla
felt intimately/in the heart
god of shepherds, flocks, and their fertility; half human, half goat
god of wildernesses
expedient device
ushering = escorting
hit/come upon, guess
to be important, to signify/matter
daughter of Zeus and Hera, cupbearer of the gods [bisyllabic, first accented]
straps, ropes, harness
wearied, overworked
tender/cutter of hedges
covering, as by a mantle/cloak
bearing, carriage
airy, joyful, bright, etc.
dell, hollow, cleft between hills
shallow hollow or pit
bushy
prook
escort
residing
sheltered
straw bed
poor, humble, inferior
dutiful, faithful
adapt, regulate
are in the habit/practice of
blessing
(1) wax wick/candle, (2) a light
reed
small door
Arcadia (site of proverbial pastoral simplicity)
Tyre = ancient Phoenician city
Callisto, raped and impregnated by Jupiter, is turned by Juno into Ursa Minor: the Pole Star is in its tail
shut into their folds/enclosures/pens
interlaced twigs, sprigs, and the like

flute

made of oat stems straw

that which forms encloses a fingerhole

narrow, enclosed, confined

ridge

large pillow

filled

overexcited intense

reckon resolve

form shape

i.e., I do not plan to look for her in that spirit

embraces hides

fixed steadfast

unsuitable

peril danger risk

[five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

preens

quotidian activities

confused

of the earth

blinded clouded

likes seeks

single person solitary dwelling

place of frequent resort

garments
dressed in livery (distinctive uniform of servants)
serve, wait upon
unrestrained, profuse
admits
[four syllables, second and fourth accented]
incorporates
degrade, make bestial
cemetery
as if
sacred, holy, religious
unsheathe a sword
i.e., swords
melodies, tunes
pushing, hurrying
mother
irregular
caused to be abandoned
nearest, closest
open expanse of upland
concern, fear
fanciful, incredible
monsters with lion heads, goat bodies, and serpent tails
split
poisonous, life-destroying
whispered charms/spells
undoing
874 coinage, stamp
875 engraved, written
876 pastures, fields
877 crowd
878 domesticated
879 [trisyllabic]
880 most remote (farthest in)
881 unwitting
882 waving
883 conclusion, end
884 familiar
885 forestall
886 a sentence [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
887 enslaved
888 evil
889 [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
890 the underworld, Hades
891 monsters, part woman, part bird
892 many-headed snakes
893 hobgoblins
894 booty
895 prowess
896 profit, advantage
897 “as to tell us this story/narrative”
898 tricks, stratagems
899 value, merit
900 strong, powerful, magically endowed
pouch
herbs, medicinal plants
picked, chose
studded
a fabled and fabulous plant
fabulous plant given to Odysseus by the god Hermes [bisyllabic]
the shepherd lad
supreme
plasting influence, curse
[five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]
entanglements
retired, came away
sweet, pleasing
withdraw, vanish
retreat, recoil, slip away
quickly, at once
stimulating, envigorating
sweet drink
boundaries, limits
grief-banishing drug
wife of Thon = Polydamna
terms, promises
not privileged, not freed from
[four syllables, second and fourth accented]
those who
quickly
looks, faces
masked, disguised
pompous, formal, solemn
Diogenes, Cynic philosopher who lived in a tub
offspring
stored
furnish
sulk
peas, beans, lentils, etc.
coarse wool
miser
Nature
overburdened
feathers [the line, having ten syllables, can be scanned as iambic pentameter—but not easily]
overfreighted, overloaded
duped
boasted of, praised
in general use, passing/flowing from hand to hand
show
plain, simple, unpolished
[four syllables, second and fourth accented]
vile, wretched, worthless
color
work busily at
embroidery
to separate, to card
judicious
except
magician, trickster, buffoon

as he has

thrusting forward, intruding

deeded, dressed

sift, examine

vice’s

blame, burden

wished

provider

suitable, seemly

[four syllables, first and third accented]

[four syllables, second and fourth accented]

showy, dazzling

holy secret

the practice of swordplay

sinews

i.e., Jove consigns the rebels against him to “the chains” of Hell

test, afflict

i.e., creation

sediments, dregs

at once

disjoining, parting, separating

stop

character in Spenser’s *Fairie Queene*

truest, most genuine

played his pipe/flute

check, restraint
Return to text.
982 governs
Return to text.
983 river flowing out of Wales, ending in Bristol Channel
Return to text.
984 once upon a time
Return to text.
985 son of Brutus, legendary founder of Britain
Return to text.
986 Brutus
Return to text.
987 river
Return to text.
988 depths
Return to text.
989 sea god, father of the Nereids
Return to text.
990 jimp, loose
Return to text.
991 spiritual cleansers
Return to text.
992 vestibule
Return to text.
993 elf, goblin
Return to text.
994 breaths of malignant air, curses, infections
Return to text.
995 sing joyously
Return to text.
996 songs
Return to text.
997 encircling
Return to text.
998 surrounding, hemming in
Return to text.
999 exorcising
Return to text.
1000 [four syllables, second and fourth accented] Oceanus’ wife, mother of rivers, is Tethys; Neptune = Poseidon, god of the sea and of earthquakes; Nereus is father of the Nereids, one of whom is Thetis; the “Carpathian wizard” is Proteus, a shape-shifter; Triton is son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, human from the waist up, fish below; Glaucus is a fisherman who became immortal and a sea god; Leucothea is a Greek sea goddess; Parthenope is a Siren, as is Ligéa.
Return to text.
1001 blown, sounded
Return to text.
1002 [four syllables, first and third accented]
Return to text.
1003 beaches, shores
Return to text.
1004 [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
Return to text.
1005 sly, artful
Return to text.
1006 raise, lift
toss one’s head

[adjective]

shackle, chain, fetter, etc.

constrained, pressed tightly

duty
healing effect
viscous resinlike secretions
sticky
Neptune's wife [four syllables, first and third accented]
Trojan prince, father of Aeneas
small, minor
small streams, brooks
headwaters
transparent pale green precious stone
thicket
come, congregate
quick, abrupt lowering of head or body
customs, behavior
prepare, invent
affectedly elegant or dainty
tree nymphs [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
open ground, grassy pasture
rippling
trim, dapper, neat
so that
walkways, passages
aromatic balsam
goddess of the rainbow
cause to blossom/bloom
embroidered, trimmed
wonderfully handsome youth: one day while he was hunting, he was seen by Aphrodite/Venus, who fell in love with him—and when he was killed by a wild boar, from his blood grew the rose, and from her tears, the anemone growing

Aphrodite/Venus

Cupid falls in love with Psyche, a mortal; she disobeys him and is deserted by him; thereafter she goes through trial after trial and, eventually, reclains and is married to him [bisyllabic; the first letter is silent]

[adverb]

the music of the spheres

weak, infirm

the poem was intended to be “set on a clock case”

see footnote 40 immediately below

the leaden weight that animates the clock’s works

(1) womb, (2) stomach, belly

scum, rubbish, dregs

indivisible?

left behind [adjective]

sixth order in the nine ranks of the celestial hierarchy

heraldic pomp (“herald” = officer who makes state pronouncements and delivers state messages)

erwhile, once

[adjective, modifying “sin”]

spelled in Milton’s manuscript “sease,” this word could be either “seize” or “cease”

judgment, sentence

“And I [God] will establish my covenant between me and thee [Abraham] and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:7)
always not discordant concord, harmony [four syllables, first and third accented] primal, original (1) fellowship, (2) company of musicians a generic shepherd’s name—announcing, as it were, that the genre of the poem is the classic pastoral lyric ode sung by a single voice; in the pastoral tradition, an interior monologue or soliloquy Edward King, a fellow student at Cambridge by occasion = the poem, written because of this fatal occasion…. (1) symbolic of poetry, (2) symbolic of fame: the laurel, an evergreen, is sacred to Apollo, god of poetry sacred to Venus sacred to Bacchus, the god of wine dry, withered unripe constrained inexperienced, unskilled ripening obligation, necessity roll to and fro withering, shriveling recompense, reward, honor the Muses a bit disdainful so may = in the future, when Milton dies, he too may be thus mourned by “some gentle muse” noble, excellent, honorable fortunate, successful
approve of, regard with kindness
ordained, predetermined, fated
holding funereal ashes
black burial sheet
brook, stream
meadows, glades
their flocks
what time = when, at the time when
a brownish beetle known as a cockchafer or dorfly/dorhawk
blows (strictly, “hums” or “buzzes”)
summertime/ hot-weather heat
fattening? feeding? watering?
Hesperus (Venus)
“wheel” because heavenly objects were thought to be located in “spheres”
tuned, in harmony with
oat stems/straws
woodland gods/demons, part human, part beast
a tutor at Cambridge?
straggling
poems, songs
plant-disease of an ulcerous sort
worm or crawling larva, an intestinal parasite thought to infect sheep, cattle, etc.
recently weaned
blossoms
slopes, hills, mountains, cliffs, etc.
Celtic minstrel-poets
the island of Anglesey, in the Irish Sea
the River Dee

Calliope [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
i.e., she who bore Orpheus
was mother to
(1) performing magic, (2) entrancing, charming
all of
mob, throng, crowd, rabble, etc., all female, though it is unclear whether they were (1) Thracian women jealous of Eurydice or (2) Maenads angry that Orpheus did not properly honor their god, Dionysus
his head had been cut off; in some versions of the story, the severed head continued to sing
profits, avails
simple, plain
frolic
generic shepherdess name
see footnote 20, immediately above
positive, determined, unobstructed, pure
stimulate, incite
reward
find it
Atropus (“irresistible”)
Phoebus Apollo, god of poetry
glittering
metal hammered into very thin sheets and used to set off some gem or glittering stone
talk
ultimately
recompense, reward
the nymph Arethusa fled from a sea god, Alpheus; Diana turned her into a fountain, but he—a river—flowed under the sea and was thus united with her
river, stream
river running through Mantua, home of Virgil
pastoral song
Triton, a merman, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, a Nereid
cruel, terrible, wicked
rough, stormy, strong
winds represented as great birds
god of the winds [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
water nymph [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
during, subject to
secret, foul, evil
River Cam, which flows through Cambridge (and from which, of course, the town takes its name)
cap
made of reedlike plants
worked
the hyacinth
robbed
child
St. Peter, wearing a bishop’s miter (headdress) and carrying the keys to Heaven’s gates
violently
enough
invited
the prosody is helped if “they are” is contracted: did Milton perhaps intend it to be sounded as spoken?
successful, prosperous
like

trifling, showy

feeble

corrupt, foul, festering, virulent

vapor

breathe

plague, pestilence, moral corruption

savage, cruel

secret

at a rapid pace, swiftly, right away

as Roy Flannagan has said, “perhaps the most famous crux in English literature”

see note 33 to line 85, above

revered, authoritative

uncertain: perhaps Theocritus, pastoral poet, who may have been born in Sicily

valleys

as in “bluebells,” “harebells,” etc.

small flowers

are customary

playful, sportive

new, green

a hollow among hills

the Dog Star, Sirius

frugally, abstemiously

clever, lovely, dainty

the colored center of flowers

spring, springlike

early
flecked
sober, steadfast, constant, mournful
crowned with laurel
wood frame to hold flowers; funeral carriage
introduce, put forward
islands off the Scottish coast
gulfing, submerging
the sea was thought to be full of monsters
tear-strewn
i.e., we pray for you to be returned, but our prayers (“vows”) are denied
the Roman name for Land’s End, in Cornwall; perhaps a reference to some Cornish giant—or perhaps (since Milton first wrote and then crossed out “Corineus”) inserted strictly for prosodic reasons
Mount St. Michael’s, near Land’s End in Cornwall, and across the English Channel from Mont-St.-Michel, in France
in Spain
a fortress (“hold”) near Cape Finisterre, in Spain
pity, compassion
carry, transport
i.e., the sun
soon, in a little while
to restore, renew, mend
dresses
precious metal, here clearly “gold”
muddy, damp
bathes, washes
inexpressible
grand, sacred, formal
companies, groups, bands
fellowships

go

guardian spirit

ample

reparation, compensation

unpolished, rough

streams

reeds, pipes, flutes

pastoral

extended across

pulled around him

prosody

the Latin urget, which Horace uses here, means “presses down on”

simple

elegance, style

unaccustomed

to be surprised, astonished, to marvel at

too readily believed

at leisure, unoccupied

luckless

untested

votive offering

[noun: the Latin is tabula sacer votiva]: David Ferry’s 1997 translation renders these lines “The votive tablet on the temple wall / Is witness that in tribute to the god / I have hung up my sea-soaked garment there.”

i.e., dedicated/given them to the god

clothing

(1) episcopacy had been formally abolished in 1643 (bishops having been members of the House of Lords); (2) in addition, the chief prelate had been the much-hated Archbishop William Laud—whose name, in British English, is virtually a homonym of “lord”
in 1645 the House of Commons banned either public or private use of the *Book of Common Prayer*

i.e., holding more than one clerical post at a time, as Anglicans had, was a practice being indulged in by Presbyterian clergymen as well

swear an oath (to)

presbyterian synod (unit of administration)

Adam Stewart, member of Parliament and propagandist for orthodox Presbyterianism; he affixed only his initials to the pamphlets he published

Samuel Rutherford, a Scot, author of *Plea for Presbytery* (1642)

Thomas Edwards, author of *Gangraena: a catalogue and discovery of many of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and pernicious practices of the sectaries of this time* (1646)

Robert Baillie, a Scot who attacked the Independents

the Council of Trent, 1545–63, attempted but failed to effect Church reforms

leather accouterments worn, at prayer, by Jews: here, a symbol of open hypocrisy

already cropped: William Prynne (a barrister), the onetime Puritan pamphleteer and then member of the House of Commons, had been thus punished in 1634 (and punished again, for the same offense, in 1637, at which time his cheeks were branded) for criticizing the bishops

Psalms 80–88, rather dully translated in 1648—that is, five years earlier than Psalms 1–8—are here omitted; they make no significant contribution either to Milton’s English poetry or to the study thereof

grain husks, separated out by threshing or winnowing

winnowed, threshed

endure, withstand

put up with, endure

[noun]

heathen, pagans

[verb]

ponder

stand erect

meetings, assemblies

deride, mock
rigorous, unsparing
fierce, terrible, dire
merciless
anger, wrath
afflict
ruled, governed
crushed
(1) fully, (2) finally, at last
disinclined
be conversant with
in the way = thereby
dry
support, reliance
King David
his rebellious son
life
quickly
mob, rabble, herd
set, arrange
tents
struck
righteous deeds, conformity to the requirements of divine law
sore need, difficulties
liberate, deliver from bondage
free
tolerated, endured
what time = when
terrified, filled with reverential fear
faithful, rightful, correct, appropriate [adjective]
kind, crowd
excessive quantity
supplies, stocks
clog
lands
grains
devotional/contemplative exercise
i.e., “give weight to my meditations”
deliberate judgment
arrange
tarrying, expectation
endure
wickedness
deceitful, treacherous
in Thy fear = in fear of You
humbly
watch, notice, inspect
sin
in front of (the place)
i.e., he who has a….
unreliable, vacillating
true
destroyed, crushed
continually, always
rebuke, find fault with
set right, repair
bed
wastes, burns away
grown
watch, notice
wickedness
petition, entreaty
acknowledge
nonplussed, prostrated
struck, destroyed, confounded, frustrated
disconcerted
belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel
King David, the Psalmist
worked, done
given in return
nothing—i.e., without any fee or ransom
crush
deposit, place
anger, wrath
press forward, drive, pursue
keep watch
fury
appease, soften, mitigate
i.e., on earth
pledge, promise
creation
wrongly (“do” = “act”)
Return to text.
1355 set up, place
Return to text.
1356 securely
Return to text.
1357 separates, distinguishes
Return to text.
1358 kidneys
Return to text.
1359 ultimately, in the end
Return to text.
1360 strict, rigorous, unsparing
Return to text.
1361 desist, abstain
Return to text.
1362 sharpens
Return to text.
1363 remains
Return to text.
1364 pursue (maliciously), hunt, harass, oppress
Return to text.
1365 he who (not God)
Return to text.
1366 pompous
Return to text.
1367 dug
Return to text.
1368 appropriate, fitting
Return to text.
1369 path
Return to text.
1370 track, way of life
Return to text.
1371 head
Return to text.
1372 precipitous, headlong
Return to text.
1373 stir up, incite, stimulate
Return to text.
1374 molded
Return to text.
1375 cut short, check
Return to text.
1376 weaken
Return to text.
1377 called into being
Return to text.
1378 by
Return to text.
1379 (1) high rank, power, (2) pomp, dignity
Return to text.
1380 i.e., are met
Return to text.
1381 scarcity
metric
iambic pentameter
substance, content
differently
prosody
proper, appropriate
common, ordinary, uneducated
considered
most appropriately
time
about
ancient Israel
deadly, fatal
Christ
Horeb = Sinai, in Exodus and Deuteronomy
Moses, who was thought to have been the author of Genesis
the Jews
site of the Temple, in Jerusalem
Siloam, near Jerusalem
fast by = close, very near
the temple
(1) perilous, rash, risky, (2) enterprising
Mount Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and to the Muses
not specified: the basic nature of the Godhead?
in preference to, rather than
(1) hatching eggs by sitting on them, (2) meditating
ignorant, obscure, blind
great, original
move away
on account of
celestial
horrible, frightful, terrific
conflagration, burning
final damnation
unbreakable
(1) punishing, (2) severe
detestable, abominable
army, band, gang, mob
abyss
brought to nought, shamed
sentence, judgment (punishment)
kept, retained, preserved
(1) full of active evil, (2) full of pain and suffering
attested to, were evidence of
hardened to evil, unyielding
power of vision
disastrous, dreadful, calamitous
barren
(1) desolate, (2) fantastic
reveal, show
presses forward
never used up
lot, destiny, fate
rolling, tumbling
Beelzebub
blessèd, fortunate
countless numbers
covenant
strife
[five syllables, second and fourth accented]
hostile
uncertain, undetermined
cultivation
to petition, beg
favor, pardon, mercy
humbly petitioning, bent
because of
fear
recently
feared for
heavenly, pure fire
care for/prediction of the future
raised, moved forward
boasting, bragging
comrade, of equal rank
sixth of the nine angelic orders
first of the nine angelic orders
guidance, leadership
eternal, everlasting
test, trial
regret
entities, beings
perforce, of necessity
whole
permit, allow
strengthen
satisfy
slaves, bondsmen
anything
always
interfere with, interrupt
purposes, directions
intended, designed
discharge
caused to subside, laid to rest
billows, waves
waste
satiated, glutted
bluish leaden-colored
direct our course, move toward
lodge, take shelter, be contained
mortified, troubled
attack, hurt, damage
companion, associate
water
rod = 5 / yards
Titans: Briareos, in the next line, is one
giants: Typhon, in the next line, is one

biblical city in Cilicia (Asia Minor), north of Cyprus

had

(1) sea monster often analogized and linked to Satan, (2) whale

perhaps, by chance

foaming water, the sea

“foundered” can mean “sunk” here, it may mean “stuck, mired”

concluding, considering, thinking that it (i.e., Leviathan)

skin, outer surface

on the sheltered side, the side away from the wind

covers, clothes

lifted, raised

discomfiture, ruin, perplexity

immediately, at once

spread out

lying his weight upon

descends, settles

so, the like

form, appearance

Sicilian promontory, near Mount Etna (an active volcano, then and now)

(1) vaporized, (2) transmuted

lowland

wrapped, enfolded

infernal, hellish

(1) literally, the River Styx, but metaphorically death, (2) by analogy, this particular burning lake

still being

consent, toleration
Return to text.
1517 heavenly
Return to text.
1518 residence
Return to text.
1519 regulate, control
Return to text.
1520 command
Return to text.
1521 deepest
Return to text.
1522 just barely
Return to text.
1523 stunned, bewildered
Return to text.
1524 unmindful: this is not Lethe, which induces forgetting (oblivion), as Milton makes clear, later, in Book 2, lines 606–10
Return to text.
1525 abode
Return to text.
1526 defeated, overthrown, balked, frustrated
Return to text.
1527 a guarantee, security
Return to text.
1528 stunned
Return to text.
1529 overwhelmed
Return to text.
1530 wicked, fatal
Return to text.
1531 celestial
Return to text.
1532 hardness
Return to text.
1533 Italian: Galileo
Return to text.
1534 practical scientist, learned man
Return to text.
1535 discover, make known
Return to text.
1536 spotted, patchy
Return to text.
1537 admiral’s ship, flagship
Return to text.
1538 straight slender stick
Return to text.
1539 difficult, troublesome
Return to text.
1540 soil
Return to text.
1541 beat/shone strongly
Return to text.
1542 covered, roofed
Return to text.
nevertheless

burning, glowing

in a trance, overpowered

monastery south of Florence

Etruscan

give shelter

rushlike/reedlike plants

the constellation of Orion is associated with winter storms

troubled, agitated

Egyptian pharaoh who oppressed the captive Israelites

Egyptian (Memphis = city in ancient Egypt)

knights, horsemen

treacherous

temporary residents

where the captive Israelites lived, in Egypt

brought low, cast down

stupefaction

revolting, immense

rulers

insensibility, mental prostration

power, force, strength

banners, flags

soon

impale, pierce through

abyss

briskly, quickly

accustomed
1570 Moses
1571 Return to text.
1572 black
1573 floating/whirling through the air
1574 vault
1575 descend, settle
1576 burning stone, sulfur
1577 Goths and Vikings
1578 Danube
1579 down from
1580 at once
1581 surpassing
1582 at first, originally
1583 God’s record of the righteous
1584 toleration, consent
1585 testing
1586 showy
1587 bed
1588 shore
1589 of mixed and disorderly composition
1590 at a distance
1591 most, the bulk
1592 place
1593 to face (defiantly)? await?
1594 desecrated, violated
1595 to insult, defy
1596 percussion instrument, tambourinelike
savage, cruel, fierce, harsh

a Semitic people who lived in Jordan; they were related to the Israelites but often at war with them

now Amman

in Bashan region; included in the sixth province of Solomon’s kingdom

modern Bashan

river flowing into the Dead Sea

shameless, daring

Moloch’s

scandalous, disgraceful

Gehinnom, valley SW of Jerusalem

high place in the valley of Hinnom, where children were sacrificed to Moloch

place of future torment, hell

symbol, model

the Moabites’ god

filthy

object of fear/reverence

like the Ammonites, the Moabites were located in Jordan and related to the Israelites, with whom they often warred

see Deuteronomy 3:12

a mountain in the Moabite region: see Isaiah 15:2

linked to Nebo (see footnote 219, above)

Hesebon = Moabite city

see Isaiah 15:5

Sehon = king of the Amorites, the pre-Israelite people of Canaan

Moabite town

Moabite city

the Dead Sea

Peor = Baal-Peor, Canaanite god associated with sexual orgies on Mt. Peor, in the Moabite region
prophet of the Babylonian exile of the Israelites, sixth century B.C.

captured by the Philistines

placed in Dagon’s temple, overnight the ark toppled Dagon’s statue, knocking off the head and both hands

threshold-edge

(1) still, at that time, (2) nevertheless

Ashdod, major Philistine city

a major Philistine city

a major Philistine city

ekron: a major Philistine city

a major Philistine city

Syrian god

river in Damascus [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

river near Damascus

clear, pellucid, translucent, shining

rivers

Naaman, cured by Elisha, ninth century B.C. prophet of Israel, disciple of and successor to Elijah

Ahaz, king of Judah, eighth century B.C.

i.e., Rimmon’s

stupid, foolish

induced

i.e., Ahaz

Osiris was husband to Isis; Horus (Orus) was their son

tricked, deceived, imposed upon

produced, made up

linked to Apis, the sacred bull of Egypt

Horeb: the mountain where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments; the Israelites waiting below demanded
an idol to worship and Aaron, taking their gold jewelry, melted it and made them a golden calf

Return to text.

1677 Jeroboam, king of Judah, 930–910 B.C., made not one but two golden calves for his people to worship

Return to text.

1678 holy site, north of Jerusalem

Return to text.

1679 holy site in far northern Palestine

Return to text.

1680 “They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten [golden] image,/Thus they changed their glory [i.e.,
God] into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.” Psalm 106:19–20

Return to text.

1681 by extension, the Israelites

Return to text.

1682 made equal

Return to text.

1683 “For I [the Lord] will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.” Exodus 12:12

Return to text.

1684 “wickedness”

Return to text.

1685 monstrous, flagrant

Return to text.

1686 see I Samuel 2:12–17

Return to text.

1687 (1) lecherous, unchaste, outrageous, (2) given to luxury

Return to text.

1688 debauchery, dissipation, extravagance, loose living, etc.

Return to text.

1689 wrongful treatment, violation of another’s rights

Return to text.

1690 intemperance, excess, violent/disorderly behavior

Return to text.

1691 a common Puritan insult, borrowed from the Hebrew bene Belial, “sons of Belial”

Return to text.

1692 inflated

Return to text.

1693 a city in the Jordan plain, destroyed by God because of its wickedness

Return to text.

1694 see Judges 19:22–30

Return to text.

1695 cast out

Return to text.

1696 married woman (though in fact the woman was a concubine)

Return to text.

1697 i.e., homosexual rape of a man

Return to text.

1698 primary

Return to text.

1699 widely

Return to text.

1700 celebrated, famous

Return to text.
admitted, acknowledged

Uranus’ oldest son, Saturn’s older brother

Saturn, overthrown by Jove

Uranus’ daughter, Cronus’ wife

like measure = equal treatment

Mount Ida (in Crete)

mountain in Thessaly: the gods’ home

true heaven is the highest; the middle air is for demons—and for the Greek gods, according to Milton; in the lower air is the earth (and Hades underneath it)
or = whether

the oracle of Apollo at Delphi

the oracle of Zeus at Dodona

boundaries, limits

Doric land = southern Greece

the Adriatic Sea

western, Italian

i.e., Britain and Ireland

dejected

hidden

Satan

a similar

uncertain, unsettled

appearance

acustomed

appearance

immediately

a form of trumpet, shrill-sounding

raised
in Judaism, the very personification of impurity, an archdemon

presented, put forward

vault, hollow

brilliant, sparkling, radiant, lustrous

pressed close together

quickly

close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans

wooden flutes, not held transversely, as is the flute properly so called

composure, state of mind

mollify, appease

assuage: soften, pacify

bristling, frightful

battle line

fearfully/exceedingly long

weapons

semblance, external appearance

arranged

lay on, give

rows

passing across, side to side (in ranks) rather than front to back (in files)
counts up
swells, expands
(1) actual, concrete, (2) joined in one group/body
mentioned (for purposes of comparison)
be entitled to, be deserving of
i.e., any more than
pygmies: the battle is in Homer’s _Iliad_, III:1–5; Milton returns to it in lines 780–81, below
in Chalcidice, where the giants warred with the gods
part of the Oedipus story: see Aeschylus, _The Seven Against Thebes_
i.e., any more than
Troy
auxiliary
echoes, rings
King Arthur
surrounded by
of Brittany
knightly combat (pronounced “justed”)
castle near Nice, where Charlemagne fought
Rinaldo’s castle: see Ariosto, _Orlando Furioso_
Damascus, where Moslem and Christian knights jousted, in _Orlando Furioso_
Morocco (city): see footnote 396, below
on the southern coast of the Black Sea
Bizerta, in Tunisia, like Morocco a famous site of knightly tournaments
in _La Chanson de Roland_, it is Roland rather than Charlemagne who dies at Roncevaux, not far from Fontarabbia
with (merely)
revered, feared
ominous, ill-boding
1782 sprinkles, lets fall on, pours out, drops
Return to text.
1783 confuses, makes uncertain
Return to text.
1784 furrowed
Return to text.
1785 deliberate, prudent
Return to text.
1786 dropped
Return to text.
1787 partners, colleagues
Return to text.
1788 fate, destiny
Return to text.
1789 punished
Return to text.
1790 blast/scorch/sear with fire/heat
Return to text.
1791 noble, majestic, imposing
Return to text.
1792 blighted, withered
Return to text.
1793 tried, attempted
Return to text.
1794 in spite of = with contempt for
Return to text.
1795 except
Return to text.
1796 outcome
Return to text.
1797 dreadful, terrible
Return to text.
1798 predicting
Return to text.
1799 rebuff, being forced/driven back
Return to text.
1800 powerful
Return to text.
1801 armies
Return to text.
1802 judgment, opinion, direction
Return to text.
1803 at full = completely
Return to text.
1804 worked
Return to text.
1805 “His strength”
Return to text.
1806 act, business
Return to text.
1807 secret, confidential
Return to text.
1808 plan, scheme
Return to text.
1809 brought about, accomplished
1810 discover
1811 common, prevalent
1812 rumor
1813 special, select [adjective]
1814 attention, consideration
1815 breaking/bursting forth
1816 hide, wrap
1817 i.e., from scabbards strapped to their thighs
1818 (1) very much, (2) proudly, arrogantly
1819 clutched and held firmly
1820 reverberating, sonorous
1821 ugly, horrible
1822 “the whole rest”
1823 a scale/crust (of hardened sulfur, combined with volcanic flow)
1824 current science taught that metals formed by mercury combining with sulfur
1825 soldiers with shovels and axes
1826 run in front of, precede
1827 dig trenches in
1828 to throw up, with shovels or spades
1829 defensive mound, usually of earth
1830 upright, elevated
1831 aught…else = anyone else
1832 blessed
1833 (of the earth)
1834 plundered, robbed
1835 veins (of ore)
1836 be surprised/amazed/astonished
1837 curse
1838 (1) brag of, (2) glory in
1839 Egyptian
1840 condemned, depraved, rejected by God
1841 i.e., Memphian kings et al.
1842 near
1843 pits
1844 drawn
1845 skill
1846 melted
1847 dense
1848 separating
1849 skimmed
1850 golden dregs
1851 as soon = quickly
1852 versatile
1853 unknown
1854 soon
1855 structure, building
1856 sweet, pleasing
1857 harmonious music
1858 pillars, columns
1859 a form of Greek architecture
1860 support beams of various types
1861 lack
1862 ornamental molding
decoration applied between the architrave and the cornice

bossy sculptures = bas-relief sculptures

adorned, carved

ancient Memphis, near modern Cairo

Belus or Serapis = Baal or Osiris

enthrone, establish

lofty/large building/structure

(1) located, established, (2) firm, stable

(1) brass, (2) hardened in their effrontery

reveal

suspended, hung

intricate, delicate, skillful, expert, ingenious

firepots

swift, hurrying

Italian

Malciber = Hephaestus/Vulcan

talked idly, lied about

steeply, perpendicularly

fortifications placed on top of walls

directly overhead

tell, recount

mob, rabble

machines, devices

hardworking, skillful, ingenious

solemnly impressive/majestic

multitude

i.e., all the spirits/demons
1890 precisely formed
1891 position, post, rank
1892 soon, quickly
1893 escorted
1894 approaches
1895 were in the habit, accustomed to
1896 Sultan’s
1897 pagan
1898 encounter, charge
1899 outskirts
1900 walk and speak
1901 closed in, compacted
1902 the Himalayas
1903 merrymaking
1904 tardy, late-coming
1905 person in charge
1906 revolves, turns, rolls, moves
1907 way, onward movement
1908 joyful
1909 i.e., the watching peasant
1910 at large = at liberty, free
1911 sovereign establishment
1912 assembly
1913 crowded
1914 is
1915 put forward
1916 occupy

Return to text.
abyss
Persian Gulf city of great wealth
India
showy, magnificent
unsatisfiable
(1) failure, misfortune, (2) result, sequel (to the first attempt)
abyss
(1) strength, energy, (2) mental acuity
the seventh of the nine angelic orders
“Although just right [fair law] at first created me….
regained
luckier, more fortunate
goes along with, depends on
rank, worth, honor, excellence
defensive structure, rampart
political parties, intrigue, strife
after
(1) hope, (2) confidence, confident expectation
cared
opinion, judgment
injurious, abusive, disgraceful
engine = mechanical device: God’s chariot?
the deepest region of Hades
unknown, unfamiliar
drug, potion
in book 1, line 266, an “oblivious pool”
intrinsic—i.e., that which inheres in Spirits/Angels, etc.
1944 actively opposed (i.e., unnatural)
1945 the hindmost portion of their army
1946 attacking, assaulting
1947 result, outcome
1948 horrible, disgusting
1949 [adjective]
1950 harass, oppress
1951 slaves, serfs
1952 kindle, inflame
1953 essence, being
1954 proclaimed, threatened
1955 as God had dropped manna to the Israelites, in the desert, when they fled from Egypt
1956 complicate, confuse
1957 frustrate, destroy
1958 (1) companions, (2) high lords
1959 prognostication
1960 result
1961 feats, deeds, actions
1962 being brought to an end, death
1963 goal, purpose
1964 object
1965 dark, secret
1966 “if we could”
1967 overthrow, defeat
1968 celestial
1969 distinctive nature/shape
1970 evil, harm
1971 low, inferior, degraded
1972 absolute, lifeless, spiritless
1973 employ, exercise
1974 undo, release
1975 (1) intelligent existence, (2) superior intelligent existence
1976 possibly, probably
1977 ordained
1978 set apart
1979 in full force of numbers
1980 interrupted
1981 overhanging, near
1982 afflicting, shaking
1983 without reprieve/delay
1984 struggling, fighting
1985 therefore
1986 occur, come to pass, result
1987 dishonor, disgrace
1988 sentence, judgment, destiny
1989 discharge, withdraw, cancel
1990 distant
1991 remember, notice
1992 unwholesome
1993 habituated, accustomed
1994 adapted
1995 announce, proclaim
1996 submission, obedience, homage
1997 for/by
2025 golden scepter
2026 settled, fixed, resolved
2027 overthrown, defeated, repulsed
2028 conferred, granted, allowed, permitted
2029 whip-strokes/lashes
2030 exchange, give back
2031 resistance, opposition
2032 harvest, gain from
2033 opportunity
2034 be lacking
2035 speed, promptness
2036 bold/daring task
2037 report, talk
2038 [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
2039 form
2040 endowed
2041 (1) judge, (2) sole and absolute ruler
2042 the world of man
2043 attack, assault
2044 ruin, destroy
2045 direct (like cattle)
2046 (1) inexperienced, (2) undersized
2047 i.e., the first man, Adam
2048 overthrow, defeat
2049 Adam and Eve combined, metaphorically the root of all mankind
2050 high-ranking powers, beings of rank/status/importance
2051 assembly
2052 suitable, timely
2053 safe
2054 precious, lustrous
2055 test
2056 touchable, tangible, perceptible
2057 darkness
2058 unknown
2059 abyss
2060 (metaphorical)
2061 sentries [Milton’s spelling = prosodically necessary]
2062 vote, collective decision
2063 cautious, doubtful, uncertain
2064 stunned, paralyzed
2065 worthy, select
2066 first in rank/degree
2067 bold
2068 calm, collected
2069 descendants
2070 celestial
2071 hesitancy
2072 the high vault of hell
2073 excessive, cruel
2074 walls in, surrounds, imprisons
2075 material of impregnable hardness
2076 shut
2077 exit
2078 emptiness, vacuum
vast, deep
immaterial
miscarrying, bringing to nothing
great depth, abyss
weight, importance
sovereignty, pomp
consider assiduously, apply oneself to thinking about
[four syllables, first and third accented]
remedy
incantation, spell
relieve, delay, suspend
reduce/diminish
wretched, difficult, troublesome
abode
omit
border (-lands)
participate in, share
by
restored, roused, stirred up, animated, stimulated
esteem, reputation
profoundly respectful
plausible but false [by A.D. 1651 the modern meaning]
incites, sets in motion
secret, hidden
sombre, wicked
frowning, sullen
atmospheric agency (the weather)
spreads out, stretches forth
bear witness to
settled, secure, steadfast, unwavering
harmony, agreement, peace
alone
possessed of, protected by
undertake, impose
reconciliation, agreement
enough
infernal, hellish
overlord
having a spherical form (or, in this case, a spherical arrangement/order)
heraldic devices
bristling
pronounce, announce
kingly, magnificent
resonant, sonorous
trumpet made of a composite brass-based metal, shining like gold
sent back, reflected
drawn up in ranks
anxious, in doubt, troubled
high up
compete, strive earnestly
i.e., the games held at Olympia, in Elis
second most important site of Greek games, held at Pythia, in Delphi, and in honor of Apollo
practice checking/managing/controlling
avoid
column making a turn, in a chariot race
facing
vanguard
spur/urge forward their horses
lower (into fighting position)
densest
come together, grapple
sky
Typhon/Typhoeus, a hundred-serpent-headed giant with a great voice, who fought against and was killed by Jove as soon as he was born
fierce, savage, cruel, terrible
tear
Hercules
a kingdom on the large Greek island of Euboea, ruled by Eurytus, whose daughter, Iolé, was beloved by Hercules; Hercules was married and neither the girl’s father nor Hercules’ wife was pleased sent to him by his wife, Deianeira, who believed (erroneously) it would win her back his love Thessaly, in NE Greece the innocent messenger who had brought him the poisoned robe mountain in south Thessaly the southern Aegean withdrawn, retired [adjective] unlucky judgment enslave they complained that, at Fate’s hands, free virtue was put in bondage to force or chance prejudiced, biased riveted the attention of seized
communication of thought by speech
“eloquence charms the soul, but….
secluded
unyielding, hardened in evil, insensible to moral influence
dense, compact
confident, daring
reconnoiter
extensively [adverb]
swift, rapid
full of active evil
river
[trisyllabic, second accented]
for
sorrowful
[trisyllabic, first—with “ph” pronounced as “f”—and third accented]
swift-flowing [adjective]
blaze up
with rage = violently
[bisyllabic, first accented]
like error, the river follows “a devious or wandering course” labyrinth = a maze
at once
river
mass, form
large structure, building
abyss
depth
Egyptian lake, bordered by quicksand
Damietta/Tamiathis: city at the mouth of the Nile

mountain range bordering on Egypt

to dry/shrivel/wither with cold

intensely cold, frostlike

brings about, works, achieves

dragged

turnings of celestial bodies, times

i.e., going from

wither, perish

suffer, languish

for periods

resists, stands in the way, opposes

one of three Gorgons; there are writhing serpents all over her head; those who look at her are turned to stone

flees

creature, living being

condemned to remain in a pool filled with water that moves away whenever he attempts to drink

[first syllable accented]

[four syllables, first and third accented]

for evil only good = good only for evil

abnormal, unnatural

pretended, invented

see line 611, above

many-headed serpent; the heads immediately grow back if cut off

fire-breathing monster with a lion’s head, a goat’s body, and a serpent’s tail

purpose, intention

brings to bear (as one “puts on” speed)

conducts
moves rapidly along
comes exceedingly close
vault of hell
captured sight of
by means of
equatorial
i.e., close to the wind, with sail tacks hauled close
Bengal
Ternate and Tidore = Moluccan (spice) islands
winds that blow steadily in one direction are “trade winds”—i.e., useful for trading vessels
moving water, “tide” (metaphorical)
Indian Ocean, near northeastern Africa
Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa
steer, direct their course
making headway
the South Pole
hell’s boundaries
leaves of a folding door, gates
enclosed
alarming
pack
outburst of sound
wanted to
six-headed monster, each head having triple rows of teeth
the extreme south of Italy
rough
Sicilian
is (“comes after”)
Hecate [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
extreme north of Scandinavia, associated with storm-causing witches and wizards
labores lunæ (Latin) = the moon in eclipse
because of
part (of the body)
“or might be called a substance: it seemed a shadow”
i.e., as fast as Satan
wondered
took account of, heeded, was worried about
fled from, avoided
detestable
fierce, cruel, savage
(1) impudence, effrontery, (2) face
across
ugly demon
sworn, conspiring
spend, use up, consume
count, consider
unknown, unfamiliar, never experienced
Ophiuchus = “serpent-bearer,” a vast northern constellation
deadly
filled
the Caspian Sea, between Iran and Turkestan

engage in

i.e., Christ

fast by = close, very near

aim, direct

fatal

scourge, plague ("pestilence")
disted

trols, interrupts with

quick, speedy

 refrains, abstains

female porter, gatekeeper

[noun]
ominous, warning

complete overthrow, disorderly retreat

heaven

highest point

(1) melancholy, sorrowful, (2) reflective

vast, enormous, powerful

dismal, pitiable

labor pangs

repulsive, hateful

path

so that

waving, flourishing
paralyzed with fear

copulating

wish

food, meal

in opposition = placed opposite

destruction, ruin, death

nor

those bright arms = that bright armor

constituted, endowed

violence, force

lesson

(1) love token, (2) hostage given to fortune

amorous play

claims

unknown, strange

alone

bottomless

outskirts

place

distant

overstocked, overpopulated

mighty, powerful

actuate

quarrels, tumults

intended

unresisting

extreme scarcity of food, hunger
throat, stomach

said to

right

put forward

spear

underworld place of punishment for the sinful

deep

compassed round = surrounded

luxuriously sensuous

suits, becomes, fits

as per lines 651–53, above, she has a serpentine tail

lattice gate

infernal, hellish

notches cut in the key

rapid, violent

Hell

surpassed

surging, overflowing

tumult, civil commotion

embryonic, not yet created

Egyptian/Tunisian desert

city located near modern Tripoli [trisyllabic, second accented]
enlisted, enrolled

to add weight to ("avoir du pois" = to have weight)

follow, side with, cleave/cling to

heats up, adds discord/hostility/dissension to

decree, order [verb]
cautious
Return to text.
estuary, arm of the sea
Return to text.
assailed
Return to text.
crashing
Return to text.
Roman goddess of war
Return to text.
contrivances, machines
Return to text.
leveled, wound up
Return to text.
destroy
Return to text.
wings
Return to text.
kicks off from
Return to text.
daring, confident
Return to text.
wings
Return to text.
[adjective]
Return to text.
blow
Return to text.
imbued, charged
Return to text.
saltpeter, potassium nitrate
Return to text.
infernal spirit (Satan)
Return to text.
checked
Return to text.
stretch of sandbanks off North Africa
Return to text.
almost
Return to text.
sent to the bottom, sunk
Return to text.
not fully developed
Return to text.
material coherence
Return to text.
behoves him now = now he needed
Return to text.
half lion, half eagle
Return to text.
Scythian
Return to text.
the gryphon’s
Return to text.
vigilant
stolen
intensity, strength
steers
partner
Orcus = Pluto/Hades, Adès = Pluto/Hades
ancestor of all the gods
entangled in disorder
changing, unstable
have a border with
reached
depth [noun]
“guide (if you would/please)”
small, petty
benefit
loosed, freed [adjective]
unlawful seizure
author of anarchy
agitated
insurrection
fleeing bands
mixed up
can do
thus
internal, inner
quarrels
be successful
clashing
surrounded
closed round, hemmed in
ship of Jason and the Argonauts
the left side of a ship, when looking forward
Ulysses
Satan
having passed
rapidly
sphere, circle
wicked
emanation
rim, edge, border
to retire = begins to retire
sails, floats
vague, uncertain
mainmast ropes
rigging
balances
not fixed, not settled
fast by = close by
filled
hastens
a flowing out, emanation
uncreated
“would you rather hear”
cover
infernal, hellish
visit
Orphean = belonging to Orpheus
harplike musical instrument used to accompany poetry
unusual, uncommon
the sun
pure, clear
extinguished, killed
a fluid that spreads over some part of the body
i.e., veiled them (his eyes)
struck, impressed, inspired
site of the Temple, in Jerusalem
equaled with = the same as
legendary Thracian poet
Homer
blind seer of Thebes
Thracian king and prophet
“i feed”
poetry
the nightingale, which does not sleep at night
in the dark [adverb]
cover
during = lasting, continuing
blotted out, erased
destroyed
illuminate, shine light upon [three syllables, second accented]
[verb]
supreme blessing/happiness

[bisyllabic, first accented]
as yet, still
dark, dusky, murky

high up
enclosed
substratum, support
a place affording an open view
carries away
broken away
having broken
environs, neighborhoods, districts
try, attempt
specious, flattering
violate, break
(1) vow, promise, (2) surety
stayed erect, endured
plundered, robbed
controlled
unalterably
founder, instigator, father, ancestor
enslave
Satan and his followers
“while God spoke thus”
(1) not imaginary, (2) real, (3) amply
paramount, supreme
authoritative decision

encircled

proclaim, celebrate

surrounded

Satan

sentence, final fate

conclusive

conferred, bestowed

fallen

lost by misconduct

particular, special

chosen

(1) in good time, (2) at an early time, speedily

inflamed, angered

[adjective]

proper, fitting, right

arbitrator

enlightenment, the brightness of Heaven

patient endurance/toleration

sworn fidelity

loving

consecrated

unyielding, strict, firm

payment of a debt [legal/theological]

love, spontaneous goodness, benevolence

company

protector, advocate
mediator
sentence, judgment
not anticipated, not won by prayer
fit, suitable, appropriate [adjective]
hold, reckon
ultimately
give vent to
tribute, right
boasted of
bow, submit
broad, spacious
in spite of
exhibit, display
destroy
overfill, surfeit
complete
wonder mixed with reverence
to lead, result
quickly, at once
pleasure, delight
ransom
place
transferred
those among them
expensively, at such a high price
pleasurable possession
renounced, given up
embodied

reward

make subject, subdue, constrain, lower

dwell

summoned

judgment

outburst/volley of sound

called to account

accomplish

wild cries, shouts

cries of praise to God

mythical flower that never fades

[adjective]

floor [noun, and grammatical subject; the verb is “smiled,” at the end of the next line]

harmony, music in parts

harmoniousness

except

lower part of a robe

still

Christ

eminent

stamped

splendid radiance

full whole

fourth of the nine orders of angels

sixth of the nine orders of angels

the fallen angels
sentence, judge

separate

opaque

curved surface

fenced in

(1) sudden incursion, raid, (2) a road in, entranceway

harsh, severe, pitiless

at large = unconfined, at liberty

Himalayan mountain

leaps, often on horseback [verb]

leaving his usual surroundings, shifting

springtime

origins, sources

on, along

descends

partly in China, partly in Tibet

cane, bamboo

[adjective]

plenty, abundance

whether

incomplete

unnaturally

hurry [verb]

silvery

transported

Enoch and Elijah: see Genesis 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11

Shinar, in Babylonia
if they had means, resources singly, one by one. he = as per line 471, below: Empedocles considered, judged, thought foolishly credulous/sanguine he = as per line 473, below: Cleombrotus as described in Plato’s *Phaedo*, which he had just read too long to tell of hermits Carmelite Dominican Franciscan i.e., in Franciscan garments i.e., “or so they said,” proposed, prated all as in Ptolemaic astronomy: the “trepidation” was the shaking of the spheres small door/gate await [trisyllabic, first and third accented] sideways, across one league = ca. three miles askew, out of the right course remote
dispensations

[the pun is surely deliberate]

[noun, and subject of the verb “turned,” immediately following]

sees

steps

the decorated entrance of a building

lustrous

gateway

i.e., making the distinctions of dark and light that indicate depth, color, etc.

[both bisyllabic, first accented]

see Genesis 28

mystically, allegorically

i.e., this is Jacob’s “ladder”

invisible

carried

worsen

commands, injunctions

(1) choice regard = well-chosen/careful attention or (less likely) (2) choice regard = deliberately observed

Paneas = “spring of Dan” a city near Mt. Hermon, in northern Palestine, at a spring of the River Jordan; now Banias

source

river

Beersheba, in southern Palestine

spy

reveals

(1) of good appearance, (2) large

view

constellation, the Scales
Aries, the Ram
ebula
headlong
[verb; rhymes with “finds, minds, binds,” etc.]
smooth as marble
either
in which the Hesperides, daughters of Night and Darkness, guarded a tree that bore golden apples
stopped
“away from the center,” which in this astronomy = the earth
i.e., whether Ptolemaic or Copernican
the sun
at a distance from
common
dense
the sun’s
proper, fitting
changing
powers, qualities
luminous
made of glass
telescope: Milton had visited Galileo and looked through his telescope
utterance
stamped, impressed
see Exodus 28:17–20
i.e., the so-called philosopher’s stone
the god also known as Mercury, “volatile” because fond of trickery and furtiveness
sea god, a shape-shifter
glass vessel with a beak, used by alchemists for distilling operations
mythical essence
liquid, drinkable
master chemist (or alchemist)
distant
fluid
reach
Satan’s line (of sight)
identifiable distance
see Revelation 19:17
tiara, headdress
luminous, shining brightly
furnished
commission, mandate, responsibility
thought, reflection
contrives
youthful
fully grown, mature
spread, shed [verb]
a small, inferior crown
feather
not cut full, close-fitting
respectable
Satan
addresses
Return to text.
2699 usually
Return to text.
2700 authoritative
Return to text.
2701 one who makes another’s will known, a messenger
Return to text.
2702 message, business
Return to text.
2703 “unspeakable desire to see” = subject; the verb is “hath brought me,” in line 666, below
Return to text.
2704 companies
Return to text.
2705 wonder, marveling
Return to text.
2706 proper
Return to text.
2707 sincerity, innocence, ignorance
Return to text.
2708 controller
Return to text.
2709 considered
Return to text.
2710 Uriel’s
Return to text.
2711 integrity
Return to text.
2712 attains to, brings
Return to text.
2713 celestial
Return to text.
2714 home, residence
Return to text.
2715 pleasing
Return to text.
2716 collected into a form
Return to text.
2717 stopped in its tracks
Return to text.
2718 controlled
Return to text.
2719 cumbersome
Return to text.
2720 airy, impalpable
Return to text.
2721 the fifth essence, of which substance the heavenly bodies were thought to be composed
Return to text.
2722 infused, animated
Return to text.
2723 in a circle
Return to text.
2724 furnishes walls for [verb]
Return to text.
2725 puts forth, introduces
the goddess of the moon, Diana, had three distinct shapes ("triform"), representing the moon's three phases: Luna, Diana, and Hecate/Proserpine.

to give light to

customary

(1) appropriate, (2) owed

the orbit of the sun around the earth; earth's great circle

twists

circular movement

stopped

Armenian mountain, near the Assyrian/Mesopotamian border; it is the source of the River Tigris

expectation, looking forward to

boundary markers

shown, disclosed

i.e., Satan's

orders

see Revelation 12:10–12

so that

while there was still time

perhaps

before he became

(1) give vent to, (2) take revenge on

Satan’s

moving, forming, advancing, sweeping upward

a cannon

from
result, follow
the sun’s
noontime
many things/thoughts
turning over in his mind
the sun
above thy sphere = (1) above your position/status, (2) literally, in Heaven above the sphere which you are in
(1) height, (2) distinction
He (God) reproached/scolded/censured
to give/yield
repayment
(1) owed, (2) right, proper
worked
disdained [probably from the Italian sdegnare, “to disdain/despise/scorn”]
submission, obedience
get rid of, release
(1) yet, (2) always
remained
unlimited, uncontrolled
sixth of the nine angelic orders
lowly
might have been drawn
side, cause
(1) having weapons, (2) having protective qualities/characteristics
to remain steadfast/firm
honorable, generous
gives, brings
himself
rightfully, properly
regrets
i.e., “O how miserable I am!” [four syllables, first and third accented]
flee
whichever
yield
boasts
at a high price
face, put up with
raised
obtains, gains
pretended
withdraw, disavow, retract
forced
at high cost, great expense
pain, suffering
instead of us = replacing us
man
more than half of the empire
pallor
anger
spoiled, disfigured
ill tempers, ill humors, disorders, derangements
innocent
agitation
mechanic-inventor
2806 i.e., “who”
2807 hidden, joined in concealment
2808 put into practice
2809 happen to
2810 conduct, behavior
2811 travels
2812 expanse of open land
2813 top
2814 access denied to him (Satan)
2815 impossible to overcome/surmount
2816 rustic
2817 rows
2818 place where action occurs
2819 noble, majestic
2820 common
2821 prospect large = extensive view
2822 Adam’s
2823 lower
2824 handsome, large
2825 at the same time, simultaneously
2826 any smooth, lustrous surface
2827 imprinted, stamped
2828 rainbow
2829 of pure now purer = purer still
2830 springlike
2831 chase, expel
2832 a wind not much stronger than a breeze
fragrant

bestow, distribute

natural

loot, plunder, booty

Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa

[trisyllabic, second accented]

Saba, in modern Yemen

Arabia, called at the time, in Latin, *Arabia felix,* “happy/blessed Arabia”

abate, let slacken

onward movement

one league = ca. three miles

pleasing, agreeable

experienced with pleasure

slayer

evil demon in Apocryphal book of the Bible, Tobit, who has seven times killed the husbands of Sarah, daughter of Tobit’s relative, with whom the demon is in love; he is finally driven off by fish smells

vapor

sent him, the demon, away from Media, where Tobit, his son, and his wife lived

hurriedly

by the Angel Raphael, sent by God

wild, uncultivated

thicket

troubled, entangled

easy

completely

made of interwoven branches

stalls, pens

reduce the store of money
of the roof climbed the view it afforded him had been = would have been guarantee, promise lowest space contours Haran, city on the River Euphrates, in Mesopotamia city near Babylon, on the River Tigris city in Eden [four syllables, first and third accented] tangled, heavily wooded swallowed up formed, fashioned (as a potter “throws” a pot) garden topsoil natural brook underground river in different directions [bisyllabic, first accented] skill rippling gleaming winding, labyrinthine wandering fussy, fastidious
skillful, choice, exquisite
gracious, bountiful, jolly
i.e., darkened
[four syllables, first and third accented]
legendary garden in which the Hesperides, daughters of Night and Darkness, guarded a tree that bore golden apples
open expanse of treeless pastureland
grass bearing palm trees
a hollow among hills
irrigated [probably trisyllabic, second accented]
shady covering chorus
bring into operation make tuneful/harmonious
joined Aglaia (brilliance), Euphrosyne (joy), Thalia (blossoming)
female divinities presiding over seasonal changes
in Sicily
Dis = Pluto = Hades
Nature/earth goddess, later Demeter; mother of Proserpine/Persephone
like Proserpine, pursued by lustful gods
river in Syria
the grove of Daphne contained an oracle dedicated to Apollo
named after the spring at the oracle in Delphi, also dedicated to Apollo
compete
the island of Nysa, in the River Triton in Tunisia
encircled, surrounded
Zeus’ nurse, mother of Bacchus by Ammon
red-faced (from wine)
Abyssinian/Ethiopian
offspring, children
in Abyssinia
contours
River Nile
source
forehead
exalted, lofty
manifested, made plain/clear
(1) curled, or (2) scented, or (3) dark-colored
lock of hair in front
loosened
frisky, sportive
requested, demanded
authority, rule
shy, modest
mysterious parts = genitalia
i.e., unchaste
externals, displays
patch
grassy spot
commend
the west wind
sweet as nectar [adjective]
obliging, yielding
variegated
discourse, speech
lacked
animals that are hunted [noun]
playing
bounded
moving lightly up and down
(1) lynx, (2) panther
leopards
capered, danced
coiled, twisted
flexible, pliant, supple
trunk, nose
close by
sinuously
intricate
rope, twine, knots
intertwined, braided
tail, long dragging body
destined, fated
lay
i.e., with eating the grass that grows on pastureland
(1) digesting, as ruminants do, (2) reflecting
slanting down
steeply downward
racelike, galloping speed
the Azores, to the west
with a scale having two weighing pans, when one (lighter) goes up the other (heavier) necessarily goes down
made device
place, position
“hath poured on their shape”
noble, excellent
close
firmly fixed, safe
deliberate
abandoned, lost, doomed
I am myself
alliance
direct, honest
perhaps
hold, keep
did wrong me
soften
common, community, patriotic
frolicking
condition, circumstances
noted, observed
as a lion
rangeland
lies
uttering
Satan
all ear = eagerly attentive
participant
deserved
mandate, order, instruction, admonition
near, alongside
rule, control, government
purpose
preeminent by so much odds = superior by such a high percentage/amount
similar
companion
shady cover (from the sun)
unmoving, fixed
i.e., to the pool
inexperienced
awaits
at once
plane tree (e.g., the sycamore)
flee
solid, true, real
in order to
inseparable, indivisible, special
(1) comfort, pleasure, delight, (2) entertainment, recreation, amusement
claim as
universal, common
impregnates
complained
Return to text,
3021 wastes away
Return to text,
3022 endure
Return to text,
3023 rouse/stir up
Return to text,
3024 close, careful
Return to text,
3025 but only a chance
Return to text,
3026 follow
Return to text,
3027 vigilant/cautious observation
Return to text,
3028 wild, uncultivated land
Return to text,
3029 [noun]
Return to text,
3030 extreme/outermost west
Return to text,
3031 astronomical orientation: directly opposite
Return to text,
3032 visible
Return to text,
3033 practiced
Return to text,
3034 close
Return to text,
3035 evening, twilight
Return to text,
3036 crosses, traverses
Return to text,
3037 burning
Return to text,
stamp, imprint on
violently forceful
destiny
responsibility
traced
noted
(1) course, (2) carriage: i.e., through the air, as spirits move
foreign, inconsistent, repugnant
darkened
stir up, cause
watch, guard
meridian hour = noon
disposed, thinking, intending
responsibility: i.e., to his post
daily: i.e., as it does every day
or else
rolling, revolving
silent, quiet [adjective]
sober livery = grave/solemn/sedate uniform/style of dress
“had clad all things in her sober livery”
melodious song
brightest of the early evening stars
manifest, obvious
think, remind
similar
one after another
bends downward
makes known  
Return to text.

observant attention  
Return to text.

move hither and thither  
Return to text.

prune  
Return to text.

passages, walks  
Return to text.

tilling, cultivating  
Return to text.

luxuriant  
Return to text.

blended song, of multiple origin  
Return to text.

bright  
Return to text.

pleasing  
Return to text.

see footnote 336, above  
Return to text.

universal, common  
Return to text.

perfect, fulfilled  
Return to text.

furnishing, supplying  
Return to text.

ready [adjective]  
Return to text.

illuminate  
Return to text.

(1) natural, (2) benevolent  
Return to text.

variable, varying  
Return to text.

disposition, temperament (i.e., astrologically)  
Return to text.

rouse/stir up with heat  
Return to text.

qualities, powers  
Return to text.

the species  
Return to text.

better fit/suited  
Return to text.

powerful, mighty  
Return to text.

should you think  
Return to text.

lack  
Return to text.

height, slope  
Return to text.
rounding walk = walking round
musical periods/groups of notes
into watches
proprietor
covering
adorned
made, shaped
embroidered
i.e., inlaid with precious gems
though but feigned = even if only in fables
pastoral god of vegetation and agriculture, who had goat horns and legs
intimate
seclusion, withdrawal, retirement
married
wedding hymn
what day = on the day
(1) festive, kindly, (2) nuptial
Pandora (“all gifts”), whose box of gifts, when opened, let loose all ills upon the world
she was brought to Epimetheus (“afterthought”), brother of Prometheus (“fore-thought”)
Iapetus, a Titan
Jove’s messenger
to be = in order to be
Prometheus
truly created by Jove
hut, cottage, house
venerated
wonderfully pleasant
lacks
unreaped
joined hand in hand
relieved/set free of
believe, suppose
property
held in common
wander
kinship
natural affections
describe, call
arrows
steadfast, faithful, true
enjoyment
unchaste, lascivious
renewed, replaced
the earth’s shadow
arch (the sky)
Paradise’s eastern gate
“Strength of God”
move, turn to
like
the shield was worn on the left arm; the spear was held in the right
“Discovery of God”
“Searcher of Secrets”
secure of = protected/safe from
from the time of
who tells = one (Uriel) who tells
headed, bound
ranks/rows of armed angels
Satan
crouching
close at = near
trying
desired, wished
whether
blowing, breathing
infect, corrupt
disordered, ill-humored, deranged
hardening
necessity
leaps, bounds, jumps
caught unawares
nitrous powder = gunpowder
piled up, heaped
barrel, cask
military warehouse
blackened
powder of a granular texture: i.e., gunpowder
sent forth
overwhelmed
horrible, ghastly
address
quickly, without delay
sentenced, condemned

suitable companion

i.e., in Heaven

indicates

rebel

judgment

sublime, majestic, impressive

mourned

fight

gnashing, rattling

the strap/chain of a horse’s bit

strive or fly = fight or flee

dread combined with wonder

overcome

front line

quick

royal, stately

carriage, bearing

pallid, gloomy

depart

scowls

crouching, lurking

look

responsibility

commend

reputation

sentenced
exchange
 compensate, repay
 grief, sorrow
 more firmly/securely
 forced confinement, imprisonment
 provoked
 “What a loss in Heaven is one who can judge what wisdom is!”
 unauthorized, without permission
 boundaries, limits
 flee
 however he can
 oppose
 whip, lash
 courageous
 declared
 hurry
 reinforced
 otherwise
 thy words at random = thy careless/heedless words
 as to what
 is needful/required of…. faithful leader
 attempts, experiments
 results
 courses, directions, roads, paths
 fly
 rumor, report
 even if
forced, pushed
quickly
dee
declare oneself
indicates
found, searched out
slavelike, meanly
dread
why
counsel
leave!
boundaries
fasten
(1) easy, (2) courteous
growing
in rage = enraged
guardian of boundaries
material force
superior, stronger
comrades
moonèd horns = crescent formation
close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans
raised/lifted and at the ready
grain (metaphorical use of the goddess’ name)
[adverb]
swings
bundles
alert
(1) wings extended, (2) expanded in size
high peak in the Canary Islands
Mt. Atlas in Mauritania, Africa
(1) holding his ground, (2) unremovable
helmeted
was lacking
involved in
vault
crash, collision, destruction
quickly
the constellation Libra (“the Scales”) is between Scorpio and Virgo/Astrea
still
Virgo
reflects upon, weighs
i.e., the two pans of the scale
result
separating, breaking off
the balance beam
addressed
mud
destiny
recognized
grumbling, complaining, muttering
i.e., responsible, without any excuse
region, realm
bright, gleaming
accustomed, in the habit
produced, developed
moderate
exhalations of a digestive kind
soft, mild
giving off vapors—mist and evaporation

goddess of morning

Adam’s exhalations were easily “dispersed” (dissipated, scattered) by the “fanning” motion of leaves and the “fuming” of running water
morning
heartfelt
singular, special
west wind/spring breeze
goddess of flowers
early morning (either dawn or about 6 A.M.)
note, observe
[verb]
“what the myrrh tree (a gum resin) drops”
here, a balsam (pine) tree
accustomed
plan, aim
wearisome, irritating, tiring, annoying
except
look
[verb]
ectasy
forbidden
exuded, let fall
overloaded
imposition of a limitation
is it set
venturesome
dazed, depressing
declared
plucked
instigator, the Creator
a portion of
firmly, soberly
unusual, unfamiliar, strange
imagination
closest, nearest
function
vigilant
bring before the mind
what we call
recent
dismal
hidden, confined
a dam or any device holding back water
disclosing (i.e., making visible, after the darkness of night)
prayers
different, variable, changing
lacked
suitable, appropriate
(1) flow of impassioned language, (2) style
Venus (as morning star, called Lucifer; as evening star, called Hesperus)
entangled branches?

the elm becomes the stepparent of the vine’s “children,” her bunches of grapes

couples of grapes

unproductive

“WeWith pity, Heaven’s High King (God) beheld Adam and Eve thus employed”

see Book IV, above, at lines 168–71

plans, schemes

relieve

food, a meal

unsettled, fickle, variable, subject to change or alteration

confident

moreover, in addition

resisted

claim, put forward as an excuse

unexhorted, uninformed

satisfied, did, performed

order, responsibility

radiant spirits

shrouded, covered

brilliant, magnificent

corrived, built, intended

placed between

corresponding

competent

islands in the south Aegean Sea

Greek island

island off the coast of Asia Minor
sees, identifies
headlong
wing
beats
flexible, unresisting
the altitude attained in soaring
mythical bird that perpetually renews its life, first burning its old body, then being reborn from the ashes
stared at
solitary
the phoenix's
Raphael
features
draped
belt
covered, bordered, edged
soft
dyed (by immersion)
colored
dye
Hermes
plumage, feathers
so that
circuit wide = wide surrounding space
participating in, performing
blessed, beatified
an aromatic balsam
sported, played
beyond
aromatic
burning, glowing
properly
render distasteful
command
condescend
confer as a gift
liberality, bounty
discharging its load
hoard
holy, sanctified
soil
supply
suffice
careful
laying by
(1) unneeded, (2) excessive
moisture
thicket
hurried, quick
[four syllables, first and third accented]
sustained, supported, confirmed
most natural
busies
Mediterranean
the Black Sea
Carthaginian/Phoenician (North African)

king of the Phaeacian island, now Corfu

homage, tax

table

unfermented juice

mixes

sweet

smooth (creamy) and frothing liquids

lacks

suitable, appropriate

not burned, as incense would be, since there was as yet no fire available to burn them

original

grand, imposing

submissive, subdued

lack

condescend

noontime, midday

sink down

seventh of the nine angelic orders

at will = as I please

pastoral

Roman goddess of fruits

orchard, bower

(1) from fables rather than real, (2) sham, because pagan

a beauty competition among Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite; Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, gave the prize to Aphrodite

“veil” could then mean “cloak” or “mantle”
weak, shaky

Return to text.

table

Return to text.

Adam

Return to text.

generous gifts

Return to text.

in part = who is in part

Return to text.

distasteful, unwelcome

Return to text.

as “rational” creatures, human beings are required to (and can) think in order to know; their knowledge is therefore of necessity partial. “Intelligent” creatures, however, are endowed with complete knowledge that is of their very essence

Return to text.

both angels and men

Return to text.

heat for digestive purposes

Return to text.

[adjective]

Return to text.

unpurified

Return to text.

land

Return to text.

everything else

Return to text.

nutritional

Return to text.

evening

Return to text.

dines

Return to text.

flowing as sweet as honey

Return to text.

on earth, in the Garden of Eden

Return to text.

fussy

Return to text.

food

Return to text.

so far as one can judge

Return to text.

in mist = blurred (as an immaterial object)

Return to text.

interpretation, explanation

Return to text.

[bisyllabic]

Return to text.

see footnote 200, above

Return to text.

to turn corporeal to incorporeal, i.e., to make spiritual that which was material

Return to text.
is excessive, superfluous

is emitted/breathed/vaporized (i.e., passes through their “bodies,” is excreted)

lower-ranking, merely experimentally oriented (rather than the higher, theoretically oriented)

as from = just as if it had come from

served

filled to overflowing

unlustful, unlecherous

food

i.e., their natures

conversation, meeting [trisyllabic, second accented]

splendid radiance

careful

shaped, articulated

condescended

member of the hierarch (order) of angels [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

evertinged, corrupted

earliest (primeval)

invested, supplied

upward jumps

completed, perfected, supreme

elevated, refined, purified

complete instantaneous knowledge requiring no prior thought

unsuitable, inappropriate

duration

He whose offspring of what
gracious, helpful

added, annexed

lack

listen, follow me closely/carefully

remain firm/steady

hereby notified, warned

complete

unalterable

from which one cannot extricate oneself

tested

must will

guarantee

[noun]

ancestor, forefather

command, single = single command

raise, stir up

narrative

dedicated

ample, abundant

daylight hours (since the angel has said, in line 376, that he will stay on earth “till evening rise”)

region, encircling band

impose on

first, original

sober, serious

regretful remembrance

finally, last of all

permitted
Return to text, sketch, draw, portray
Return to text, for men, a foreshadowing
Return to text, calculated by Plato, in his *Republic*, as approximately thirty-six thousand years (i.e., when all the heavenly bodies have returned to their created starting points)
Return to text, celestial
Return to text, archangels
Return to text, banners, flags
Return to text, military banner or flag
Return to text, banners with tails/streamers, suspended from a crossbar rather than a pole
Return to text, front, foremost
Return to text, for distinction serve = used in order to distinguish
Return to text, fabric, cloth
Return to text, inscribed
Return to text, [trisyllabic, second accented]
Return to text, prominently
Return to text, enclosed
Return to text, as if
Return to text, offspring
Return to text, unrevoked shall stand = shall stand unrevoked (not rescinded/annulled/withdrawn, etc.)
Return to text, called into being
Return to text, he whom
Return to text, acknowledge, avow
Return to text, gerent = ruler, manager
Return to text, swallowed, buried
Return to text, fixed stars
Return to text, elliptical, irregular
Return to text, interwound
Return to text, frees from difficulties, invests with calm/placidity
harmony divine’s

musical intervals
delightful
[trisyllabic, first and third accented]
produce, product
inclining, resting
fellowship, sharing
drink deeply of
secure of = safe from
limits
abundant
(1) celestial, (2) divinely fragrant
pleasing, agreeable
(1) rose-colored, (2) rose-scented
inclined, prepared
spherical, globular
(1) constantly flowing, (2) refreshing
a kind of large tent
tents
turn, customary practice
among
filled
lessened
leave one’s place of lodging (break camp)
Beelzebub
if you
in the habit of
3603 make known, communicate
3604 both waking = both of us awake
3605 disagree, be at variance
3606 countless numbers
3607 the chief = the best part
3608 I am to haste…homeward = I will hurry…home
3609 (1) swift, (2) literally flying (through the air)
3610 hold, occupy
3611 (1) headquarters, (2) regions
3612 angelic orders
3613 insinuated
3614 [trisyllabic, second accented]
3615 Beelzebub
3616 separately
3617 “He calls together, or else speaks to them separately, or one by one”
3618 controlling, governing
3619 under him Regent = which were Regents under him
3620 freed
3621 ensign of the hierarchy
3622 test
3623 corrupt
3624 familiar
3625 command, will, right
3626 person with great and independent power, a ruler
3627 rank
3628 charmed, tempted
3629 the most hidden
Return to text.
3630 particularly
Return to text.
3631 of long standing
Return to text.
3632 consider, reflect
Return to text.
3633 peril
Return to text.
3634 inexpressible
Return to text.
3635 safe
Return to text.
3636 commotions, agitations
Return to text.
3637 makes illustrious
Return to text.
3638 put an end to, suppress, destroy
Return to text.
3639 matter to me of glory…to quell their pride
Return to text.
3640 in event = in the occurrence
Return to text.
3641 adroit, skillful
Return to text.
3642 with
Return to text.
3643 [five syllables, second and fourth accented]
Return to text.
3644 the nine angelic orders were at one time said to be divided into three sub-groupings
Return to text.
3645 having the form of a globe
Return to text.
3646 stretched into longitude = stretched lengthwise
Return to text.
3647 territories, bounds
Return to text.
3648 explained, translated
Return to text.
3649 claiming, feigning
Return to text.
3650 false, slanderous
Return to text.
3651 having the name, but not the reality
Return to text.
3652 collected
Return to text.
3653 artificial representation, copy, counterpart, portrait
Return to text.
3654 raise
Return to text.
3655 well consist = are consistent
Return to text.
3656 perversion, corruption, misuse
check
“to boil”
stringent, rigorous
flowing
speaking evil
invested
fit, proper, owed
acknowledge, avow
uninherited
marked out the limits of
careful
inclined
nearly
to be unjust
dimmed, darkened
these others
pacify, mollify
in time = if in time
ardent, intensely earnest
out of season = inopportune, unseasonable, not at the right time
just him
hasty, impetuous
second-best, second-class, subsidiary, auxiliary
unfamiliar
life-giving, animating
destined, fated
complete
celestial

the act of addressing someone

(1) flee, (2) fly on wings

“hoarse murmur echoed applause to his words”

estranged

settled, decided

luckless

lenient

distinguished = not distinguish between you and me

alone

[trisyllabic, first and third accented]

machines, mechanical devices

fearless

Abdiel

open country

fast by = very near

reside

go away
pleasing

obedient, dutiful

as it is

cestial

brightly shining

[when all the plain (lines 15 ff.) = subject; met his view (line 18) = verb]

Abdiel’s readiness, preparation

countless numbers

pre sent him [verb, in the present tense]

valued, good

incorrect, wicked

remains to

[verb]

cliff edge

lowest region of Hades/Hell

writhing

fear, awe, reverence

were drawn up for battle

square formation

and neither

obstructing

constricting

quiescent, unresisting

race, species
3738 Adam
3739 stretch/extent of land, region
3740 earth
3741 border
3742 ready/eager for battle [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
3743 on nearer view
3744 upright beams = the upright poles
3745 crowded
3746 statements, slogans, arguments
3747 painted, adorned
3748 wild, mad
3749 speed
3750 thought, expected
3751 foolish
3752 “when they were halfway there”
3753 hostile encounter
3754 wont to = usually
3755 like-minded
3756 descended
3757 fearful, terrible
3758 open space
3759 darkened by ignorance, anger, etc.
3760 foremost part
3761 bristling
3762 loyalty, devotion, honesty [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
3763 (Abdiel, not Satan, is trusting in God)
3764 test, probe
savage

wicked, dirty, offensive

(1) obstruction, obstacle, (2) confrontation

is Abdiel incensed at Satan? or Satan at Abdiel?

Satan

submerged, buried, completely covered

(1) course, (2) following

those who

misguided, mistaken

party

a few

principal, great

(1) sideways, (2) askew, asquint

rebelling

(1) assault, (2) test

(1) free, (2) claim

reward

result, outcome

slaughter

corrupt

command

enslaved

wickedly, basely

serving

censure, reproach

commands
heraldic device on the top of his helmet
violent speed
injury, damage
“ten large paces”
held up
discomfited, overthrown
[vtrisyllabic]
[vtrisyllabic?]
vastness
in wonder/amazement
met, now engaged in combat
made a harsh, clashing sound
frenzied, turning furiously
brasslike, brass-hard
horrible, dreadful
spears, javelins, arrows
covered
canopy
armies
mighty	
tumultuous conflagration
controlled, ruled against
of such numbers
split into factions, discordant
battle lines
fierce, cruel
as if
cause, influence, turning point
mighty, vigorous
shaking, stirring
battling
marvelous, amazing
disorderly
motion, force
frightful
set in opposition, put in the way
left off
internal
quantity, degree, proportion
spiritual/mental peace
borders
puts up with
join together
quarrels
negotiate
parley
readied
visible
side, direction
most dense
space, room
(1) wind, (2) violence
bearing, relative position
destroy one another?
settle/put an end to/decide/resolve

advantage

blocking, parrying

completely

divided

coiling, twisting

piercing

breaking the organic continuity of Satan’s bodily substance

fluid, essence

bloody

withdrawn

files of war = rows/ranks of fighters

outrage, anger

disgrace

kidneys

except

similar [adjective]
troops serving under a single ensign/banner/flag

ranks

soon, at once

unfamiliar, never experienced

of the army: military formation

their: i.e., each of them vanquished “his” boasting opponent

boasting

Assyrian sun god

Asmodeus, the demon in the Apocryphal Book of Tobit: see Book 4, line 168, above

third of the nine angelic orders
3873 inferior, lower
3874 cut, hacked
3875 “lion of God”
3876 a Spirit of revenge; Arioch is mentioned in Genesis 14:1 as a “king of Ellasar”
3877 “exaltation of God”—although in the Apocryphal Book of Enoch, Ramiel’s lustfulness with mortal women causes him to fall from Heaven
3878 judgment, sentence
3879 that which is just
3880 unworthy
3881 dishonor, disgrace
3882 fate, destiny
3883 crushed
3884 changed
3885 raid
3886 stuck, stabbed, pierced: i.e., into the rebel ranks
3887 hideous
3888 spiritless, feeble
3889 ashen
3890 attacked, captured
3891 unable to be violated/broken/injured [five syllables, second and fourth accented]
3892 close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans
3893 as a whole
3894 not exposed/liable
3895 hateful
3896 victorious, dominant
3897 around
3898 red
3899 dishonor, disgrace
side
gone away
devoid
claim
seek, aim at
uncertain
disdained
celestial
ponder
effective, technically perfect
an Assyrian deity
fifth of the nine angelic orders
principal, first
fatigued
split, cracked open
weapons, armor
destruction
darkened
countenance, face
invulnerable
vanquished, crushed
weak
dispense with
complain
find, discover, produce
attack
correctly
important
composed of ether or similar celestial material [trisyllabic, second accented, “-eous” elided]
ground
only seeing the surface (an erudite pun)
think
foam
modified, worked
surrounding
birthplace
stuffed
aperture, hole
(1) distended, amplified, enlarged, (2) spread abroad
(1) opposite, (2) hostile
accomplishment
countenances
lit up, illuminated
drooping
perhaps
contrivance
similar
original elements
mixed
arranged, systematized
granules
some of them
melt and mold, build
missive ruin = missilelike destruction
kindling
swift
conscious Night = Night, aware of what they were doing
caution
bright
armor
gleaming, radiant, resplendent
army
joined/formed into a company
discover
“spy of God”
sober, serious, firm
confident [adjective, modifying “resolution”]
buckle
level, horizontal
can predict
the call to arms
in battle order
slow
massive
of great size
pulling
surrounded, enclosed
their face-to-face meeting
open
agreement, settlement
opening, revelation
obstinate
at once
bring forward
forms
opening, aperture
uncertain, doubtful
staring, puzzled
vent = hole, here the “touch-hole”
most precise, delicate
vomited
filled
enormous
overflowing amount
violent, forceful, rapid
because of
armor
scattering
loosen, open
pressed close together
ranks
unseemly
discharge, explode
volley
frolicking
amazed
overthrew
(1) comprehend, (2) be supported (“stand under”)
excited
the angels
located
swiftly/easily
[prosodically, “When coming towards them so dread they saw”]
thrown, so as to cover
attacked, intruded upon
great, solid
headlands
weighed down, crushed
distended
inexorable
hurling, throwing
horrible
disaster, wreck, ruin
judicious, deliberate
associate, sharer
radiance
sentence, judgment
hold out
the whole, the rest of Heaven
tolerated, allowed
poured, instilled
wicked, stubborn
disturbance, sedition
curbed, checked
anointing
as likes them = as they please

beyond the power of words

consider, value

serpent, snake

purified

undreamed

innate

carried, conveyed

racing

i.e., resembling a shower

the heavens

the jewels on the high priest Aaron’s breastplate: see Exodus 28:30

pouring-out

flashing, glistening, quivering

exalted

luminous, gleaming
drew/led back

diffused around

leader

united

withdrew

dutiful, obedient

usual, habitual, familiar

unlucky

unyielding

foolish

forming, taking

reform, win back

thinking

finally, in the end

fate

test

desirous

grant

army

dark, dismal

[four syllables, first and third accented]

scourges, wounds, afflictions

stunned

useless

wrath

adorned

rapid

Return to text.
customary
empty
edge
unbearable, intolerable
falling headlong, falling into ruins [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
rigorous
disordered, confused
defeated army
opening wide
filled
walled
joyful shouts
Adam's
be cautious, take warning
occurred
so that
like him, together with him
deprived
spiteful injury
once and for all, forever
as companion
weaker partner, Eve
i.e., Christ
"heavenly": muse of astronomy
Bellerophon's flying horse
i.e., "above" (beyond) pagan inspiration
live, keep company
breathed in of thy blending/alloying/preparation surroundings

Bellerophon was unhorsed by Zeus, when attempting to fly up to the gods’ home to which Bellerophon fell when unhorsed wandering aimless, straying (as Bellerophon had done) lost, abandoned enclosed, contained, confined diurnal sphere: the sphere that revolves daily around the earth swept away, carried above the pole = into Heaven compassed round = surrounded group or class of persons, here Bacchantes or worshipers of Bacchus Orpheus mountain range in Thrace, sacred to Bacchus ecstasy Calliope, muse of epic poetry happened ignore, disdain unsteady, not fixed partner in marriage wonder pensiveness exalted astonishing, unknown disorder, commotion turned back
dismissed, abandoned
visible
flowing
messenger
purpose
designed, condescended
courteously, generously
encompassing
interspersed, poured in
flowering, blooming, bright
repose
recently
completed
lacks
creating, begetting
invisible
Chaos
stay awake
ask
send away, allow to depart
supplanted
gain, reach
make, show, prove
further
imagining
the only
hidden, kept secret
Lucifer, the morning star
all were
position, place
occupy, hold
[fre quent]
services (in the religious sense)
foolishly
surmised
loss
tested
loosely, at ease
protecting
place
of angels
wisdom
arsenal
like brass
deposited
apparatus
naturally [trisyllabic, second accented, “-eous” elided]
enduring
enormous
desolate
all-creating
glowing
inscribe/draw a circular line/boundary
depth
deep
removed
(1) earthy, gritty, sedimentary, (2) hellish
created
collected and compacted
separated
in between
spiritlike
the fifth essence, of which substance the heavenly bodies were thought to be composed
the sun
tent
stayed for a while, tarried
gleaming
blowing, sent out
firm or solid structure
division, distribution
ambient, flowing around
offensive
disorder
took away
[trisyllabic, second accented, “-uous” elided]
disturb, disorder, derange
embryo [trisyllabic, second accented]
reserved
uselessly, pointless
fertilizing
fluids, essences
stirred

Return to text.

generative

Return to text.

swelling, bulging

Return to text.

the waters

Return to text.

great speed

Return to text.

rolled up

Return to text.

collecting

Return to text.

beds, lines

Return to text.

[verb]

Return to text.

rushing [adjective]

Return to text.

force of movement

Return to text.

flowing back

Return to text.

whether, either

Return to text.

winding

Return to text.

waterlogged

Return to text.

comfortable

Return to text.

current

Return to text.

“He called the dry land ‘earth’”

Return to text.

green

Return to text.

formed

Return to text.

grainlike

Return to text.

crenellated, having battlements

Return to text.

entangled, entwined

Return to text.

budded

Return to text.

groups of trees/shrubs

Return to text.

along

Return to text.

visit, habituate

Return to text.
Galileo discovered that Venus, like the moon, had phases (then commonly spoken of as “horns”) going, resorting
glad
with diminution seen = seen with lessened light
ruler, governor, controller
clothed, vested
glad
east-west course
flowing forces
horizontal
the sun’s
position
divided, separate
decorating
channels, inlets
smaller fish
schools
form a mass/mound in
frolicking
sprinkled, flecked
look for
watch for
smooth water
striped
rolling, surging
ungraceful
disturb violently [verb]
lukewarm
marshes
natural
downy, unfledged
maturely feathered
collect
full-grown feathers
high
harsh birdcalls
looked down on
in visual survey from the ground, the mass of birds resembles a cloud
i.e., of the sky
arranged
a pattern
cleave, drive (as per their wedgelike, triangular formation)
understanding
reciprocal: those behind, it was said, rested their heads on those in front
moves gently, undulates
made a cheerful place of
evening

grave, impressive

songs

spread out, one after the other

wet spot, wetness

[verb]

trumpetlike call [noun]

the peacock

filled

proclaimed, honored

(1) birdsong [if a noun], or (2) morning [if an adjective modifying “harps”]

doing her sort/kind/species

brought forth

dwells

brushwood

the wild beasts of the wood

cattle

come into being

earth

rear

brindled, streaked

lynx

leopard

see Job 40:15–24

[ ]
hippo = horse, potamus = of the river: Milton here translates the Greek

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.

Return to text.
breeding, generation
control, cultivate
differentiated, distinguishable
die-est
fulfilling

[the syntax here is uncertain, though the intended meaning is not]

procession
heavenly, exalted
procession
belt, girdle
abided
the stop on a stringed instrument
produced
that which is created
injure
limit
the waters above the firmament
boundless, immeasurable: the reference is to the new world, not to the hyaline
[first syllable accented]
lower
surrounded
raised
visible state, external appearance
so that
need
under a spell: i.e., “charm,” as in magic spells
immobile
(1) teller of history, (2) teller of stories

amply, fully

inscrutable

solving

structure, fabric

indicates

daily

provide, supply

dark ("opaque")

like a point, a dot

viewing

wonder

constant, unceasing

revolving, turning

inactive

ingenuity, craft, artifice

those more

immeasurable

caused

remote from understanding, recondite

from ("out of")

humility

won over

whoever

examine, inspect

care

held back, kept apart
telling
hearer, listener
[verb]
pleasing
[verb]
procession
mild of manner
find out
matters, signifies
whether or not
calculate, estimate
analyze, scrutinize, examine carefully
wonder, marvel at
desire, wish
clever, ingenious
mistaken
portray
express
preserve, keep
likelihood
encircle
at the center
not centrally placed
recurrent sequence
small circle, with its center on the circumference of another circle
you who
implies gleaming, bright power ineffective otherwise active force in service/office part [trisyllabic, first and third accented] allege, say conceding (arguendo: for the purposes of argument) said confirm, ratify the sun’s magnetic power continually moving forward/larger continually moving backward/smaller six planets transverse, crossways the tenth and outermost sphere, the primum mobile, which kept the other spheres in motion [trisyllabic, second accented, “-ible” elided] zealous reaches, meets the sun’s the earth
clear, transparent
the moon
the moon
assigned, destined
male light = original, female light = reflected
space
deserted [de sert]
[trisyllabic, first and third accented]
habitable earth [four syllables, first and third accented]

obvious to dispute = obviously disputable
harmless
evenly
disturb, make anxious
humbly
manner
circumstances (i.e., rich or poor)
a point on some scale of measurement
complications
afflict, trouble
at large = fully, amply
abstruse
smoke, vapor
foolish
irrelevance, presumption
point, elevation
descend to
perhaps
permission [bisyllabic: suffrance]
usual, customary, habitual
foolish
after
meal, food
[bisyllabic: satiate]
permeated, inspired
[bisyllabic, second accented: satiety]
courteous, indulgent
silent
proposition
is in order/form/a structure
it happened
unfamiliar, strange [uncouth]
dark, hidden
a journey
arranged, formed
military formation
breaking out
accustom
[bisyllabic, second accented, “-ience” elided]
barricaded
ordered, commanded
narration
listen
led, prevailed upon
herbage, grass
4509 mild, soft
4510 steaming
4511 gliding flow
4512 near, alongside
4513 moved, walked
4514 illuminated (literally: by sunlight)
4515 weight
4516 soporific, sleepy
4517 manifestation
4518 dwelling, habitation
4519 needs, requires
4520 [bisyllabic, first accented]
4521 vividly, lifelike
4522 depicted
4523 cultivate
4524 famine, shortage
4525 effect, power
4526 guarantee
4527 close by, near
4528 [five syllables, second and fourth accented]
4529 look, countenance
4530 discourse
4531 lands, territory
4532 oath/acknowledgment of loyalty
4533 breathe
4534 some (the land-bound animals)
4535 whatever please
invested, endowed
understanding
pressed forward, presumptuously
filled, fully stocked
exercise, frolic
diversion, entertainment
wield, sustain
intercessory prayer
favorably inclined
be suitable
eager, ardent
lacking force/energy
wearisome, annoying, disagreeable
mutually, to each
share
companion, partner
suitably
live
closely reasoned, discriminating
communion
discourse, interchange of thoughts and words
comfort, alleviate, soothe
complete, perfect
display, prove
imperfection in being single/solitary
parallel
friendship
seclusion, mysteriousness

birds, beasts, fish, etc.

pleasure

test

unsuitable

always

adduced, proposed

remained, endured

dialogue

lofty

surpasses, is superior to

restoration

held apart, separated

was able to see

restorative

inferior, poor

instilled, insinuated

manner, appearance

in order to

renounce

lovable

desist

change

"given (by You) grudgingly/with reluctance"

drawn forth, obtained

brought forth, produced, created

knowledge
open, bold forward
reserved worked
dutiful, compliant confirmed urged
statement/speech/discourse
most choice joyful feeling aromatic
drollicking, gamboling nightingale
a marriage poem Venus
strong, passionate enrapured
I touch agitation
either support removing
highly finished principal goal
which most excel = which are by and large those that are superior
perfect
reduced, lowered
loosens, goes slack

shamed

appears

as if she were

created

incidentally

finish, complete

like

distrusting, lacking confidence in

discard, reject, send away

ascribing, assigning

i.e., self-esteem

master

appearances

worthy of/commanding profound respect

always

procreative

judge, consider

full of divine grace

acts of decorum, proprieties

pleasing

[verb, second syllable accented]

frustrated, defeated

statements, arguments

lines 609–10: “I who deal with all sorts of arguments, presented to me (my mind) by my bodily senses…. 

emitted radiance

having virtues/powers

having virtues/powers
in eminence = in eminent measure (i.e., even more)

exclusionary, excluding

restricting, limited

(1) conducting way, passage, (2) management, skill, artifice

Cape Verde Islands, in the Atlantic off northwestern Africa

in the west

first of all = primarily

allow, permit, consent to

happiness, welfare

free choice

[verb]

courteous, noble

always

circled around

i.e., while the serpent is sleeping

among

attack, assault, try to seduce

finally

intensity, strength, ardor

i.e., quarrel, disagree

i.e., God or an Angel guest “sitting indulgent” with Adam, as with a friend

familiar used = treated affably, intimately, courteously

good-humored

Adam

country-style

Adam

pardonable
unreproved

(of poetry/music)

breaking of relations

estranged

forerunner

theme, subject

fierce, hard, merciless

Hector, prince of Troy

Hector, in great fear, tried to escape Achilles by running away, and was caught after a chase that went three times around Troy's walls

Italian king

Turnus' promised bride, given to Aeneas instead

betrothal (engagement) broken off

Neptune's ire = Neptune's anger at Odysseus for killing Neptune's son, Polyphemus

Juno's anger stems from (1) the beauty contest, which she did not win, and which Venus did, the judge being Aeneas' brother, Paris, and (2) the peril Aeneas poses to Carthage, a city sacred to Juno

puzzled, entangled

Odysseus

Cytherea = Venus; Aeneas was her son

appropriate [four syllables, first and third accented]

from

Urania, muse of epic poetry

condescends, vouchsafes

quietly, comfortably

not planned out in advance

i.e., taking a long time to choose his course, his subject matter, and starting late in life

diligent, assiduous

write about, in a literary composition
theme, subject
judged, considered
skill, knowledge
analyze, anatomize
destruction
imaginary, not real
knightly combat, jousting
equipment, furnishings
adorned (painted)
devices/insignia painted on shields
ingenious, skillful
harnesses
the lower part of a shield
showy, glittering
magnificent, rich
properly ordered
attendants
stewards
clever trickery/devices
duty, service
low
inspire
i.e., “heroic poem”
flight
held/forced down
evening star
duty, function
mediator
not long before
enhanced, advanced, made better
despite
come about, happen
circling
had observed
traveled
equatorial
chariot
great circle
coast averse = side opposite
that which does not arouse suspicion
path
Mesopotamian river, which watered Eden
profound depth in a body of water
passing swiftly/suddenly
enwrapped
the Black Sea
the Sea of Azov (a lake, in fact)
flowing into the Arctic Sea
Syrian river
Isthmus of Panama, northeastern (Atlantic) side
sphere, globe
close, careful
judgment, opinion
urchin, little devil/demon
tricks
note, notice
create
mental capacity
complaints
correcting
dutiful
earth
power
graded, degrees of
succession
enemies
destruction, ruin, woe
God
come back
i.e., man
happiness, welfare
extend
harmed, spoiled
place
an origin
attendants
hidden, secret
peer
thicket
chance, fortune
mazy folds = mazelike object, bent/folded
forcibly compressed
convert into flesh
degrade to the level of an animal
he whom
whoever
go down
liable, subject
care
descend, fall
insult, contempt
continued
circle
frightful, detestable
wild beast’s lair
harmful
the serpent’s
secretly
perfume
(1) pleasing, (2) thankful
lacking
they partake, share in
discuss
work at, continue
getting, doing
widely, extensively
continually
make straight/right
prescribed authoritatively
luxuriant
rebellious, unmanageable
mocks us
inclining
consider
bursting forth
set right
interrupts, stops
proposed
purpose
tedious
shady paths
assent
withdrawal
whether
most appropriately
pure, innocent, unstained
grave, sober
steadiness, constancy
intact, free, untouched
wanting confidence
bespatters
despise
increase
overpowered
bring to bear
similar, equivalent

test, endeavor, effort

attached to his home

[four syllables, first and third accented]

made narrower

alone

equivalent, equal

insults, confronts

judgment, estimate

forehead, face

allegation, suspicion

imagine, fancy

certain, safe

to either

intensely earnest

man’s

alert

prescribe, direct

prescribes

(1) attend to, take care of, (2) remind

remain, exist

outwardly respectable but in fact not

bribed

reason

if you would

attest, demonstrate

more certain/confident
though still

i.e., Eve has the last word

mentioned, noticed in passing

inclined, determined

a mountain nymph

a tree nymph

Diana’s

deportment, manner

skill [noun]

coarse, inelegant

innocent

goddess of flocks and herds

goddess of fruit

god of the orchards and fruit, husband of Pomona

Ceres/Demeter, goddess of Nature’s generative power

not maternal/the mother of

injunction

promised, pledged

ask him to come to

luckless, unfortunate

anticipated

wicked, wrong, stubborn

bitter grudge

planting

chance, luck, fortune

cover, overhang, shelter

gliding
shrubbery
work
imaginary, fabled
whether
for whom, and in whose honor, “gardens of Adonis” were planted
king of the Phaeacians, in Scheria
Odysseus
mythical, fabled
wise
Solomon
amorous play
see 1 Kings 3:1; Solomon’s wife is not named
marveled at
confined, shut up
injure, trouble
teded grass = grass spread out for drying
place where milk and cream are stored, butter and cheese are made
for her = on her account
plot
hidden place
restrained/suppressed/controlled by awe
pillage, robbery [noun]
deprived, robbed
interval
withdrawn, absent in mind
dully, stupefiedly
(1) in compensation, (2) joyously, welcoming

stirs, rouses

diverge/depart from

opportunity

convenient

mind

exalted, eminent

unformidable, to be dreaded

if not

equaled

turn

lodger

directed

zigzag, wavy

fiery red

spirals? (spires = stems, stalks)
moved gently

copious

transformed into serpents

Hermione/Harmonia = daughter of Ares/Mars and Aphrodite/Venus; Cadmus’ wife [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

founder and king of Thebes; he and his wife were both turned into snakes by Zeus

Aesculapius, god of healing, portrayed as a serpent at his temple in Epidaurus, in Argos, Greece

Ammonian Jove = Egyptian/African Jove, supposed to be the biological father of Alexander the Great, having slept with Olympias, wife of Philip of Macedonia, in the form of a serpent

Capitoline (Jove) = Roman Jove, supposed to have fathered Scipio Africanus

eminence

track
at an angle, indirect
a way to approach [second syllable accented]
cape, promontory
crooked, twisting
extravagant
ring, band, circle
around
obedient [bisyllabic, first accented, “-eous” elided]
herd disguised = Odysseus/Ulysses’ men, turned by Circe into swine
like an organ or other similar instrument
thrust, force
unrivaled
insatiable
majestic, commanding
secluded
ecstasy
deficient
veiled with specious comments
prelude, preface, introduction
uttered, gave forth
(1) hesitate, (2) disagree about
capable of speech
from being
a marvel, extraordinary event
despicable
pleasing
snakes were thought to improve their eyesight by rubbing their eyes on fennel
snakes were reputed to suck milk from sheep and goats
are engaged in
tempting, charming
quickly
feeding ground
was able to
lacked
kept, confined
in between
vexatious
mistress, woman of rank and power
having a Spirit in his body
power, quality
demonstrated, tested, learned about
due number
that which is born of Nature, Nature’s offspring
a flat = level ground
close, near
guidance [second syllable accented]
composed, made [second syllable accented]
oily
envelops
a shaking movement
accompanies
i.e., the order forbidding that its fruit be eaten
useless, wasted
credibility
offspring
role
as if
proper, decorous
actions
[raised as of some great matter to begin]
standing up, rising (to speak)
of right = rightful
knowledge
natural forces/substances that are productive of active phenomena
no matter how
God
venturing
kindle
uttered denunciations against
fitting, suitable, proper
sharing
they employ/make use of
the gods
reasons [noun]
signify
filled
all by itself
impregnated
favorably disposed, inclining
test, taste
oral utterance
lack, need
plain language/terms
not rational
not to be suspected
[pronounced, in British English both then and now, /et/]
criminal
noticed, paid attention to
convivial
influence, power, effect
wisdom, understanding
hidden
defamed
left, allowed to
purpose
fed
concealed
way
share
is lacking
follow
consider
knowledge-containing
divining, prefiguring
wrongdoing
action
perceived, was conscious of
soft, coaxing
at will = ready
deprieved of
deprecated, supplied, invested
to admiration = marvelously
to be as he has said they would be
amplified, expanded
to the extent that, if
a share
fortune, destiny
cheerful, gay
intoxication, derangement
stunned, astonished
prostrate
went slack
fell off, scattered
doomed
abandoned, forsaken, desolate, lost
never be
condition, manner of existing
strengthened, soothed
criminal, infamous
already tasted
polluted
accessible, general, free
unsanctified
resolved, determined
equivalent, equal
accompany, attend
powerful, convincing, unavoidable
extremely great, surpassing excellence
manifestation
but short = but since I am short (have less of)
achieve (such emulation)
conspicuously [four syllables, first and third accented]
were it = were it that
as threatened
follow
undogo, endure, bear, experience
5090 deed, action
5091 destructive, fatal
5092 recently
5093 influenced, won over
5094 foolishly
5095 darkened, threatened
5096 finishing
5097 primary, first
5098 repeat
5099 effect
5100 amorous play
5101 strict
5102 correct, delicate, graceful, polite
5103 which is of
5104 wisdom
5105 quality, character
5106 sense of taste
5107 sensible, wise, having sound judgment
5108 furnished, provided
5109 enjoyment of taste
5110 gift, kindness
5111 potent, powerful
5112 caress
5113 a hollow among hills
5114 diversion, sport, games
5115 amply, at length
5116 moist
5117 Return to text.
pressed down on

deceitful

genial

unnatural

burdened, hampered, embarrassed, clogged

turmoil, disturbance

rightful, proper

quality of conforming to moral or divine law

had gone from

covered himself

of the tribe of Dan

Philistine [four syllables, first and third accented]

Samson’s traitorous wife [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

defeated, overthrown, brought to nought

afflicted

customary

lust

evil store = an abundance of evil

worst, final

hidden

(1) shade, (2) the foliage that produces shade

God or Angels

peril, danger

offensive

most improperly

the banyan

western India
southern India
Return to text.
shield
Return to text.
belted
Return to text.
belt
Return to text.
screened, shielded, protected
Return to text.
understanding’s
counsel, advice
Return to text.
both of them (Adam and Eve)
power, authority, rule
Return to text.
disordered
Return to text.
alienated
Return to text.
tone
Return to text.
interrupted
Return to text.
begged earnestly, supplicated
Return to text.
robbed, stripped
Return to text.
own
Return to text.
quickly
Return to text.
easily persuaded
Return to text.
oppose, contradict
Return to text.
clearly, distinctly, openly
Return to text.
send away
Return to text.
as unchangeable
Return to text.
enjoyed
Return to text.
confident
Return to text.
things, affairs, events, circumstances
Return to text.
tests, endeavors, experiments
Return to text.
regret, repent
Return to text.
happen, occur
Return to text.

[noun]
Return to text.

follow
Return to text.

[con test]
Return to text.

confirm, pronounce
Return to text.

infamous
Return to text.

spiteful
Return to text.

corrupted
Return to text.

complete
Return to text.

Adam and Eve
Return to text.

always
Return to text.

complexly, in multiple fashion
Return to text.

corrupted, injured, broke, destroyed
Return to text.

had happened/occurred
Return to text.

responsible
Return to text.

clear
Return to text.

guiltless
Return to text.

demonstrated
Return to text.

responsibility, trust
Return to text.

truest, purest
Return to text.

predicted
Return to text.

recently
Return to text.

succeed
Return to text.

had to be
Return to text.

weight
Return to text.

force
Return to text.

his will's
Return to text.
remains except deadly be passed proclaimed lenity, mercy, indulgence release (from a debt) 

“Justice must not be scorned (treated with contempt) as the free gift of kindness (bounty) has been” one who rules by deputed power, appointed by a ruler to exercise certain powers joined planned, intended descend, fall I possess/hold alleviate, abate judgment, sentence conveyed, transferred explain, make clear, elucidate set free from doubt, convinced pacify escort, attending company be needed Satan i.e., from the process of judgment, as applied to Adam and Eve proved guilty proof, demonstration i.e., the animal whose body was appropriated, wrongly and without consent, by Satan parallel, side by side
attendant
Return to text.
descent
Return to text.
mediator
Return to text.
received
Return to text.
either
Return to text.
visible
Return to text.
disconcerted, abashed
Return to text.
disturbed, unsettled, agitated
Return to text.
visible
Return to text.
abusive language
Return to text.
instruction, order, mandate
Return to text.
assailed
Return to text.
narrow pathway
Return to text.
suffer, bear
Return to text.
miserable
Return to text.
unbearable, unendurable, (2) unjustifiable
Return to text.
come upon
Return to text.
[four syllables, first and third accented]
Return to text.
[trisyllabic, second accented]
Return to text.
merely, simply
Return to text.
true
Return to text.
worth, excellence, honor
Return to text.
rule, direction
Return to text.
unfit, improper
Return to text.
office, role
Return to text.
quickly
Return to text.
babbling, talkative
Return to text.
polluted from the end = corrupted away from the purpose
faulty, corrupt
finally
judgment, sentence
occult, obscure
creatures
crush, smash, break
Christ’s
captured
display (of force)
wrongfully appropriated
Christ
the serpent’s
his fatal bruise = the Crucifixion
action of conceiving (becoming pregnant)
unasked, uninvited, uncommanded
proclaimed
youthful coat = sloughed-off skin
exchanged
not much = not at all
shameful, injurious
satisfied [adjective]
view from opposite sides
extraordinary, enormous, excessive, hyperviolent/gross/wrong
i.e., opening the way (and the gates) for Satan
place, abode
rule, control
Return to text.

[adjective, modifying “dominion”]
Return to text.
draws me on = leads me on
Return to text.
whether, either
Return to text.
affinity, harmony
Return to text.
congenial
Return to text.
is powerful
Return to text.
profound depth
Return to text.
not affording passage
Return to text.
enterprising
Return to text.
create
Return to text.
mainland
Return to text.
communication, passage
Return to text.
mistake
Return to text.
miss, mistake
Return to text.
breathe
Return to text.
I taste
Return to text.
take in hand, attempt
Return to text.
absent
Return to text.
fatal
Return to text.
shape
Return to text.
perceiving by smell
Return to text.
separately
Return to text.
fluttering, flapping
Return to text.
whatever
Return to text.
swimming together
Return to text.
Arctic, Satanian: frozen, northern
Return to text.
block, close up
fancied
the River Pechora, in Siberia, flowing down from the Urals into the Arctic Ocean
Cathay = China
muddy/wet places
causing things to be petrified/turned to stone
three-pronged fish spear or scepter: wielded by Neptune in creating the Cyclades (islands in the Aegean)
one of the Cyclades: it floated until Zeus fixed it in place, for the birth of Apollo and Diana/Artemis
the most famous (and the only mortal) Gorgon, Medusa, turned to stone anyone who looked at her
harshness, strictness
blackish mineral, containing among other things pitch
seashore
mass, massive structure
worked
the primum mobile or other shell of the universe
(1) without a safeguarding fence, (2) defenseless
Persian king who invaded Greece in 480 B.C.
biblical Shushan, founded by Tithonus, Memnon’s father
the Dardenelles, the strait between Turkey and southeastern Europe
beat, whip
bridge-making
suspended, hanging
disturbed
descended
flying, flight
regions, borders

pushed itself in

different

roads, paths

discovered

turning, moving

i.e., steering a central course, through the high point of the sky

the sun (Uriel) rises under the sign of Aries; it is opposite to Scorpio, which is near Centaurus

recognized

unnoticed

unknowing

covering

Christ’s/God’s

he (Satan) returned

luckless

filled

follow after

inevitable, deadly

relationship, connection

(1) to build/establish a position/structure of defense, (2) to become powerful

(1) marvelous, prodigious, (2) bearing portents, omens, signs

with odds = and more (“and then some!”)

defeat, repulse

rule

decision, judgment

turned away

Heaven is square
the earth and all our world/universe is round/globular

i.e., on earth

slave

invested with full power/authority

i.e., the “new kingdom” has, by his action, been exposed to sin and death

action

loss, damage

poison, destruction

suddenly infected

(though planets usually influence the earth, they are now struck, in their turn, by the activities of Sin and Death)

[bisyllabic, second accented]

darkening, loss of splendor

causeway

divided-into-parts

cried out

walls, gates

withdrawn

compared

anxious, apprehensive

cut off, stop, hinder

[adjective, modifying “emperor”]

i.e., had earlier commanded

near the mouth of the Volga

Persian ruler

greater Armenia

Tabriz, in northwestern Persia
Kazvin, in northern Persia
recently
deserted
outermost
drawing together
unnoticed
appearance
of low rank
soldier
canopy
gleaming
hellish
directed, turned
gaze
(1) hall of state, (2) raised floor area, used (with pillows) as a kind of couch or sofa
unformed
unknown
travel
stubborn, difficult, unmanageable
possessing no creator, since existing from the very beginning
unfamiliar
rumor, report
product
complete
beguiled, led astray
(although there are no stage directions, this being an epic poem and not a drama, Milton clearly intends at this point a burst of laughter from Satan’s devilish audience)
God
sudden attack
move hither and thither
break, smash, crush
ordained, established, fixed
brought low, stumbling
struggling
sentence
presumptuous, audacious
tumult, disorder, violence
twisted/twined together
mythical serpent with a head at each end
mythical water snake
swordfish?
dismal, melancholy
the bite of which caused intense thirst
serpents grew from Gorgon blood
“full of snakes”: one of the Balearic Islands
the dragon whom
the Pythia = the prophetess of Apollo
i.e., the sun’s heat engenders the monster in the mud (“slime”) of the Nile River
Satan
mob, crowd
in station = at their proper post
proper
proud, erect
corruption
distant
Return to text.
along with
Return to text.
make worse, weigh down, exasperate
Return to text.
view
Return to text.
unfamiliar
Return to text.
a Fury, all three of whom had snakes in their hair
Return to text.
pitchy
Return to text.
the Dead Sea
Return to text.
foolishly
Return to text.
gusto
Return to text.
aversion, disgust
Return to text.
triumphed over
Return to text.
i.e., only once
Return to text.
extreme hunger
Return to text.
on certain
Return to text.
depress, frustrate
Return to text.
relate/transmit as a tradition [verb]
Return to text.
spread about
Return to text.
booty
Return to text.
“snake”: a Titan, first ruler of Olympus
Return to text.
“wide-ruling”: Ophion’s wife
Return to text.
i.e., more or less the pagan equivalent of Eve?
Return to text.
Ops/Rhea/Cybele: wife of Cronos
Return to text.
Dictaean Jove = Dicte, mountain in Crete, where Jove/Jupiter/Zeus grew up
Return to text.
at one time
Return to text.
actuated/made actual by Adam and Eve
Return to text.
see Revelation 6:8
quickly

suffer, am tormented/troubled

prey

not limited/bound by his body

a body, living or dead

plain, rude

mercilessly

in different

ripen

consume, diminish, destroy

devastate, destroy

attribute, ascribe

permit, allow

winking, tactly permitting

reward, oblige

carried away

renounced, abandoned

at random = without consideration/care/control, purposelessly, heedlessly

dregs, refuse

till the time when

filled/stuffed to excess

glutted, satiated

almost

sucked-dry?

chokingly/sickeningly overfilled

garbage, rubbish, putrid flesh

throw, fling
gaping

will obstruct

saintliness, holiness

takes precedence

like

weaken, lessen

i.e., next they sang

different tasks/responsibilities/mandates

fitted

order, authoritative command

feeble, worn out

connected with the solstice, i.e., when the sun is halfway between the two equinoxes and, in the summer, at its farthest point from the equator

pale, white

planets

relative positions of the planets, as seen from the earth

two heavenly bodies at 60-degree angles from one another (60 degrees = one-sixth of the whole zodiac)

two heavenly bodies at 90-degree angles from one another

two heavenly bodies at 120-degree angles from one another

two heavenly bodies at 180-degree angles from one another

harmful, unwholesome

conjunction

the fixed = the fixed stars, in the eighth of the heavenly spheres

stormy, passionate [trisyllabic, second accented, “-ous” elided]

north, east, south, west

storming, raging

throw into confusion/disorder
sideways
at a slanting angle
centric globe = the earth, which was at the center
Apollo’s chariot
celestial equator
equally
the Bull
the Pleiades
Gemini
Cancer
(1) without delay, rapidly, (2) exceedingly
the Lion
Virgo
Libra
otherwise
blossoming
undarkened
make up for
Labrador
strait at the extreme southern tip of South America
i.e., when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit
Atreus, Thyestes’ brother, killed Thyestes’ sons and served them to their father at a banquet
world inhabited = inhabited world
nipping, painful
equivalent
from the malign stars
New England
Samoed shore = Siberia

i.e., the cave of the winds, in which Aeolus, god of the winds, kept the winds in confinement, when they were not blowing

burst of wind

a north wind

the opposite

a south wind

Sierra Leone, in Africa

thwart of = across

equally

Euras/Levant is an east wind

Ponent/Zephyr is a west wind

coming from the horizon: east/west rather than north/south

clamor, loud/harsh sound

a southeast wind

a southwest wind

riot, violence

irrational creatures [probably, from Latin influence, four syllables, first and third accented]

settled aversion, contrariety of feeling/disposition

leaving off

fierce, savage

from without = in addition to

“he, Adam, sought”
recently from, instead of it would be well/all right want to satisfy, be useful, answer the requirements, meet the needs of the case, suit, fit multiplied, spread follow curse mine own = mine own curses remain, continue flowing back surge, turn back fall, descend proper order advance luxurious, highly pleasing agreed surrender himself, Adam himself, Adam captiously object to/find fault with permission himself, Adam receive, permit choice procreated, generated judgment
settled, determined
this day = today
live too long
deprived of sensation, unconscious
confident, safe, free from fear/anxiety
completely, entirely
corporeal clod = earthen body
relieve, calm
fated, destined
considered, thought
fact, proof
severity
all causes else = all other causes
absorption, taking in
i.e., causes act according to the capacity of what they work upon; what the cause of something may be capable of is, in this sense, irrelevant
depriving, taking away
inside
outside
turning/spinning motion
immaterial (spiritual) rather than material (bodily)
alone
use up, consume
corrupted
along with me, just as I do/have
of necessity
falls
foolish
himself, Adam
shared
Eve
similar
sentence, judgment
conscience
before
noxious exhalations/vapors
Adam’s
exhibited, showed
already announced/proclaimed
[four syllables, first and third accented: ACCepTABle]
sets right
not long ago
ring out, reëcho
attempted
suits
allied
as Satan is
is missing
held, as if a mask or screen, in front of her, to conceal the “hellish falsehood” behind it
except
would have
remained
vagrant, wanton, uncertain
thinking arrogantly/presumptuously
overpower, outdo, get the better of
imagined by me
not understood by me
(1) the left side, (2) darkly suspicious/dishonest/corrupt
withdrawn, taken
unnecessary, superfluous
i.e., his correct/right/true number is one (only himself), not two (with her—superfluously—added)
like
procreate
been befallen = happened, occurred
strait conjunction = narrow connection (“conjunction” carrying heavy sexual overtones)
proper, suitable
the woman
obstinacy, contrariness, wickedness
a far worse = a far worse man than himself
him
(1) fierce, cruel, (2) clever
antagonist, enemy
destroy
thus, thereby
begged earnestly for
amity, end of hostilities
renounce, abandon
unknowingly
depive
whereon I live = of that upon which I live
mild, generous, courteous
to be depressed/sick/weak

person, body: Eve herself

short work (of it)

function, service

intense, passionate, excited

maintained, experienced

moved, ruled, diverted (turned)

more attentive = steadier

despises

sentence, judgment

willful disobedience, perversity

smash, destroy, break

resolved/decided on

thus

(1) concerns [verb], (2) pleases [verb]

bitterness, spitefulness

spite

resistance

disintegration, decomposition

slantwise

struck and glided, passed quickly

(1) well-timed, (2) early

harsh, pitiless

unstable, changeable

dwelling, cover

of/belonging to the day

the sun
dry
rouse, excite
rub, harass
by friction
recently
pushing, shoving, knocking against
violent, harsh
kindle
transverse
if we pray to Him
conveniently
often, habitually
[four syllables, first and third accented]
i.e., the prayers
i.e., Adam and Eve
golden covering placed over the Ark of the Covenant; regarded as God’s resting place and thus the seat of mercy
anticipatory
reborn, reformed, restored
[five syllables, second and fourth accented]
demeanor
inferior, poor
Prometheus’ son, and the “Noah” of classical myth
Deucalion’s wife
[a Titan, daughter of Gaia (earth) by Zeus: goddess of justice
straying, wandering
the prayers

having no material being/body

smoked

near

Christ

container in which incense is burned

tilling, cultivating

atonement, expiation, sacrifice

implant, transfer

i.e., the good works of man

i.e., the not good works of man

accept me = receive me with favor

darkening of His countenance

Adam

purge him off = purify him away

disorder, derangement

dispose him = make him fit

happiness

foolishly

immortality

make eternal/everlasting

tested

misery, distress, vexation

renewal of the body at the Resurrection

restores (yields up), repays, rewards, produces

sinning

not long ago
rank, position

Horeb/Mt. Sinai

general doom = Judgment Day

mythical flower that never fades

going, proceeding

forbidden

inward promptings, workings

but for a longer period

have known

left to itself

command

or in = whether on

i.e., the Garden of Eden, about to become vacant

pity

proclaim, announce

lose heart/courage, droop

mournful

stated, pressed

miserable

intermingle, blend in

welcoming place [four syllables, first and third accented]

band

double-faced god of gates

hundred-eyed spy for Jove/Jupiter/Zeus

messenger of Jove

opiate rod = sleep-inducing staff

goddess of dawn [trisyllabic, second accented, “thea” elided]
anointed prayers Adam’s efficaciously, powerfully will do sinned against gentle, forgiving smash, crush, destroy thought of, remembered (1) sad, (2) sober pleasing, gracious to thou so high, thus high title granted, deigned, condescended “now the labor is… imposed tired, laborious assented, agreed produced on, communicated through darkened, obscured rosy gleam the eagle swiftly descended circuit the lion pair
hart and hind = stag and doe (male and female deer)

perhaps
certainly

because of
liberation

more bright = brighter

filled
this time

jasper is a highly variegated colored form of quartz
manifestation, appearance
bodily

“that ‘apparition’ was not more glorious when….
“tents of angels”
pavilioned = covered with the tents of

“And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host”—Genesis 32:1–2
see 2 Kings 6
the prophet Elisha
treacherously
made, commenced
Michael

the formation in which the Cherubim had halted
decide, resolve, end
lowest rank
clothes
[four syllables, first and third accented]
trust, have confidence in
lofty, exalted
Return to text.

luminous, bright
Return to text.

armor
Return to text.

loose robe
Return to text.

more brilliant/vivid
Return to text.

Thessalian town famous for its bright purple dye
Return to text.

dyed cloth
Return to text.

Tyre, Phoenician seaport, now in Lebanon
Return to text.

goddess of the rainbow
Return to text.

thread
Return to text.

helmet
Return to text.

belt of stars
Return to text.

see Book 6, lines 320–27, above
Return to text.

i.e., the archangel Michael
Return to text.

high rank, dignity
Return to text.

command
Return to text.

compensate for
Return to text.

completely
Return to text.

greedy, grasping
Return to text.

cultivate
Return to text.

held fast, tied up
Return to text.

disclosed, revealed
Return to text.

quickly
Return to text.

withdrawal
Return to text.

delay, temporary extension of time
Return to text.

fatal
Return to text.

stop, visit
Return to text.
gentle

arrange

water you

compared to
dark

accustomed as we are

over-fond = over-affectionate
daze, stupor, depression
carrying out, executing

secluded place

persistent

smothering

visit often [verb, second syllable accented]

(1) pleasing, (2) feeling gratitude

lower

offspring, descendants

outermost

(1) bottom part of God’s robe, (2) outlying boundaries of His kingdom

dspecies

bathed with warm lotions, cherished/roused/stirred up

nourishing

[four syllables, first and third accented]

flat, level

exact, unmistakable

lofty, exalted

disputing, struggling, fighting

alloy
fatal
Return to text.
steeped (drugged)
Return to text.
sight of the future
Return to text.

[verb]
Return to text.
open, visible
Return to text.

“...the hand of the Lord was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain....—Ezekiel 40:1–2

range of vision

[the full verb is “lay stretched out”]

view

Christ

Adam’s

Peiping (Beijing), capital of Cathay/China

khan, emperor

capital of Temir/Tamerlane’s Tatar empire

Asian river, flowing from Turkey/Afghanistan to the Aral Sea in Siberia

Peiping (Beijing)

Chinese

a Mogul capital in southern India

a Mogul capital in northern India

Malacca

Hamadan, ancient summer capital of Persian kings

Isfahan, city in what is now Malaysia

Byzantium/Istanbul

Turkestan is a country in central Asia

see

name of Abyssinian king

now Archico, port city on the Red Sea
Mombasa, in modern Kenya

Kilwa, in modern Tanzania

Malindi, in modern Kenya

Port city in what is now Mozambique

thought to be

biblical land from which King Solomon obtained gold for the building of the Temple

river

in modern Mauritania

d. 1002, Muslim ruler in Spain and northern Africa

Fez and Sus are both in Morocco

modern Tlemcen, in Algeria

Montezuma, Aztec emperor of Mexico

capital of the Inca empire; now Cuzco, in modern Peru

Atahuallpa, Inca ruler [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

the Spanish: Geryon = monster, native to Cadiz, in Spain, who was killed by Hercules

herb used for treatment of eye diseases

medicinal herb

obliged, forced

forbidden

obtain by descent

ploughland

under cultivation

sward, turf

to the altar

at once

Cain

unselected, a random choice
such as first “came to hand”
courteous
internal organs, entrails
favorable, gracious
quick, sudden
flash/movement
other’s (Cain’s) = other’s offering
Abel
poured out freely
harm, evil, misfortune
(1) action, deed, (2) crime
attested, confirmed
thickened blood
(1) natural, (2) of his birthplace
[here, though usually bisyllabic, trisyllabic, first and third accented]
“but there are many shapes”
failure to abstain
noxious, ill-smelling, offensive
leper
violent stretching/straining
fits
nasal discharge
belly
deranged, lunatic
languishing, wasting
wasting, emaciation
a wasting disease
bubonic plague
swelling up of body parts
hideous
overcame
dragged, wrenched
beautiful, graceful
likeness
degraded
animal-like
due
transitions, journeys
natural, congenital
come, go
blunted
go/leave first
now has (in old age)
depression, stupor
finally
concerned, intending
released, freed
oppressive
duty, responsibility
rendering up = giving back
wait for
[trisyllabic]
neither
submit, allow

“near some of the tents”

harmony, accord

he who

rapid, flying

imbued

accidental

worked

fused, cast

carved

other

appearance

upright, righteous

final

company

frivolous, lewd, unchaste

songs

came on = advanced, came forward

serious, weighty, somber

negotiate, deal

Venus

forerunner

offered to

summon

god of marriage

before anything else?

fortunate
meeting, outcome, pieces of music, seized sympathetically, confess, acknowledge, propensity, foreshadows, goals, purposes, proper, fitting, compliance, smoothen, unusual, uncommon, merry, perfected, wag, snares, tricks
at large = fully, when God sends down the Flood
robb'd, deprived
began
crooked, devious
spiritless, oppressive
course
man's woe = wo-man
country, rustic
assembled
prowess, fame
assembling
choice [adjective]
oxen
cattle
with life = alive
[bisyllabic]
fighting
recently
bloody
battering rams
ladders
underground passages filled with gunpowder, which is then set off
spear
[bisyllabic]
at once
speeches
i.e., split into parties
Enoch: see Genesis 5:21–24
behavior, deportment
hooted at
perished, been destroyed
[trisyllabic]
shrink
join in marriage
muddled
strength, power
proclaimed
Enoch
therefore hated = who was therefore hated
assailed, invested, surrounded
alone
enveloped
fragrant
was given
eternal bliss
it came about, happened, occurred
surpassing
quarrels
Noah
wherever they
struggling
in large = a great deal
as if
i.e., the clouds’
violently, with full force

with great force [trisyllabic, second accented, “-uous” elided]

brought forth young

dwelled

not long before

boat

barely, with difficulty

dealt out, given

descend, fall

whom to warn = able to be warned

be destroyed

booty, spoil, plunder

gluttony

self-indulgence, capriciousness

[contest]

safely

moderation

tested

debased, degraded

corrupt

Noah

“good against that which is being done”

enticement

fashion

sinful

proclaiming

stubbornness
wreck, ruin
chosen
waterfalls
producing hornlike branches, as it divides and each branch flows on
destroyed
the Euphrates?
(1) the Perisan Gulf, in particular, or (2) the deep, in general
whales
seagulls
harsh screams [noun]
[trisyllabic, first and third accented]
no sanctity
floating
as if
declined, dwindled
from
copiously
quick-moving
closed
channels
loud noise
aging
flowing water, here ebbing
at once
more trustworthy/steadfast/reliable
then again
fall, descend
calm, tranquil
quickly
rainbow
visible
banded, striped
signaling
at first
kept alive
extended, spread out
like
border, edge
cleverly
give up, resign, surrender
not long before
regretting
i.e., of having created man in the first place
corrupted
softens
obliterate
gray
leaves off, breaks away
determined, set
put forward
pleasing
weaken
origin, fountainhead
a certain (substantial)
swiftly
young bull, bull calf
unreproved
Nimrod ("hunter"): see Genesis 10:8–10
cast out, get rid of
peace, harmony
contempt, scorn
Shinar
pitchy
whirlpool
determine, decide
the Tower of Babel: see Genesis 10:10 and 11:1–9
differing, unstable
erase, obliterate, sweep away, destroy
scatter
discordant, babbling
rage, complain
i.e., the act of building, not the structure being built
"babble" (Babel)
gift
intrusion
stops, remains
assault
waste, pain
starve to death
seeking
notwithstanding
capture, seize, snatch  

authority, direction  

enslave  

Ham, father of Canaan  

see Genesis 9:22–27  

deprecated, corrupt, malignant  

special, singular  

the Jews  

Abraham  

deigns, condescends  

immediately  

west of the Euphrates and south of Babylon; the Chaldeans, a Semitic tribe, had migrated to southern Babylonia  

east of the Euphrates, in northwestern Mesopotamia  

those in servitude: servants  

Shechem, a city in central Palestine, north of Jerusalem  

in Syria, on the River Orontes  

Mt. Hermon, to the north: the highest peak in Palestine  

the Mediterranean  

in Haifa, now in Israel  

double-sourced  

landmark, boundary, border  

Abraham’s  

see I Chronicles 5:23  

Christ  

crush, smash, break  

soon  

due time = in the time that, properly, it should take
Isaac

Return to text.

Jacob

Return to text.

emptying

Return to text.

to lodge, to dwell temporarily

Return to text.

Joseph

scarcity, famine

Return to text.

subsequent, following

Return to text.

(1) occupant, (2) stranger, foreign

Return to text.

[bisyllabic]

Return to text.

from

Return to text.

enslavement

Return to text.

refuses

Return to text.

not poured out from bodies

Return to text.

thrusting/forcing in

Return to text.

plague

Return to text.

boils

Return to text.

blisters

Return to text.

cover, bulge with

Return to text.

also all

Return to text.

turn, sweep

Return to text.

darkness

Return to text.

potent, obvious

Return to text.

Pharaoh

not long before

Return to text.

sent away

Return to text.

army

his former guests, the Jews

Return to text.
as if controlled column take away, clear off, disappear (make disappear) unyielding, hardened in evil, insensible to moral influence prevents, wards off, prohibits in the space between the two groups, Egyptians and Jews derange Pharaoh’s shatter, smash, break in battle formation troops, soldiers [adjective] of the Red Sea quickest, shortest, most direct penetrating thus called to arms the Jews not experienced (as the Canaanites definitely were) in war lead/send them “not trained (or, by implication, not having anything to do with) weapons and armor (warfare), unless people are drawn on (led on) by reckless impetuosity” create, initiate, begin building council of seventy elders, chosen by Moses: see Exodus 24:1–9 derived from the twelve sons of Jacob belong symbols images
Christ

smash, crush

narrate, tell, speak

image, emblem

command

coffer, chest

divine law

mercy-seat of gold = golden covering

the ark? God Himself?

i.e., one lamp for each of the seven known planets

see Joshua 10:12

Israel

subdue, overcome

depavity

expose, reveal, show

(1) insubstantial, (2) foreshadowing (Christ)

atonements

so that

verification, i.e., freeing (justifying) man from the penalty of (original) sin, man being thus made righteous

outward rites

carry out, execute, accomplish

(1) can be plainly seen, shown, (2) is declared

only

confidently yield themselves up to

trained, educated

images

Christ
except
David
same
tell, declare, relate
David’s
Solomon
recorded
“added (heaped) to the sum (total: large) of the people’s (the popular) faults”
as to = so as to make Him
to be a
the Babylonian Captivity, 606–536 B.C.
bearing in mind
established: as fixed as
Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes
made ready, so inclined
rebuild
poor/low
condition, degree of prosperity
watch over, look after
strive for
priests
Antipater (a Roman appointee), father of Herod
obstructed, hindered, excluded
majestic
Bethlehem
in military formation
overburdened
Return to text.

6372 outlet

Return to text.

6373 perfector

Return to text.

6374 capital bruise = injury to his head

Return to text.

6375 fatal (“capital” also = “fatal, mortal”)

Return to text.

6376 [bisyllabic]

Return to text.

6377 having spatial position

Return to text.

6378 defeat, trample

Return to text.

6379 Christ

Return to text.

6380 remedy

Return to text.

6381 Satan’s

Return to text.

6382 lack

Return to text.

6383 satisfied, repaid

Return to text.

6384 Christ

Return to text.

6385 shameful

Return to text.

6386 credited (to them)

Return to text.

6387 though their merits are based on

Return to text.

6388 lawful

Return to text.

6389 actions, deeds

Return to text.

6390 reviled

Return to text.

6391 full payment of a debt

Return to text.

6392 seize wrongfully

Return to text.

6393 [adjective]

Return to text.

6394 profit, good thing, favor, kind deed

Return to text.

6395 (1) accept, (2) submit to

Return to text.

6396 crush, smash, break, destroy

Return to text.

6397 temporary, in merely human time

Return to text.

6398 their death
lifting/floating/carrying through the air

definite, fixed

always

his salvation = the saving of the soul which Christ brings to men

definitely, fixed

fully flowing

Christ

(1) celebrating, (2) being victorious

Satan’s

in Hell

defeated, overthrown, brought to nought

those with distinguished reputations

the living

finish, final stage

filled with, full of

from

be brought forth/produced

induced (in others)

be plentiful, overflow

become of, happen to

the Holy Spirit

destroy

endured, sustained, maintained

endow, invest, supply

languages

place

profit, gain

except
the “wolves” of the Roman Catholic Church

bodily, fleshly, corporeal

left them enrolled = were (had been) left them in written form (recorded)

venture, dare

consider, judge

fallacious, outwardly respectable

formalities, ceremonies

fulfilled

withdraw

respite

at last, finally

flaming, burning

duration

in conclusion

[bisyllabic? (the etymology being “see” + “er,” and Michael being, by God’s specific direction, here a seer into the future)]

traversed

course, movement

(1) through all, (2) even more than

always

overthrowing

in conclusion

suitable, corresponding [adjective]

highest place, peak

vision

strictly defined/expressed

demands, requires, insists on
look at
at whose front = in front of whom
the act of departure
actively
foretelling
arranged, adjusted, ordered
humble, submissive
season fit = appropriate time
share
agreed, of one mind
serious and sustained reflection
inform, give counsel
favorable, gracious
granted
brilliant, flashing, swift [four syllables, first and third accented]
marsh
raised [adjective]
vehement, intense, merciless
waves (of heat)
like
scorched
scorch
(of Eden)
moderate
reluctant, tardy, dawdling
lying below
i.e., then the angel (and his troop) disappeared
some time ago

tested

hermit

accustomed to, in the habit of

ready

favored, fortunate

full summed = feathers fully formed/grown, i.e., poetic capacity fully matured

beyond

John the Baptist

sublimely majestic, commanding reverence

reverent wonder

considered

unnoticed

discovered

his worthier = (1) Christ being worthier than John, or (2) one who is his (John’s) worthier; the meaning is unchanged either way

Christ

Satan

celebrated [adjective]—but does it mean that the assembly is “famed” or that Satan did not want to be (“would not be”) less famed?

Satan is “nigh thunder-struck” by God’s voice

Satan “surveys” (looks carefully at, examines) Christ, who is “the exalted man”

filled

residence, dwelling, citadel

of the highest rank (not “equals”)

wreathed

council

frightened
serious, morose

as are counted

world, earth

easily led

awaiting

in Milton’s time, “shall” still carried the sense of “will have to, must”

attained, accomplished

endure, undergo

“bruised”

shattered, broken

as a forerunner

claims, aspires

Christ

is He

holds

Satan does not yet identify this Son of God with Christ

features, characteristics

peril

allows, permits

well put together/hidden

position of leadership/chief importance

somber, malign

warlike enterprise

convey, carry

no time was then = at that moment there was no time

absolute ruler

prospered, been successful
smooth equipped corrupt, undermine he whom Satan's contrary unweeting = not knowing to the contrary assembly occupied, familiar with [trisyllabic, first and third accented] she doubting cover exhibit, set forth try, attempt to be less arrogant/prideful Satan’s than Job trickery, deceit employ Christ beginnings [four syllables, first and third accented, third elided] patient/long-suffering endurance body, bulk so that marveling rhythms theme, subject combat
lead astray
hymns
prayers
sang
Bet ha-Arabah, biblical site near the north shore of the Dead Sea [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
proclaim, make public
ripe, full-grown
keep company/live with
the paths
consorting, fitting, harmonizing
Christ too seems unsure of his prior existence
the Jews’ wondered at
time, period
extinguish, destroy
justice
divine, celestial
privately
above example = unprecedented
sheep pens
feeding trough in a stable
place
the star’s
formed, carved, set
see Luke 2:25–35
see Luke 2:36–38
similar
considered, studied, meditated upon
learning experience, endeavor, affliction, temptation
established previously
forerunner
not easily, with difficulty, barely
prevailed upon
pouring, washing
highest point
complete
hidden, retired, unknown
dark, gloomy
(1) shadows, (2) dark figures, ghosts, specters
commend, advise
the best
soon, in a little while
covering, shelter
keep, protect
lodged, sheltered
he neither
tame, gentle
hurtful, harmful
looked fixedly/fiercely
at a distance
Christ
alone
consumed, exhausted
for that = because
desert, wilderness
forced, compelled
public report, rumor
rustic
stubble, stumps
doubt
strict discipline, harshness
not permissive
dismal
travel around
roam
recourse
of Uz, in eastern Palestine
test
make clear [trisyllabic, second accented]
king of Israel, who meets his death after a weltering confusion of prophecies: see I Kings 22
Ramoth-Gilead, fortified position east of Jordan
hesitating, balking
Ahab’s
caused to chatter
had in charge = was supposed to do
[trisyllabic, accent on second]
[bisyllabic, second elided]
“What can I feel less than desire….? (reading “less” as an adverb) or “How could anything make me do less than desire….? (reading “less” not as an adverb but as a verb, said by the O.E.D. to have become obsolete when Milton was twenty-five years old)
attentively
i.e., copartner if not “disposer” (one who controls)
predictions, omens

shares

grief

private, individual

united with me

constituted

[four syllables, first and third accented?]

slave

stared at

think evil of

as good = they might/just as well have known at all

flee

superintending

tiny point

whining

cut short

[verb]

heathen

“at least, if you are inquired for, it shall be”

indignation

volition [noun]

wrung, extorted

someone who is

profit, advantage

renounce, recant, disclaim

(1) restraint, (2) rebuff

free
spoken, uttered
Return to text.
sweet-sounding
Return to text.
characteristic of/belonging to forests or woods
Return to text.
flute
Return to text.
authoritative direction/admonition
Return to text.
magical, powerful
Return to text.
courtyards, grounds
Return to text.
help, serve
Return to text.
see Numbers 22:5 through 24:25
Return to text.
corrupt
Return to text.
still
Return to text.
scorn
Return to text.
purpose
Return to text.
feigned semblance
Return to text.
earthy
Return to text.
lying down, resting
Return to text.
recently
Return to text.
clearly, distinctly
Return to text.
lived in lodgings
Return to text.
see John 1:40
Return to text.
see John 1:41
Return to text.
afterward
Return to text.
displayed, exhibited
Return to text.
captured
Return to text.
Elijah: see 2 Kings 2:1–12
Return to text.
Bet ha-Arabah, north of the Dead Sea: see John 1:28
Return to text.
north of the Dead Sea: see Deuteronomy 34:3
Return to text.
in Samaria: see John 3:23
Return to text.
Salim, in Samaria: see John 3:23
Return to text.
stronghold east of the Dead Sea, earlier destroyed but rebuilt by Herod
Return to text.
the Sea of Galilee
Return to text.
region east of the Jordan River, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea
Return to text.
willows
Return to text.
laments, complaints
Return to text.
carried/swept away
Return to text.
withdraw, disappear
Return to text.
uphold, maintain, justify
Return to text.
completed, brought about, done
Return to text.
consecrated
Return to text.
(1) foreknowledge, beneficent care, (2) divine intervention
Return to text.
Christ
Return to text.
strength
Return to text.
greeting
Return to text.
raised
Return to text.
remarkable
Return to text.
cold
Return to text.
Herod
Return to text.
not found
Return to text.
acknowledged
Return to text.
see Luke 2:34
Return to text.
murmur, complain
Return to text.
pondered
Return to text.
hides, keeps dark
Return to text.
extraordinarily
Return to text.
heavenly greeting

completion

traversing, traveling, treading

alone

purpose, aim

statement made in a preliminary way, hint

undisturbed

resourceless

assembly

examined, tested

enticement

similar

a “womanizing” demon: Asmodeus in *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, line 146, and Asmodai, in *Paradise Lost*, Book 6, line 365

demonic womanizer/seducer, who usually descended upon sleeping women

surpassing

well-spoken

mixed

dreadful, frightful

temperament

enervate, weaken

bring to nought, destroy

magnet

irregular

dote on = be infatuated with

complexion

dalliance

narration
nymph, attendant on Artemis, twin sister of Apollo [trisyllabic, second accented]
daughter of Oceanus, mother of Atlas [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
nymph-huntress who fled from all would-be lovers [bisyllabic, first accented]
mother of Dionysus, by Zeus [trisyllabic, first and third accented]
Antiopé, seduced and impregnated by Zeus [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
rescued from a satyr by Poseidon, who then seduced her [four syllables, first and third accented]
nymph pursued by Pan and transformed into a reed to escape him [bisyllabic, first accented]
transgressions, escapades
god of the wild woods
habits, practices
Alexander the Great [trisyllabic, second accented]
carelessly
Scipio Africanus, 236–183 B.C., who triumphed in Spain and in the Second Punic War
sent away
a young Spanish captive to whom, it was said, he had been attracted; she loved someone else
food
intention, plan
(1) condition, (2) greatness, power
deliberation
foolish, insipid
encompassed
girdle/belt
see Homer’s *Iliad*, 14:214–18
i.e., “how one look from his majestic brow (seated as on the top of virtue’s hill) would….”
shame, disapprove
dejected
ostentatious ornament not necessarily composed of, but resembling, feathers
whim, caprice
display of disregard
confused, destroyed
is starving
consent
signal
“if there were reason (cause)”
energetic
for the first time
ascribe/attribute to
as long as
extreme hunger, starvation
held intimate mental intercourse
where God directed Elijah to hide from King Ahab: see 1 Kings 17:2–3
i.e., in his dream
lentils, peas, beans (“plain/simple food”)
at once
lifted (went up)
have knowledge of
view, landscape
shed, stall
hollow, valley
singing
walks, passageways
spread out
of a
having been taught
more decorously
dutifully
remain, wait, continue
Hagar: see Genesis 21:14–19
her son was Ishmael, whose son was Nebaioth: see Genesis 25:12–13
would have
thereafter as = according to how
approve of
offer, present
vigor, energy, capacity
see Daniel 1:8–16
hesitate, be reluctant
need
supplied, furnished
taste, quality
framed (contained)
ambergris, at one time used in cooking
small freshwater stream
flowing
reputation
the Black Sea
near Naples
plain, low
dainties
deflected, turned aside
splendid, magnificent
tablelike board
spread abroad, poured out
slender
Trojan youth taken by Zeus as his cupbearer
handsome prince carried off by Hercules
now…now = first this, then that
danced
stood as if they were
horn of plenty (corum copiae): Amalthea was the all-bountiful goat that suckled infant Zeus
daughters of Night and guardians of the tree that bore golden apples
told, related
middle region of Britain: see Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot
mythical region west of Cornwall, in Britain
knights of King Arthur’s court
concordant, harmonizing
a gentle wind, but not so soft as a breeze
goddess of flowers
hesitates, fears [verb]
act of prohibition
prohibits (under Jewish law)
food, sustenance, victuals
courteous, excellent, noble
attendants, servants
moderately, restrainedly
push forward
careful attention
splendid, pretentious
scorn, disdain
showy
dissatisfied
instead
appropriately
obvious
fetched-from-afar
completely, entirely
troublesome, persistent
(1) temperament, (2) moderation
management
poor circumstances
draw, obtain
suite, train, company of servants
or keep
foolish, stupid, giddy
at
ruler of Judea, 63–43 B.C., and Herod’s father
Semitic tribe located south of the Dead Sea; traditionally, descendants of Esau, son of Isaac and elder twin of Jacob
heap up [verb]
exceedingly
virtue, valor, wisdom
once gained
virtue, valor, wisdom
see Judges 6–8
Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, legendary hero, called from farming in 458 B.C. and, for urgent military reasons, made dictator; sixteen days later, having won the war, he resigned as dictator and went back to his farm.

Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, consul in the early third century B.C., who refused all bribes, gifts, and favors; after his death, since he left nothing for his daughter’s dowry, it was provided by the Senate.

Manius Curius Dentatus, also early third century B.C., was a successful general who gave all booty to the Roman republic and then, like Cincinnatus, retired to his farm.

Marcus Atilius Regulus, captured in the First Punic War (with Carthage) was paroled on condition he present Carthage’s demands to Rome and then return; he advised rejection of Carthage’s terms, then returned as he had agreed, and was tortured to death: see Horace, Odes 3:5.
(1) proven wrong, (2) futile
(1) convicted, (2) vanquished, overcome
flawed, unsound
direction
summoning up, regaining control of
Christ
ask advice/counsel of
see Leviticus 8:8: sacred means of divination attached to (not necessarily set into) the high priest’s breastplate, though exactly what the Urim and Thummim were (both words = grammatically plural) is not known
[bisyllabic]
special preparation/readiness
stand firm, hold out
i.e., though there are many fighting “against thy few in arms”
professing
upright, uplifted, exalted
having been brought to the temperament/state of mind
Alexander the Great
kingdom of Persia, founded by Cyrus and overthrown by Alexander at Arbela in 331 B.C.
in Spain, when Scipio was probably less than thirty years old
Mithradates—though by then (66 B.C.) Pompey had reached the age of forty
Julius Caesar
seek
splendid display
what are
swarm
valued
separately, individually
produced
Alexander the Great was so identified
Romulus was so identified
reveal, show
morally ugly/perverted
Scipio Africanus
Carthaginian
prove
am from, came
en masse, without distinction
i.e., and with reason
thankful blessing
false
stripped
goodness, kindness
Roman emperor, A.D. 14–37
He caused the Hasmonean uprising by plundering Temple treasures, desecrating the altar, and more
Judah Maccabeus, who led the Hasmonean uprising; he was born in Modin
opportunity’s
tortured
peaceful
intervention, mediation
Saul: see I Samuel 9ff.
the Tigris and the Euphrates
open, level country
lesser, smaller
grain
soil
view
without springs or headsprings (sources of rivers)
(1) hastened, (2) gotten where we wanted to go
Armenian river, flowing into the Caspian Sea
unapproachable
desert
capital city of Assyrian empire after about 1100 B.C.
knight of Assyria, husband of Semiramis
king of Assyria, d. 722 B.C.
in 726 B.C.
immense city on the Euphrates
just as
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, 605–562 B.C.
knight of Persia: Cyrus captured Babylon in 538 B.C. and released the captive Jews
in southern Persia: residence and burial place of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, etc.
northeast of Persepolis, ancient capital of Bactria, now in Afghanistan
summer residence of Darius
Parthian capital, southeast of the Caspian Sea [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]
Shushan, city at northwestern tip of Persian Gulf, capital of Susiana/Elam and later of Persia
eriver east of Tigris, flowing through Susa/Shushan
Macedonian
seminomadic culture in western Asia, famous for bow-wielding cavalry
capital of Selucid empire, founded by Seleucus I Nicator; located on the Tigris
Return to text.
city in northwestern Mesopotamia, south of the Tigris
Return to text.
city in Armenia, southeast of the Black Sea; located on the Araxes River
Return to text.
town at northeastern end of Persian Gulf, near the juncture of the Tigris and the Euphrates
Return to text.
city on the Tigris, near Seleucia [trisyllabic, first and third accented; first letter silent]
Return to text.
founder of Parthian empire, ca. 248 B.C.
Return to text.
(1) extravagant, (2) unchaste, lewd
Return to text.
city on the Orontes River, capital of Syria
Return to text.
fierce “barbarian” people living north and east of the Black and Caspian Seas
Return to text.
region northeast of Parthia
Return to text.
fearsomeness
Return to text.
lozenge/diamond-shaped military formation
Return to text.
half-rhomb military formation
Return to text.
i.e., with most of the army concentrated in the center
Return to text.
Christ
Return to text.
splendor, pomp, display
Return to text.
swift
Return to text.
border
Return to text.
eastern Parthia, a region west of the Indus River
Return to text.
Kandahar, in modern Afghanistan
Return to text.
northern Parthia, between Bactria and Parthia
Return to text.
Hyrcania: province of ancient Persian empire, southeast of the Caspian Sea
Return to text.
region in the Caucasus, not Spain
Return to text.
Media-Atropatenia, west of Parthia, between the Caspian Sea and Armenia
Return to text.
near Nineveh, south of Armenia, on the Tigris: part of Assyria
Return to text.
see footnote 104, above
Return to text.
southeastern Persia: Susa was its capital
Return to text.
Basra, north of Persian Gulf, south of Susa

port, harbor

lacked

foot soldiers

an army had two horns/wings

soldiers in armor

loaded

soldier-diggers

flat, level, smooth, even

one-humped swift camels

filled

Tatar king in Boiardo’s romance *Orlando Innamorato* (“Roland in Love”)

fortress of King Gallophrone, Angelica’s father

bravest, most chivalric

pagan

high nobles

pressed forward

win over

make secure/safe [verb]

contemptible, small

note

progenitor, ancestor

descendants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, religiously and politically at odds with the Jews

molest, injure

Hyrcanus II, made king of Judah by Rome; he was attacked by Antigonus; both were abducted by Parthians

in spite of

alliance, treaty
modern Khabar, near the Euphrates: see 2 Kings 17:6, 18:11

inhabitants of Media, in Parthia

i.e., those of Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh: see note 130, above

political cunning

praiseworthy, fair-seeming

remiss, neglectful

scheming, crafty

evidence

wield

confronted (him) as

see 1 Chronicles 21:1ff.

counting, making a census of

except

idle, useless, of no significance/value

look to, have a care for

with blind speed

go after, pursue

fit, suitable

polished

little won

heal, make good

defeats, frustrates

new wine in process

splinters, chips

battering

despairing

central Italy: Tyrrhenian Sea to the south, Apennine Range to the northwest, the plain split by the River Tiber
northern Rome galleries, colonnades [trisyllabic, first and third accented] memorial structures, commemorating military success arches noteworthy (interesting) citadel (fortress) built on top of a hill majestic, dignified part of the Capitoline Hill of limits/bounds visible adjusted, placed optical instrument craftsmen [four syllables, second and fourth accented] stream, flowing magistrates governors of provinces attendants carrying bundles of rods with an ax wrapped inside, the blade projecting symbols one-tenth of a legion
cavalry: one-tenth of a wing (flank)

garments, dress, clothing

from Rome to Brindisi, seaport in southern Italy

from Rome north to the Adriatic Sea

Aswan, in southern Egypt on the Upper Nile

region in the Upper Nile, considered (but in fact not) an island

North African king, ca. 105 B.C.

i.e., the Mediterranean Sea off the northwest African coast

Chersonese: the Malay Peninsula

Ceylon or Sumatra

turbans

Gaul (now France)

Cadiz

people east of Germany, between the Vistula and the Volga

the Sea of Azov, northeast of and connected to the Black Sea

politeness

distant, remote, secluded

Tiberius

island south of Naples

Roman province (Naples, Pompeii, etc.)

Sejanus, finally executed in A.D. 29

[verb]

showy

of citrus wood

marble from the Atlas mountains in North Africa

three then-famous Italian wines, from Sezza, near Rome, and Cales and Falernia, near Mt. Vesuvius

two then-famous Greek wines: see Horace, Odes 3:19
ornaments
foreign, bizarre, uncouth
pillaging
(1) arrogant, (2) outrageous
unchaste
because of
(1) theatrical performances, (2) their daily existence
overly refined, soft
“besides my own”
shameless
fussy, fastidious
always
submit to
liberty, licence
see Exodus 20:2–3, Deuteronomy 6:12–15, and Matthew 4:8–10
propose
grant, gift
test
state
the lesser rulers
i.e., blowing from the four quarters of the earth
called: that is, Satan is currently called god both of earth and of Hell

"Then spake Jesus…. saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat…. Matthew 23:1–2
see Luke 2:42–49

the first five books of the Old Testament

heathen, pagans

to admiration: wonderfully

appropriate [adjective]

weapons

affording a wide view

i.e., either “native” or “hospitable” to those not native

(1) niche, coastal indentation, (2) privacy

public park northwest of Athens

secluded place

river running from Mt. Hymettus south into the sea

Aristotle

developed, produced (as Alexander’s tutor)

park east of Athens

Athenian colonnade, with painted frescoes, where Zeno the Stoic taught

measures, rhythms: the term was used both in music and in poetry

Aeolic: Greek dialect used by Sappho, Alcaeus, and others

(1) the Doric dialect of Greek, (2) the choral lyric poetry written in that dialect (as, e.g., by Pindar, who was himself a speaker of the Boeotian dialect)

“born in/of Meles”: the River Meles, in Asia Minor, was one of Homer’s supposed birthplaces [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]
Apollo claimed iambic trimeter, used in dramatic scenes wisdom full of wisdom make one’s way, go, resort ruled, commanded, controlled, directed Athenian harbor building, construction of which was suspended in 339 B.C. because of Demosthenes, 384–322, famous Athenian orator thundered region between Balkans and Greece: famous for Philip II and his son, Alexander the Great Persian king; on Sparta’s side in the war against Athens dwelling sweetly flowing given an additional name, title, or epithetic description Aristotle and his pupils were peripatetic (“walking about”) Epicurus and his followers consider, meditate upon inadequate even if acknowledged, admitted Socrates Plato Pyrrho, Sceptic founder Epicurus disdaining wishes, desires stratagems, contrivances
claim, assume
whoever
as if they were
select, of special excellence
eraser
like
Hebrew
sprinkled, spread
impersonating, playing the part of
means of adornment/embellishment, veneer, paint
Satan
in those cases where
politicians
used up, exhausted
fussily
massive, copious
utter, discourse
whip lashes
foretell
perceive distinctly
guides, gives directions
instructive red-lettered text printed in prayer book margins
sullen, dark
absolute, entire
calm, patient
excursion, journey
severely, very much
flowing together, meeting
either Tropic: both circles of the celestial sphere
premature falling
equivalent agitated
roots extending as far into the earth as the tree extends into the air
completely covered stopped undismayed
hood with gray fur, worn by clerics
causd to subside horrible, ugly
make trial of effective
i.e., clearly sounded/uttered/brought forth twig, shoot, slender branches
welcome, greet, give thanks for plan, trick, stratagem
encounter, meeting
(1) relaxed, calmed, (2) determined outrage [noun]
his usual unconcerned, artless
befalls storming
gusts, blasts

the larger universe

i.e., the human body

harmful, injurious

point to, mark

directed

time, period, occasion

exerted influence

assault

ill-omened

portents, omens

rage

in what degree = at what level/rank

parley

agreement, treaty

examine

disdained

winged beast, half horse, half griffin (head and wings of an eagle)

lofty

a large building

need, demand, call upon

lineage

knock, strike

see Psalms 91:11–12 and Matthew 4:5–7

son of Poseidon and Gaia (earth)

in North Africa

Hercules
defeated
stood to see = stood intending/hoping to see
sphinx
i.e., the riddle
a river
struck
celebrations
a compact body of persons
wings
Jesus
difficult, uncomfortable
standing place, position
joyous, well-pleased
restored, renewed, mended
weakened, injured
hymns
temporary dwelling
endowed, supplied
expel, vanquish
dispossessed
streets, roads
hell
[noun]
destroyer, slayer, conqueror
alone, unseen
contestant, actor, champion (of God)
authoritative, important
modify, moderate [verb]

bring to, change, restore

right, proper, correct

lacking

operative influences, accomplishments

medical science/art/practice

physical/mental states

now considered to be by Menander rather than Euripides

David Pareus, 1548–1622, German Protestant theologian

i.e., (1) act, (2) chorus, (3) act, (4) chorus, etc.

in the time

a state governed by an absolute ruler/dictator

d. ca. A.D. 389; he probably was not the author of Christ Suffering

stage plays, usually comic

seriousness

[noun]
meter

having no stanzaic patterning

at that time

important

having stanzas (strophes) of varying form

created?

extended

i.e., that which is

organization, management

arrangement, ordering
narrative, story
boundary, limit
nearby
withdrawn
form, compose
as much as
i.e., then visited
in addition
follow up on, pursue
attempt
in front of
exercise
tribe of Dan (Manoa and Samson's tribe), northwest of Judah
ridge, elevation
accustomed, in the habit of
enslaved
imposed on
breathe
unhealthy
flow, current of air
improvement
(1) draw breath, (2) recover
Philistine national god
hard-work-requiring
ignorant/irrational/false belief
permission
plebeian, common, general
unvisited, uncrowded

crowding, pressing

[verb]

development, training, education

special

work laboriously

brass, brasslike, as strong as brass

chains, shackles

assigned compulsion

building containing machinery (here water-driven) for processing, manufacturing, etc.

except

defect, failure, guilt

robbed, stripped

clumsy, awkward

confident

be subordinated

wields

ordering, management

(1) probably, (2) appropriately

goals, purposes

curse, poison, slayer, ruin

demand, call for

ended, destroyed

(1) silent, (2) always

every, any, all

see Genesis 1:3

(1) first, beginning, (2) primary
empty, destitute of life/activity
in which the moon was thought to hide between its old and new phases
relegated, fastened
visible
extinguished, destroyed
at will = at pleasure/choice
tomb, burial place
susceptible, amenable, exposed
two or more steps
sprawled, spread out
slack, feeble
clothes
garments
in battle formation
(1) forging, (2) invention
brass
upper-body armor
from the Black Sea region, famous for their metalworking [four syllables, second and fourth accented]
tunic, upper garment
too strongly to be resisted/endured (“supported”)
thrust, struck, trampled
Ascalon: ancient Philistine port city
rearing and raging
twisted, writhed, bent, reversed
covered with layer(s) of metal
dirtied, fouled, polluted
whatever
unlike the Jews, the Philistines were not circumcised
the suffix “lechi” = lifting up/casting away of the jawbone: see Judges 15:14–17
mighty
Gaza
gatepost/stake
used to lock the gates
south of Jerusalem, more than thirty miles from Gaza
see Numbers 13:22 ("anak" = “giant,” in Hebrew)
on which day only very short journeys were permitted
and in addition
i.e., loaded like
he whom
tell in myths/fables
the giant Atlas
unite, combine
uncertain, changeable
man has been
more unusual
incoherent
Eshtaol and Zora: west of Jerusalem, in the valley of Sorec (Sorek) (see line 229, below)
swellings
name, inscription on coins
i.e., most of them
raise, uplift
poor, inferior
have paired = been equal
crosswise, sideways
blame, accuse, challenge
ordering, arranging
Timnath, Philistine city
so that
Samson’s parents
proposed, planned
inmost
influence, incitement
pressed, pushed
opportunity, the course of events
stemming from (the marriage)
foolish
[three syllables, second stressed]
showily beautiful
accomplished: completed, perfected
because of
outburst
gave up = surrendered
challenge, fight
negligent
is in servitude
all alone
engaged in
canvassing: soliciting (as for votes, in an election)
praise, adorn
“Israel’s governors and heads of tribes” assembled
see Judges 15:8 fleeing planning, considering, estimating benefited, profited besieged certain victim, quarry small ropes, braided for strength common a principal Philistine city rather than Succoth and Penuel: Israelite cities (see Judges 8:4–9) the tribe of Ephraim, in the hill region north of Bethel see Judges 12:1–4 Semitic tribe frequently hostile to Israel the Ephraimites were identified by their inability to pronounce the “sh” in “shibboleth”: see Judges 12:5–6 “my nation/people (“mine”) may easily neglect me” “unless there be those who think God does not exist” hidden, unknown teacher, learned man suspect disordered enwrapped are confused/perplexed/entangled endless, everlasting
commands, laws

obligation (see Deuteronomy 7:2–5)

a person who had vowed to abstain from sex: see Numbers 6:2ff.

deceitful

put/go down

plead, claim

frees, releases, acquits

Dalila

heavy, full of care

consider

strange, unfamiliar

guided, led

bent

notable

destroyer, poison

splendor

wished for

God

slave

decide, declare

equally

biblical Timnath: see Judges 14:1–20

corrupted

i.e., of gold

false

major
eluded

a jest/joke

flattering

speech

batteries = (1) battering rams, (2) artillery
to make a military assault
exhausted (from “watching” too long/much)
firm, steadfast
addiction to women
working laboriously
instigation, incitement
attack
unspoken
harsh, unyielding
account
mob, crowd
lineage
assemblage [noun]
reproach
opened
mistrust, distrust
ready, willing
find room for, hold, shelter
literally, the enclosed space where jousting took place; metaphorically, “enter lists” = to fight/challenge
God
shut His eyes
bow
defeat, deprive, strip, frustrate, confound, reason, that it be unsettled/uncertain, connection, opportunity, deal, negotiate, this time, leave, abstain, refrain, forehead, made public, fictitious narratives.

Tantalus, Zeus’ son, was thus punished for telling the gods’ secrets to his friends.

Ordering, arranging, a fine/penalty, free, release, pleads, petitions, instrumentality [noun], lofty, high-souled, impulse, sons of Anak: the race of giants, celebrated, proclaimed, confrontation, false, venereal trains = love’s tricks/snares, a sign of favor.
i.e., red wine

away from

the sun’s beams?

soft?

fluid

ruined, destroyed

something to stare at

plentiful, flowing, excessive

healthy-looking, strong

break down, destroy

garbage, refuse, offal

to trouble, molest, injure

unoccupied

violence, shock

see Judges 15:18–19

point to, indicate, foretell

entertain, deal with

natural

state of mind, disposition

fantasy, whim, inclination

pursue, perform

receive

that which produces pain/suffering

limited

kidneys

employ, perform

appearances, symptoms
corresponding sensation, feeling excite, stir up incurable continue to cause pain, fester [verb] necrosis, destruction conscious irritate abate [adjective] particular, intimate temperate, abstinent exceedingly strength as if assignment defied, incited repeatedly [adverb] roll, catalogue written, placed, entered learned, carefully thought out, practiced belief, conviction searched for, obtained mild, soothing restore
(1) changing, (2) unstable, fickle
path
crowd, mob
lax, stray, random
like
formally, seriously
chosen, picked
protection, safeguard
honored
abandon
unclean, polluted
rough
excessive
conclusion
in that way
servant, officer
acted
biblical Tarshish: see 2 Chronicles 9:21 (“the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks”)
Javan, son of Japhet, was the founder of Ionia: the islands of Greece
Cadiz
show, display, finery
apparatus, rigging, implements of war
beautiful, smartly made
flags, banners
strut, flutter
forerunner

retinue, suite: i.e., maids, female attendants

unchanging, firmly resolved

overloaded

prepared

preparation

pulled after it, led to

wicked, evil

condition

accustomed

as if

propose, urge

chiefly, principally

test

pushed, driven

skillful

so that

trained, habituated

interior, inward

exaggerations

overloaded

counterbalanced

likely, natural

pressing, persistent

make public, proclaim

because of

discussion
interpret as
unsettled, variable, fickle
(1) mind, (2) affection, love
his first wife: see lines 219–27, above
intended, planned
confinement
“that was sufficient/did it for me”
this way
wholly, entirely
not risked
not afraid
sharers
foolish
harsh, grim, bitter
forced, compelled
frantic
passion, appetite
irreconcilable
knowing that I had been
decides, ordains
worked, prevailed
officers of the executive government
swore, solemnly entreated
insisted, urged
communal, general
backward
struggle
well-founded
common, widespread
considerations
prescribing, imposing
offensively
over, in preference to
frivolity, lack of serious thought
I who
acknowledged, openly declared
the Philistines’
subject of a realm, citizen
thou mine = thou under my protection
free
goes by the worse = gets the worst of it
by
outbursts/volleys of sound (words)
spare, give, yield
occasion, opportunity
acutely
lack
accident
out of their houses
attention
duty, function
up to, until
pleasant
fits not = is not suitable
separated, disunited, estranged

devices, contrivances

nets and snares

annulled

“They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers” (Psalm 58:4–5)

disdain

betray

leave

despised

finally, at last

affront, exult

displaying excessive affection/regard for one’s wife

complete, unqualified

slavery

explain, interpret

judging, criticizing

hold, reckon

inexorable, irreconcilable

pursuing, petitioning

bid (directed) to go (to leave)

affairs

the Jews

slandered

recited, sung, narrated

higher than

ties, agreements
incense, perfume

Sisera, a Canaanite hostile to the Jews, fled their pursuit; Jael, wife of Sisera’s host, drove a nail through his head as he lay sleeping: see Judges 4, 5

criminal

is discontented

evident, obvious

receive, hold

find, light upon

consult upon

the “secret” referred to in line 384, above

best man at a wedding: Samson’s first wife was subsequently married to his former best man

neither would both wives have

destined, ruinous, deadly

for that = because

limited, very little

formed, created, produced

prefer

basis, inner/essential part

implanted

serious, calm

defending

(1) sundering, separating, (2) clinging, adhering

on, along

disorderly, troubling

out of the right path

excessive fondness

corrupted
a woman joins/unites (with her virtue) arbitrarily/absolutely authoritative proper dread mixed with veneration sever, quit smile she = whether she smiles frown, scowl been involved in hidden, secret, recondite “the giant” home can guess/predict magnificent, splendid dress whether freight mischance, luck see Deuteronomy 3:1–11 see Numbers 13:33 a race of giants dwelling east of the River Jordan: see Deuteronomy 2:10–11 see Genesis 14:5 unnatural, amazing, vast, monstrous tested in camp: on a campaign listed field: battlefield divided into lists (areas for jousting tournaments) rumor, common talk
challenge to single combat
Return to text.
shackles, fetters
Return to text.
away from
Return to text.
the circumcised, the Jews
Return to text.
deadly
Return to text.
in order to be
Return to text.
destroyed by treachery
Return to text.
room (in a house)
Return to text.
close-banded = closely joined
Return to text.
get the better of
Return to text.
expedients, stratagems
Return to text.
showy
Return to text.
armor
Return to text.
body armor: rings (or plates) of metal covered with canvas, linen, or leather
Return to text.
upper-body armor
Return to text.
vant-brace: armor for forearms
Return to text.
leg armor
Return to text.
glove of leather, covered with metal plates
Return to text.
weaver’s beam: wooden cylinder in a loom, on which, before weaving, the warp is wound (see 1 Samuel 7:7)
Return to text.
i.e., seven laminations (layers) of leather
Return to text.
rattling, noisy
Return to text.
raging
Return to text.
stiff-spined
Return to text.
as long as
Return to text.
invoke
Return to text.
supported
Return to text.
notices, cares about
Return to text.
acknowledges

Samson’s labor

course-growing, rank, rough

conquered, overcome

thine (your) people

indulgent, beneficent

challenge rebel

tongue-valiant

treaty

well-known (and bad)

see Judges 14:10–19

booty, loot

indicated, proved

crafty intriguers

forced, compelled

so engaged in, employed

secret enemies

holding no official position

treaty

gave up = surrendered

undertook, ventured, dared

solitary

familiar, well-known

i.e., revealing the secret of his strength to Dalila, who then cut off his hair
tricks, sophistries, evasions
challenger
challenges
for the third time, three times in succession
trivial, minor, unimportant
undertaking, business
little, slight, no great
exercise
examine, inspect, evaluate
comment on, carp about
Philistine god
unaccustomed
give in return, cause
front line of battle formations
offensive arrogance
is appropriate for
bewildered
huge/massy frame
large
blow (of the hand)
frame, body
peril
acts of bravado/defiance
marching
unconcerned, indifferent, uncaring
passionate
temper
common talk
Return to text.
publicly declare
Return to text.
the greatest
Return to text.
benefit, profit
Return to text.
my death
Return to text.
pleasing, proper
Return to text.
overcome, vanquish
Return to text.
violent, truculent
Return to text.
bold
Return to text.
zealous, assiduous
Return to text.
frenzied, furious
Return to text.
their deliverer
Return to text.
military stores/equipment
Return to text.
disdains
Return to text.
speed
Return to text.
flash
Return to text.
performs, fulfills, discharges
Return to text.
perplexed, confused, disordered
Return to text.
panicked, overwhelmed, astonished
Return to text.
act of worship, religious observance
Return to text.
moral strength/courage
Return to text.
everything
Return to text.
edowed
Return to text.
deprived, stripped
Return to text.
in reserve, still to come
Return to text.
making his way
Return to text.
skillfully worked
Return to text.
at full speed
fluent
distinguish, mark out
pageants, parades, displays
standard, degree
evidence
strengthened, cheered (often by alcohol)
clowns
actors
mimes, burlesque actors
furnish
diversion
afflict, strain, make miserable
look to
worker at low/servile/hard/distasteful tasks
frolic, exercise
enjoined, commanded
formal decision
pained
defiance
pay back
God's favor
one pledged to abstinence
glorifying
legal
compels
saying, maxim
anger

relax rules, grant dispensations/permission

waking, stirring

incline toward, prepare

prognostication, prediction

obtain, invent, provide for

devices, usually but not necessarily mechanical

assault, attack

confine

test

technical skill

fatal

must

drag

take off, lay aside

chains

surrounded

irritate

violent

arrogant, immoderate

guarantee, promise

round about, all around

quantity, degree

my inducement = what has led/brought me

frolic, exercise

desire

share
share, participate in

tried to make use of

disinclined, opposed

liberal, magnanimous

courteous

of his sentence/punishment

would be

high-souled kindness

pardon, forgive, release

agreeable

property, estate

accomplish

numbered down = counted out, paid down

miserable

firm, settled, determined

lacking, missing

accustomed

lay up = save

elevated, dignified

[adjective]

on garrison (protection, defense) duty

body of troops

laughable, absurd

empty, unavailing

action, accomplishing

formed

consistent/harmonious with
of the same tribe, they are in a sense next of kin

place, population

disastrous, evil

happening

sorrow, grief

assent

wait, delay

express (fast)

abates, stops for a while

flee

dreadful, terrible

event

confused, disordered, deranged

upshot, conclusion

details, particulars

excess, more than enough

promptly, hastily

quickly

bursting out

worthless, vain

discord, quarrel

finally, in the end

narration

business

high street = main road

gotten done

t all abroad = widely
thought, decided
hall, amphitheater
quality, rank
benches
at a distance
inconspicuous, unnoticed
diversions
distinctive clothing, uniform
flutes																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					
test sinews
confined, shut in
wrenching
common/ordinary people
outside (1) coils, wrappings, (2) pen, enclosure
happy
proud, lofty
swallowed
preferring him (their idol)
Shiloh
derangement, madness
i.e., the spirit of frenzy
injured
diversion
unknowingly
foolish, stupid
onto
corrupt
powers
serpent
rural, farmhouse
discharged
rendered weak
the phoenix
wrapped
sacrificial fire, complete destruction
brought forth, generated
at the time
long-lived (for centuries)
(1) redeemed, acquitted, (2) ended
original location of the Philistines
(1) boundaries, (2) lands
lay hold = grasp
lineage
vessels of water
dried blood
condition, state
rites (funereal)
procession
recorded, written
story
come, proceed
inscrutable
disposition
organize [verb]
absolute
will, purpose, pleasure
acquisition
sent away
Table of Contents

Title Page
Chronology
Preface
Introduction
A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM 114
PSALM 136
ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT
AT A VACATION EXERCISE
ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST’S NATIVITY
THE PASSION
SONG: ON MAY MORNING
ENGLISH SONNETS
No. 1 O nightingale
No. 7 How soon hath time
No. 8 Captain or colonel
No. 9 Lady, that in the prime
No. 10 Daughter to that good earl
No. 11 I did but prompt the age
No. 12 A book was writ, of late
No. 13 Harry, whose tuneful
No. 14 When faith and love
No. 15 Fairfax, whose name in arms
No. 16 Cromwell, our chief of men
No. 17 Vane, young in years
No. 18 Avenge, O Lord
No. 19 When I consider
No. 20 Lawrence, of virtuous father
No. 21 Cyriack! Whose grandsire
No. 22 Cyriack, this three years day
No. 23 Methought I saw
ON SHAKESPEARE
ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER
ANOTHER ON THE SAME
AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER
L’ALLEGRO
IL PENSEROSEO
ARCADES
COMUS: A MASQUE
ON TIME
UPON THE CIRCUMCISION
AT A SOLEMN MUSIC
LYCIDAS
THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, BOOK ONE
ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE
PSALMS 1–8:
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
#7