Part 3: The Seventeenth Century – The Age of the Revolution (1603-1688)

# 3.10 JOHN MILTON

(1608-1674)

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John Milton was born in London to John Milton, a scrivener and composer, and Sarah Jeffrey. His education followed a common route, with his first being tutored by Thomas Young, a Scottish Presbyterian cleric, then studying at Saint Paul’s School, before entering Christ’s College, Cambridge. He studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Italian, grammar, rhetoric, and logic, reading the classical and modern works on philosophy, religion, science, history, politics, and literature. Not surprisingly, he placed fourth out of 259 candidates for the bachelor’s degree, which he earned cum laude in 1629, followed by a master’s degree in 1632 (also cum laude).

But Milton’s education, his scholarship, was far from common. He studied to an extraordinary degree and with the clear intent of preparing himself to be a Poet. After earning his degrees, Milton then spent time at his parents’ home in Hammersmith, where he focused on his vocation, writing sonnets, the masque “Comus” (1634), and “Lycidas” (1637), a pastoral elegy for his friend Edward King. In “Lycidas,” he declared his intention as a poet to follow in the steps of Virgil, deliberately moving from the pastoral to the epic. In this way, he consciously carried Spenser’s banner of the national Poet.



Image 3.11 | John Milton

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After his mother’s death, Milton again followed an apparently common educational route by traveling to the Continent, particularly France and Italy. But his vocation appears in his meeting playwright and poet Hugo Grotius (1583-1645); Giavanni Battisti Manso (1567-1645), the patron of Torquato Tasso (1544-1595); and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). He thought to put all of his preparation to good service upon his return to England, which was on the verge of Civil War. He determined to write an epic based on English history, a national epic that would define England just as Virgil’s *Aeneid* defined Rome—again, carrying Spenser’s banner, also acknowledging Chaucer in this great ambition.

Milton first put his skills to more immediate use, writing pamphlets, tracts, and political addresses supporting the Commonwealth. These prose pieces include “The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth” (1660); “The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce” (1644); the Areopagitica (1664), in which he argued against censorship; and “Eikonoklastes” (1649) and “Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio” (1651), arguing for the English having executed Charles I. He also served the Commonwealth as its Latin Secretary, in which role he corresponded with rulers and diplomats throughout Europe. He devoted himself to the cause of republicanism to his own physical detriment; he lost his eyesight by 1642 from, as he believed, the eyestrain his work incurred.

Upon the Restoration, he temporarily lost his freedom, permanently lost most of his estate, and almost lost his life for being a rebel. After the intervention of friends like Marvell, Milton was released from prison and allowed to retire. He then composed his epic, *Paradise Lost*. At one point in time, he thought to write an Arthurian epic, as did Spenser. But he decided that his subject of the Fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden would surpass that of all other epics due to its moral weight. With this intent, his *Paradise Lost* transformed the classic epic into an expression of Renaissance humanism and of the Reformation. His use of blank verse, rather than rhymed verse like Spenser’s, gave his epic immediate and dramatic voice.

He transforms epic convention; for example, the naming of the fallen angels before they raise Pandemonium in Book 1 is Milton’s version of the *Iliad*’s catalogue of ships, but Milton’s catalogue reveals the true evil of these destroyers of life. His epic similes and metaphors do not take readers away from the action, as do Homer’s, but instead, offer profound commentary on it. For example, Eden is differentiated from “Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers/ Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis/ Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain/ To seek her through the world” (Book 4, lines 278-81) through the more tender love and suffering of the redeeming son of God. Milton’s descent into the underworld is a descent into Hell itself, which becomes a psychological exploration of the sorrow and rage of the diabolic mind through a troubled landscape, moving from Pandemonium palace to “Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death” (Book 2, line 621).

Further, Milton imbues classical archetypes with individual (psychological) insight. Book 3’s Invocation to Light, for example, reverses the rise and fall of Icarus who flew too close to the sun; it moves down into despair and up to love, as Milton uses his own feelings on his loss of sight for the reader’s behalf. His personal underworld is that he cannot see: He is cut off from light and Nature’s book of knowledge. But that loss becomes the precondition for vision in a paradoxical fortunate fall, as celestial light shines inwardly and enables Milton to “see and tell/ Of things invisible to mortal sight” (Book 3, lines 54-55). Indeed, his *Paradise Lost* went beyond establishing national identity by being a theodicy. It vindicates the justice of God in ordaining or permitting natural and moral evil through insights such as this fortunate fall and of conversion.

## 3.10.1 “L’Allegro”

(1645)

Hence loathed 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-brow’d rocks,

As ragged as thy locks,

In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

But come thou goddess fair and free,

In heav’n yclep’d Euphrosyne,

And by men, heart-easing Mirth,

Whom lovely Venus at a birth

With two sister Graces more

To Ivy-crowned 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 wash’d in dew,

Fill’d 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 wreathed smiles,

Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek,

And love to live in dimple sleek;

Sport that wrinkled Care derides,

And Laughter holding both his 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 honour due,

Mirth, admit me of thy crew

To live with her, and live with thee,

In unreproved 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 struts his dames before;

Oft list’ning how the hounds and horn

Cheerly rouse the slumb’ring morn,

From the side of some hoar hill,

Through the high wood echoing shrill.

Sometime walking, not unseen,

By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,

Right against the eastern gate,

Where the great Sun begins his state,

Rob’d in flames, and amber light,

The clouds in thousand liveries dight.

While the ploughman near at hand,

Whistles o’er the furrow’d 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 landskip round it measures,

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,

Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

Mountains on whose barren breast

The labouring clouds do often rest;

Meadows trim with daisies pied,

Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.

Towers, and battlements it sees

Bosom’d high in tufted trees,

Where perhaps some beauty lies,

The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,

From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,

Are at their savoury dinner set

Of herbs, and other country messes,

Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;

And then in haste her bow’r she leaves,

With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;

Or if the earlier season lead

To the tann’d 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 chequer’d shade;

And young and old come forth to play

On a sunshine holiday,

Till the live-long daylight fail;

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,

With stories told of many a feat,

How Faery Mab the junkets eat,

She was pinch’d and pull’d she said,

And he by friar’s lanthorn 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 hath thresh’d the corn

That ten day-labourers could not end;

Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,

And stretch’d out all the chimney’s length,

Basks at the fire his hairy strength;

And crop-full out of doors he flings,

Ere the first cock his matin rings.

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,

By whispering winds soon lull’d asleep.

Tower’d cities please us then,

And the busy hum of men,

Where throngs of knights and barons bold,

In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,

With store 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 oft appear

In saffron robe, with taper clear,

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,

With mask, 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 learned sock be on,

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy’s child,

Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever against eating cares,

Lap me in soft Lydian airs,

Married to immortal verse,

Such as the meeting soul may pierce

In notes with many a winding bout

Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,

The melting voice through mazes running,

Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of harmony;

That Orpheus’ self may heave his head

From golden slumber on a bed

Of heap’d Elysian flow’rs, and hear

Such strains as would have won the ear

Of Pluto, to have quite set free

His half-regain’d Eurydice.

These delights if thou canst give,

Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

## 3.10.2 “Il Penseroso”

(1645)

Hence vain deluding Joys,

The brood of Folly without father bred,

How little you bested,

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 sunbeams,

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 Ethiop 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-hair’d 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, stedfast, 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 ev’n 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 Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,

And hears the Muses in a ring,

Aye round about Jove’s altar sing.

And add to these retired Leisure,

That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;

But first, and chiefest, with thee bring

Him that yon soars on golden wing,

Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,

The cherub Contemplation;

And the mute Silence hist along,

’Less Philomel will deign a song,

In her sweetest, saddest plight,

Smoothing the rugged brow of night,

While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,

Gently o’er th’ accustom’d oak.

Sweet bird that shunn’st the noise of folly,

Most musical, most melancholy!

Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,

I woo to hear thy even-song;

And missing thee, I walk unseen

On the dry smooth-shaven green,

To behold the wand’ring Moon,

Riding near her highest noon,

Like one that had been led astray

Through the heav’ns wide pathless way;

And oft, as if her head she bow’d,

Stooping through a fleecy cloud.

Oft on a plat of rising ground,

I hear the far-off curfew sound,

Over some wide-water’d shore,

Swinging slow with sullen roar;

Or if the air will not permit,

Some still removed place will fit,

Where glowing embers through the room

Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,

Far from all resort of mirth,

Save the cricket on the hearth,

Or the bellman’s drowsy charm,

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,

With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere

The spirit of Plato, to unfold

What worlds, or what vast regions hold

The immortal mind that hath forsook

Her mansion in this fleshly nook:

And of those dæmons that are found

In fire, air, flood, or under ground,

Whose power hath a true consent

With planet, or with element.

Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy

In sceptr’d pall come sweeping by,

Presenting Thebes’, or Pelop’s line,

Or the tale of Troy divine,

Or what (though rare) of later age,

Ennobled hath the buskin’d stage.

But, O sad Virgin, that thy power

Might raise Musæus 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 own’d the virtuous ring and glass,

And of the wond’rous horse of brass,

On which the Tartar king did ride;

And if aught 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 trick’d and frounc’d as she was wont,

With the Attic boy to hunt,

But kerchief’d in a comely cloud,

While rocking winds are piping loud,

Or usher’d 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 arched walks of twilight groves,

And shadows brown that Sylvan loves,

Of pine, or monumental oak,

Where the rude axe with heaved stroke,

Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,

Or fright them from their hallow’d 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 honied thigh,

That at her flow’ry work doth sing,

And the waters murmuring

With such consort as they keep,

Entice the dewy-feather’d sleep;

And let some strange mysterious dream,

Wave at his wings, in airy stream

Of lively portraiture display’d,

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 cloister’s pale,

And love the high embowed roof,

With antique pillars massy proof,

And storied windows richly dight,

Casting a dim religious light.

There let the pealing organ blow,

To the full-voic’d quire 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.

## 3.10.3 “Lycidas”

(1638)

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more

Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

And with forc’d 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 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 favour my destin’d urn,

And as he passes turn

And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nurs’d upon the self-same hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;

Together both, ere the high lawns appear’d

Under the opening eyelids 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 slop’d his westering wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,

Temper’d to th’oaten flute;

Rough Satyrs danc’d, and Fauns with clov’n heel,

From the glad sound would not be absent long;

And old Damætas lov’d 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’ergrown,

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 flowers 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

Clos’d o’er the head of your lov’d 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.

Ay me! I fondly dream

Had ye bin 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 gory 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 Neæra’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 touch’d 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 rumour 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 honour’d flood,

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown’d 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 ask’d the waves, and ask’d the felon winds,

“What hard mishap hath doom’d this gentle swain?”

And question’d every gust of rugged wings

That blows from off each beaked promontory.

They knew not of his story;

And sage Hippotades their answer brings,

That not a blast was from his dungeon stray’d;

The air was calm, and on the level brine

Sleek Panope with all her sisters play’d.

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,

Built in th’eclipse, and rigg’d 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 inscrib’d 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 mitred locks, and stern bespake:

“How well could I have spar’d for thee, young swain,

Enow of such as for their bellies’ sake

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 learn’d aught else the least

That to the faithful herdman’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 flow’rets of a thousand hues.

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use

Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,

Throw hither all your quaint enamel’d eyes,

That on the green turf suck the honied showers

And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,

The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,

The white pink, and the pansy freak’d with jet,

The glowing violet,

The musk-rose, and the well attir’d woodbine,

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,

And every flower that sad embroidery wears;

Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,

And daffadillies 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.

Ay me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas

Wash far away, where’er thy bones are hurl’d;

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 walk’d 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 for ever 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 touch’d the tender stops of various quills,

With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;

And now the sun had stretch’d out all the hills,

And now was dropp’d into the western bay;

At last he rose, and twitch’d his mantle blue:

To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

## 3.10.4 from Paradise Lost

### Book I

Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste

Brought death into the World, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire

That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed

In the beginning how the heavens and earth

Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill

Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed

Fast by the oracle of God, I thence

Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar

Above th’ Aonian mount, while it pursues

Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer

Before all temples th’ upright heart and pure,

Instruct me, for thou know’st; thou from the first

Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,

Dove-like sat’st brooding on the vast Abyss,

And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark

Illumine, what is low raise and support;

That, to the height of this great argument,

I may assert Eternal Providence,

And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,

Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause

Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,

Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off

From their Creator, and transgress his will

For one restraint, lords of the World besides.

Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

Th’ infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,

Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived

The mother of mankind, what time his pride

Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host

Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring

To set himself in glory above his peers,

He trusted to have equalled the Most High,

If he opposed, and with ambitious aim

Against the throne and monarchy of God,

Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,

With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

Hurled headlong flaming from th’ ethereal sky,

With hideous ruin and combustion, down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell

In adamantine chains and penal fire,

Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,

Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,

Confounded, though immortal. But his doom

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain

Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,

Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.

At once, as far as Angels ken, he views

The dismal situation waste and wild.

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,

As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames

No light; but rather darkness visible

Served only to discover sights of woe,

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

That comes to all, but torture without end

Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed

With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

Such place Eternal Justice has prepared

For those rebellious; here their prison ordained

In utter darkness, and their portion set,

As far removed from God and light of Heaven

As from the centre 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, weltering 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 Heaven 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 fallen: 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 lustre, 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 Heaven,

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

Extort 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 Heaven.”

So spake 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 throned Powers

That led th’ embattled Seraphim to war

Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds

Fearless, endangered Heaven’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 Heaven, and all this mighty host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,

As far as Gods and heavenly Essences

Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains

Invincible, and vigour 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?”

Whereto with speedy words th’ Arch-Fiend replied:—

“Fallen 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 labour must be to pervert that end,

And out of good still to find means of evil;

Which ofttimes 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

is ministers of vengeance and pursuit

Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,

Shot after us in storm, o’erblown hath laid

The fiery surge that from the precipice

Of Heaven 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 harbour there;

And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,

Consult how we may henceforth most offend

Our enemy, our own loss how repair,

How overcome this dire calamity,

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 wished 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 Heaven

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, shewn

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

Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rolled

In billows, leave i’ 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 singed bottom all involved

With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole

Of unblest 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 Heaven?—this mournful gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since he

Who now is sovereign 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 for ever 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 Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

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 Heaven.

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 Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?”

So Satan spake; 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

rovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,

As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;

No wonder, fallen 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

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views

At evening, from the top of Fesole,

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 inflamed sea he stood, and called

His legions—Angel Forms, who lay entranced

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks

In Vallombrosa, where th’ Etrurian shades

High over-arched embower; 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 carcases

And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrown,

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 Flower of Heaven—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 Heaven?

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 Heaven-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 fallen!”

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.

or 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 given, 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

Rhene or the Danaw, 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 Heaven sat on thrones,

Though on their names in Heavenly records now

Be no memorial, blotted out and rased

By their rebellion from the Books of Life.

Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve

Got them new names, till, wandering 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 the 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

Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,

In Argob and in Basan, to the stream

Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such

Audacious neighbourhood, 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, Tophet thence

And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.

Next Chemos, th’ obscene dread of Moab’s sons,

From Aroar to Nebo and the wild

Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon

And Horonaim, Seon’s real, beyond

The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,

And Eleale 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

Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove

Of Moloch homicide, lust 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 tried 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,

And works of love or enmity fulfil.

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, whom the Phoenicians called

Astarte, 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

Of alienated Judah. Next came one

Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark

Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt 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 and Pharphar, 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 wandering 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 Bethel and in Dan,

Likening his Maker to the grazed 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?

In courts and palaces he also reigns,

And in luxurious cities, where the noise

Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,

And injury and outrage; 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 far renowned

Th’ Ionian gods—of Javan’s issue held

Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,

Their boasted parents;—Titan, Heaven’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 heaven; 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. That proud honour claimed

Azazel 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 lustre 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 colours 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 swage

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 fixed 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 armed 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, hardening 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 Armoric 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 tower. 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-risen

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 Heaven, and from eternal splendours 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 singed 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,

Forseeing 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 Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,

Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?

For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,

If counsels different, or danger shunned

By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns

Monarch in Heaven 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 Heaven that he ere long

Intended to create, and therein plant

A generation whom his choice regard

Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.

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. But these thoughts

Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;

For who can think submission? War, then, war

Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake; 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 grasped arms

Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,

Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

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. Thither, winged with speed,

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 Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts

Were always downward bent, admiring more

The riches of heaven’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 centre, 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

That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best

Deserve the precious bane. And here let those

Who boast in mortal things, and wondering 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 graven;

The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon

Nor great Alcairo such magnificence

Equalled 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 arched roof,

Pendent by subtle magic, many a row

Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed

With naptha 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 Heaven by many a towered structure high,

Where sceptred 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 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,

On Lemnos, th’ Aegaean isle. Thus they relate,

Erring; for he with this rebellious rout

Fell long before; nor aught aviled him now

To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape

By all his engines, but was headlong sent,

With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the winged Heralds, by command

Of sovereign 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 squared 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 smoothed 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,

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

High on a throne of royal state, which far

Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,

Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand

Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised

To that bad eminence; and, from despair

Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires

Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue

Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,

His proud imaginations thus displayed:—

“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!—

For, since no deep within her gulf can hold

Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,

I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent

Celestial Virtues rising will appear

More glorious and more dread than from no fall,

And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—

Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,

Did first create your leader—next, free choice

With what besides in council or in fight

Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,

Thus far at least recovered, hath much more

Established in a safe, unenvied throne,

Yielded with full consent. The happier state

In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw

Envy from each inferior; but who here

Will envy whom the highest place exposes

Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s aim

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 Heaven, 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, sceptred king,

Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit

That fought in Heaven, 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 spake:—

“My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,

More unexpert, I boast not: them 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 lingering here,

Heaven’s fugitives, and for their dwelling-place

Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,

The prison of his tryranny who reigns

By our delay? No! let us rather choose,

Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once

O’er Heaven’s high towers 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

Insulting, 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, driven 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 Heaven,

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 Heaven; 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 towers of Heaven are filled

With armed 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

Heaven’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 Heaven’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, threatening 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

Or racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk

Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,

There to converse with everlasting groans,

Unrespited, 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 Heaven’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 Heaven

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 venturous, 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 vapour; or, inured, not feel;

Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed

In temper and in nature, will receive

Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,

This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;

Besides what hope the never-ending flight

Of future days may bring, what chance, what change

Worth waiting—since our present lot appears

For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,

If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason’s garb,

Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,

Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—

“Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven

We war, if war be best, or to regain

Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then

May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield

To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.

The former, vain to hope, argues as vain

The latter; for what place can be for us

Within Heaven’s bound, unless Heaven’s Lord supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent

And publish grace to all, on promise made

Of new subjection; with what eyes could we

Stand in his presence humble, and receive

Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne

With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing

Forced hallelujahs, while he lordly sits

Our envied sovereign, and his altar breathes

Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,

Our servile offerings? This must be our task

In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome

Eternity so spent in worship paid

To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,

By force impossible, by leave obtained

Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state

Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek

Our own good from ourselves, and from our own

Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,

Free and to none accountable, preferring

Hard liberty before the easy yoke

Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear

Then most conspicuous when great things of small,

Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,

We can create, and in what place soe’er

Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain

Through labour and endurance. This deep world

Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst

Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven’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.

Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!

As he our darkness, cannot we his light

Imitate when we please? This desert soil

Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;

Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise

Magnificence; and what can Heaven 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 blustering winds, which all night long

Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull

Seafaring men o’erwatched, whose bark by chance

Or pinnace, 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 Heaven.

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 engraven

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 spake:—

“Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,

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 Heaven hath doomed

This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat

Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt

From Heaven’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 sceptre rule

Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.

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 given

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

Heaven, 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 Heaven

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 favoured more

Of him who rules above; so was his will

Pronounced among the Gods, and by an oath

That shook Heaven’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 of subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,

And Heaven’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

Attempting, 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 neighbouring arms,

And opportune excursion, we may chance

Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone

Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven’s fair light,

Secure, and at the brightening 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 wandering 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 countenance read his own dismay,

Astonished. None among the choice and prime

Of those Heaven-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 spake:—

“O Progeny of Heaven! Empyreal 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 sovereignty, adorned

With splendour, 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 honour, due alike

To him who reigns, and so much to him due

Of hazard more as he above the rest

High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,

Terror of Heaven, though fallen; 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 Heaven.

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

Heaven’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 concord holds; men only disagree

Of creatures rational, though under hope

Of heavenly 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 Heaven, nor less

Than Hell’s dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,

And god-like 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 deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.

Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised

By false presumptuous hope, the ranged Powers

Disband; and, wandering, 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 fronted brigades form:

As when, to warn 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 thickest legions close; with feats of arms

From either end of heaven 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 wandering 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’ obdured 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—

Abhorred 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 watery 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 profound 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 alp,

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 level wing the deep, then soars

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 from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;

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 labouring 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—black it stood as Night,

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 Heaven.”

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:—

“Art thou that traitor Angel? art thou he,

Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then

Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms

Drew after him the third part of Heaven’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 Heaven

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 lingering, or with one stroke of this dart

Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,

So speaking and so threatening, 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 heaven’s artillery fraught, came rattling on

Over the Caspian,—then stand front to front

Hovering 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 wither 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,

Risen, 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 spake, 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 Heaven, when at th’ assembly, and in sight

Of all the Seraphim with thee combined

In bold conspiracy against Heaven’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 opening wide,

Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,

Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,

Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized

All th’ host of Heaven; 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—thee chiefly, who, full oft

Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,

Becam’st enamoured; 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 Heaven: 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,

Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down

Into this Deep; and in the general fall

I also: at which time this powerful key

Into my hands was given, with charge to keep

These gates for ever shut, which none can pass

Without my opening. 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

Engendering with me, of that rape begot

These yelling 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,

Through tempered heavenly; 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 Heaven, and joys

Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change

Befallen 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 heavenly 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’ unfounded Deep, and through the void immense

To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold

Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now

Created vast and round—a place of bliss

In the purlieus of Heaven; and therein placed

A race of upstart creatures, to supply

Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,

Lest Heaven, 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 odours. 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 bespake her sire:—

“The key of this infernal Pit, by due

And by command of Heaven’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 Heaven and heavenly born—

Here in perpetual agony and pain,

With terrors and with clamours 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 beseems

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 bannered host,

Under spread ensigns marching, mibht 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 mastery, 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

Confusedly, 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 rase

Some capital city; or less than if this frame

Of Heaven 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 vacuity. All unawares,

Fluttering 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 nitre, 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 winged 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

Bordering 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 Ades, and the dreaded name

Of Demogorgon; Rumour 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 Spirtis 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

Wandering 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

Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,

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!”

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,

With faltering speech and visage incomposed,

Answered: “I know thee, stranger, who thou art— \*\*\*

That mighty leading Angel, who of late

Made head against Heaven’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 Heaven-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 defend,

Encroached on still through our intestine broils

Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell,

Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;

Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world

Hung o’er my realm, linked in a golden chain

To that side Heaven 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 Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,

Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned

Charybdis, and by th’ other whirlpool steered.

So he with difficulty and labour hard

Moved on, with difficulty and labour he;

But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,

Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,

Following his track (such was the will of Heaven)

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 Heaven

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 Heaven, 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 pendent World, in bigness as a star

Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.

Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,

Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

### Book III

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven firstborn,

Or of the Eternal coeternal beam:

May I express thee unblam’d? since God is light,

And never but in unapproached 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 Heavens 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,

Escap’d the Stygian pool, though long detain’d

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 heavenly Muse to venture down

The dark descent, and up to re-ascend,

Though hard and rare: Thee I revisit safe,

And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou

Revisit’st not these eyes, that roll in vain

To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;

So thick a drop serene hath quench’d their orbs,

Or dim suffusion veil’d. Yet not the more

Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt,

Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,

Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief

Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,

That wash thy hallow’d feet, and warbling flow,

Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget

So were I equall’d with them in renown,

Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace;

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 even 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 dark

Surrounds 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 expung’d and ras’d,

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 thron’d above all highth, bent down his eye

His own works and their works at once to view:

About him all the Sanctities of Heaven

Stood thick as stars, and from his sight receiv’d

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 plac’d

Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,

Uninterrupted joy, unrivall’d love,

In blissful solitude; he then survey’d

Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there

Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night

In the dun air sublime, and ready now

To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet,

On the bare outside of this world, that seem’d

Firm land imbosom’d, without firmament,

Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.

Him God beholding from his prospect high,

Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,

Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.

Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage

Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds

Prescrib’d no bars of Hell, nor all the chains

Heap’d on him there, nor yet the main abyss

Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems

On desperate revenge, that shall redound

Upon his own rebellious head. And now,

Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way

Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,

Directly towards the new created world,

And man there plac’d, with purpose to assay

If him by force he can destroy, or, worse,

By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;

For man will hearken to his glozing lies,

And easily transgress the sole command,

Sole pledge 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, though free to fall.

Such I created all the ethereal Powers

And Spirits, both them who stood, and them who fail’d;

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 appear’d,

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 despoil’d,

Made passive both, had serv’d necessity,

Not me? they therefore, as to right belong’d,

So were created, nor can justly accuse

Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,

As if predestination over-rul’d

Their will dispos’d 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 form’d 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 ordain’d

Their freedom: they themselves ordain’d their fall.

The first sort by their own suggestion fell,

Self-tempted, self-deprav’d: Man falls, deceiv’d

By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,

The other none: In mercy and justice both,

Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;

But Mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.

Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill’d

All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect

Sense of new joy ineffable diffus’d.

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen

Most glorious; in him all his Father shone

Substantially express’d; and in his face

Divine compassion visibly appear’d,

Love without end, and without measure grace,

Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake.

O Father, gracious was that word which clos’d

Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace;

For which both Heaven and earth shall high extol

Thy praises, with the innumerable sound

Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne

Encompass’d shall resound thee ever blest.

For should Man finally be lost, should Man,

Thy creature late so lov’d, thy youngest son,

Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join’d

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 accomplish’d, 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 question’d and blasphem’d 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 sav’d who will;

Yet not of will in him, but grace in me

Freely vouchsaf’d; once more I will renew

His lapsed powers, though forfeit; and enthrall’d

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 fallen 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 warn’d

Their sinful state, and to appease betimes

The incensed Deity, while offer’d grace

Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,

What may suffice, and soften stony hearts

To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.

To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,

Though but endeavour’d 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 us’d, 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 harden’d, 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 Heaven,

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, heavenly 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 Heaven charity so dear?

And silence was in Heaven: on Man’s behalf

He ask’d, but all the heavenly quire stood mute,

Patron or intercessour none appear’d,

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, adjudg’d to Death and Hell

By doom severe, had not the Son of God,

In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,

His dearest mediation thus renew’d.

Father, thy word is past, Man shall find grace;

And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,

The speediest of thy winged messengers,

To visit all thy creatures, and to all

Comes unprevented, unimplor’d, 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 given me to possess

Life in myself for ever; 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

For ever 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 Heaven, 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 spake, 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 Heaven, what this might mean, and whither tend,

Wondering; but soon th’ Almighty thus replied.

O thou in Heaven 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 heavenly 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

God-like 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 for ever, 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 Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell.

When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,

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 for ever shut. Mean while

The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring

New Heaven 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 honour 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, Heaven 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 amarant and gold;

Immortal amarant, a flower which once

In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,

Began to bloom; but soon for man’s offence

To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,

And flowers aloft shading the fount of life,

And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven

Rolls o’er Elysian flowers 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 Heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung Omnipotent,

Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,

Eternal King; the Author of all being,

Fountain of light, thyself invisible

Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit’st

Throned inaccessible, but when thou shadest

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 Heaven, 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 countenance, 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.

He Heaven of Heavens and all the Powers therein

By thee created; and by thee threw down

The aspiring Dominations: Thou that day

Thy Father’s dreadful thunder didst not spare,

Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook

Heaven’s everlasting frame, while o’er the necks

Thou drovest 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 incline:

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 no where to be found less than Divine!

Hail, Son of God, Saviour 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 Heaven, above the starry sphere,

Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.

Mean while upon the firm opacous globe

Of this round world, whose first convex divides

The luminous inferiour orbs, enclosed

From Chaos, and the 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-threatening storms

Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky;

Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,

Though distant far, some small reflection gains

Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud:

Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field.

As when a vultur 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 aereal vapours 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 the 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 the 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 neighbouring moon as some have dreamed;

Those argent fields more likely habitants,

Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold

Betwixt the 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 Sennaar, 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 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 Heaven;

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 crystalling sphere whose balance weighs

The trepidation talked, and that first moved;

And now Saint Peter at Heaven’s wicket seems

To wait them with his keys, and now at foot

Of Heaven’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, tost

And fluttered into rags; then reliques, 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 thither-ward in haste

His travelled steps: far distant he descries

Ascending by degrees magnificent

Up to the wall of Heaven 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 Heaven.

Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood

There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes

Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed

Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon

Who after came from earth, failing 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 the 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 the Arabian shore;

So wide the opening 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 Heaven-gate,

Looks down with wonder at the sudden view

Of all this world at once. As when a scout,

Through dark and desart 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 seised, though after Heaven seen,

The Spirit malign, but much more envy seised,

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 Atlantick seas

Beyond the 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 staid not to inquire: Above them all

The golden sun, in splendour likest Heaven,

Allured his eye; thither his course he bends

Through the calm firmament, (but up or down,

By center, or eccentrick, 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 magnetick beam, that gently warms

The universe, and to each inward part

With gentle penetration, though unseen,

Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;

So wonderously was set his station bright.

There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps

Astronomer in the sun’s lucent orb

Through his glazed optick 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 limbeck 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-chemick sun, so far from us remote,

Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,

Here in the dark so many precious things

Of colour 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 the equator, as they now

Shot upward still direct, whence no way round

Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air,

No where 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 fledge 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 coloured 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 Heavens, or down to the Earth

Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,

O’er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts.

Uriel, for thou of those seven Spirits that stand

In sight of God’s high throne, gloriously bright,

The first art wont his great authentick will

Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,

Where all his sons thy embassy attend;

And here art likeliest by supreme decree

Like honour to obtain, and as his eye

To visit oft this new creation round;

Unspeakable desire to see, and know

All these his wonderous works, but chiefly Man,

His chief delight and favour, him for whom

All these his works so wonderous he ordained,

Hath brought me from the quires of Cherubim

Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell

In which of all these shining orbs hath Man H

is fixed seat, or fixed seat hath none,

But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell;

That I may find him, and with secret gaze

Or open admiration 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,

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 spake 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 Heaven and Earth:

And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps

At wisdom’s gate, and to simplicity

Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill

Where no ill seems: Which now for once beguiled

Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held

The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven;

Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,

In his uprightness, 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 reaches blame, but rather merits praise

The more it seems excess, that led thee hither

From thy empyreal mansion thus alone,

To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,

Contented with report, hear only in Heaven:

For wonderful indeed are all his works,

Pleasant 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 heap:

Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar

Stood ruled, 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 cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;

And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven

Flew upward, spirited with various forms,

That rolled orbicular, 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 the other hemisphere,

Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon

So call that opposite fair star) her aid

Timely interposes, and her monthly round

Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heaven,

With borrowed light her countenance triform

Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,

And in her pale dominion checks the night.

That spot, to which I point, is Paradise,

Adam’s abode; those lofty shades, his bower.

Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires.

Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low,

As to superiour Spirits is wont in Heaven,

Where honour due and reverence none neglects,

Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath,

Down from the ecliptick, sped with hoped success,

Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel;

Nor staid, till on Niphates’ top he lights.

### Book IV

O, for that warning voice, which he, who saw

The Apocalypse, heard cry in Heaven aloud,

Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,

Came furious down to be revenged on men,

Woe to the inhabitants on earth! that now,

While time was, our first parents had been warned

The coming of their secret foe, and ’scaped,

Haply so ’scaped his mortal snare: For now

Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,

The tempter ere the accuser of mankind,

To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss

Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell:

Yet, not rejoicing in his speed, though bold

Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,

Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth

Now rolling boils in his tumultuous breast,

And like a devilish engine back recoils

Upon himself; horrour 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: Now conscience wakes despair,

That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory

Of what he was, what is, and 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 Heaven, 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,

Lookest 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,

Of 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 Heaven against Heaven’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 sdeined 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 inferiour 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 hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,

But Heaven’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 threatening to devour me opens wide,

To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.

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 highth 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, in stead

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 Heaven’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 spake, 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 heavenly minds from such distempers foul

Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,

Each perturbation smoothed 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 demeanour, 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

Access denied; and overhead upgrew

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 theatre

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 neighbouring 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 colours mixed:

On which the sun more glad impressed his beams

Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,

When God hath showered the earth; so lovely seemed

That landskip: 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 fail

Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past

Mozambick, off at sea north-east winds blow

Sabean odours from the spicy shore

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 enamoured, 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 the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,

Due entrance he disdained; and, in contempt,

At one flight 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 perverts 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 Heaven on Earth: For blissful Paradise

Of God the garden was, by him in the east

Of Eden planted; Eden stretched her line

From Auran eastward to the royal towers

Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,

Of 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 ingulfed; for God had thrown

That mountain as his garden-mould 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, wandering 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 crisped brooks,

Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,

With mazy errour under pendant shades

Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed

Flowers 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 bowers: 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 only, 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,

Flowers 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; mean while murmuring waters fall

Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,

That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned

Her crystal mirrour holds, unite their streams.

The birds their quire 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 the eternal Spring. Not that fair field

Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,

Herself a fairer flower 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 honour 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 valour 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

Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:

She, as a veil, down to the slender waist

Her unadorned 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, honour dishonourable,

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 labour 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 flowers:

The savoury 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 the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale

Of Heaven 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 heavenly Spirits bright

Little inferiour; 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 Heaven

Ill fenced for Heaven 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 strait, 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 loth 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 publick reason just,

Honour and empire with revenge enlarged,

By conquering this new world, compels me now

To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.”

So spake 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,

Griped in each paw: when, Adam first of men

To first of women Eve thus moving speech,

Turned him, all ear to hear new utterance flow.

“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 knowest

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 given

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 flowers,

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 no where find.

That day I oft remember, when from sleep

I first awaked, and found myself reposed

Under a shade on flowers, much wondering 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 the expanse of Heaven; 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 watery gleam appeared,

Bending to look on me: I started back,

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 seest,

‘What there thou seest, 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 watery image: Back I turned;

Thou following cryedst aloud, ‘Return, fair Eve;

‘Whom flyest thou? whom thou flyest, 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, to 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

Seised mine: I yielded; and from that time see

How beauty is excelled by manly grace,

And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

So spake 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 superiour love, as Jupiter

On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds

That shed Mayflowers; 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.

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

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 wandering Spirit of Heaven 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!”

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

Mean while in utmost longitude, where Heaven

With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun

Slowly descended, and with right aspect

Against the eastern gate of Paradise

Levelled 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 angelick guards, awaiting night;

About him exercised heroick games

The unarmed youth of Heaven, but nigh at hand

Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,

Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold.

Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even

On a sun-beam, swift as a shooting star

In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours 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 highth 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 aery gait;

But in the mount that lies from Eden north,

Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks

Alien from Heaven, 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 winged warriour thus returned.

Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,

Amid the sun’s bright circle where thou sitst,

See far and wide: In at this gate none pass

The vigilance here placed, but such as come

Well known from Heaven; 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 knowest it to exclude

Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.

But if within the circuit of these walks,

In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom

Thou tellest, 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 fallen

Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb,

Incredible how swift, had thither rolled

Diurnal, or this less volubil 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 Evening 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 slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;

She all night long her amorous descant sung;

Silence was pleased: Now glowed 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, the hour

Of night, and all things now retired to rest,

Mind us of like repose; since God hath set

Labour 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 Heaven 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 risen,

And at our pleasant labour, to reform

Yon flowery arbours, 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 bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,

Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;

Mean while, as Nature wills, night bids us rest.

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst

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 flower,

Glistering 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 Heaven, 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, flower,

Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;

Nor grateful Evening 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 ancestor replied.

Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,

These have their course to finish round the earth,

By morrow evening, and from land to land

In order, though to nations yet unborn,

Ministring light prepared, 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, but with kindly heat

Of various influence foment and warm,

Temper or nourish, or in part shed down

Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow

On earth, made hereby apter to receive

Perfection from the sun’s more potent ray.

These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,

Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,

That Heaven would want 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

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,

With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds

In full harmonick number joined, their songs

Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed

On to their blissful bower: it was a place

Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed

All things to Man’s delightful use; the roof

Of thickest covert 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 flower,

Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,

Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought

Mosaick; underfoot the violet,

Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay

Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone

Of costliest emblem: 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,

Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph

Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,

With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,

Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed;

And heavenly quires 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 authentick 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 heaven,

Which they beheld, the moon’s resplendent globe,

And starry pole: Thou also madest 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 uncropt 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 bower

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 encrease; 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 driven 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 domestick sweets,

Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,

Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.

Here Love his golden shafts 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 mask, or midnight ball,

Or serenate, 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 flowery roof

Showered 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

Half way 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 spake.

Uzziel, 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 winged 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 evening 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, seise 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 ingendering pride.

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear

Touched lightly; for no falshood 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 rumoured war, the smutty grain,

With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air;

So started up in his own shape the Fiend.

Back stept 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

Comest 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

For you, there 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 stoodest in Heaven upright and pure;

That glory then, when thou no more wast good,

Departed from thee; and thou resemblest 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 spake 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 lustre 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,

A waiting 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 splendour wan; who by his gait

And fierce demeanour 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 spake.

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 hadst in Heaven the 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 wouldst thyself, no doubt

And boldly venture to whatever place

Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change

Torment with ease, and soonest recompense

Dole with delight, which in this place I sought;

To thee no reason, who knowest only good,

But evil hast not tried: and wilt object

His will who bounds 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 Heaven 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 incurrest by flying, meet thy flight

Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,

Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain

Can equal anger infinite provoked.

But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee

Came not all hell broke loose? or thou than they

Less hardy to endure? Courageous Chief!

The first in flight from pain! hadst 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 knowest 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 behoves

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 Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,

And practised distances to cringe, not fight,

To whom the warriour Angel soon replied.

To say and straight unsay, pretending first

Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,

Argues no leader but a liear 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 the acknowledged Power supreme?

And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem

Patron of liberty, who more than thou

Once fawned, and cringed, and servily adored

Heaven’s awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope

To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?

But mark what I arreed thee now, Avant;

Fly neither whence thou fledst! 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 limitary 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 compeers,

Us’d to the yoke, drawest his triumphant wheels

In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved.”

While thus he spake, the angelick squadron bright

Turned fiery red, sharpening in mooned 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 plowman doubting stands,

Left on the threshing floor his hopeless sheaves

Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,

Collecting all his might, dilated stood,

Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:

His stature reached the sky, and on his crest

Sat Horrour 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

Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements

At least had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn

With violence of this conflict, had not soon

The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,

Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen

Betwixt 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 bespake the Fiend.

“Satan, I know thy strength, and thou knowest mine;

Neither our own, but given: What folly then

To boast what arms can do? since thine no more

Than Heaven 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 night.

### Book VIII

THE Angel ended, and in Adams Eare

So Charming left his voice, that he a while

Thought him still speaking, still stood fixt to hear;

Then as new wak’t thus gratefully repli’d.

What thanks sufficient, or what recompence

Equal have I to render thee, Divine

Hystorian, who thus largely hast allayd

The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsaf’t

This friendly condescention to relate

Things else by me unsearchable, now heard

With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,

With glorie attributed to the high

Creator; something yet of doubt remaines,

Which onely thy solution can resolve.

When I behold this goodly Frame, this World

Of Heav’n and Earth consisting, and compute,

Thir magnitudes, this Earth a spot, a graine,

An Atom, with the Firmament compar’d

And all her numberd Starrs, that seem to rowle

Spaces incomprehensible (for such

Thir distance argues and thir swift return

Diurnal) meerly to officiate light

Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,

One day and night; in all thir vast survey

Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire,

How Nature wise and frugal could commit

Such disproportions, with superfluous hand

So many nobler Bodies to create,

Greater so manifold to this one use,

For aught appeers, and on thir Orbs impose

Such restless revolution day by day

Repeated, while the sedentarie Earth,

That better might with farr less compass move,

Serv’d by more noble than her self, attaines

Her end without least motion, and receaves,

As Tribute such a sumless journey brought

Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;

Speed, to describe whose swiftness Number failes.

So spake our Sire, and by his count’nance seemd

Entring on studious thoughts abstruse, which Eve

Perceaving where she sat retir’d in sight,

With lowliness Majestic from her seat,

And Grace that won who saw to wish her stay,

Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flours,

To visit how they prosper’d, bud and bloom,

Her Nurserie; they at her coming sprung

And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew.

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse

Delighted, or not capable her eare

Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv’d,

Adam relating, she sole Auditress;

Her Husband the Relater she preferr’d

Before the Angel, and of him to ask

Chose rather: hee, she knew would intermix

Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute

With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip

Not Words alone pleas’d her. O when meet now

Such pairs, in Love and mutual Honour joyn’d?

With Goddess-like demeanour forth she went;

Not unattended, for on her as Queen

A pomp of winning Graces waited still,

And from about her shot Darts of desire

Into all Eyes to wish her still in sight.

And Raphael now to Adam’s doubt propos’d

Benevolent and facil thus repli’d.

To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav’n

Is as the Book of God before thee set,

Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learne

His Seasons, Hours, or Dayes, or Months, or Yeares:

This to attain, whether Heav’n move or Earth,

Imports not, if thou reck’n right, the rest

From Man or Angel the great Architect

Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge

His secrets to be scann’d by them who ought

Rather admire; or if they list to try

Conjecture, he his Fabric of the Heav’ns

Hath left to thir disputes, perhaps to move

His laughter at thir quaint Opinions wide

Hereafter, when they come to model Heav’n

And calculate the Starrs, how they will weild

The mightie frame, how build, unbuild, contrive

To save appeerances, how gird the Sphear

With Centric and Eccentric scribl’d o’re,

Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb:

Alreadie by thy reasoning this I guess,

Who art to lead thy ofspring, and supposest

That bodies bright and greater should not serve

The less not bright, nor Heav’n such journies run,

Earth sitting still, when she alone receaves

The benefit: consider first, that Great

Or Bright inferrs not Excellence: the Earth

Though, in comparison of Heav’n, so small,

Nor glistering, may of solid good containe

More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,

Whose vertue on it self workes no effect,

But in the fruitful Earth; there first receavd

His beams, unactive else, thir vigour find.

Yet not to Earth are those bright Luminaries

Officious, but to thee Earths habitant.

And for the Heav’ns wide Circuit, let it speak

The Makers high magnificence, who built

So spacious, and his Line stretcht out so farr;

That Man may know he dwells not in his own;

An Edifice too large for him to fill,

Lodg’d in a small partition, and the rest

Ordain’d for uses to his Lord best known.

The swiftness of those Circles attribute,

Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,

That to corporeal substances could adde

Speed almost Spiritual; mee thou thinkst not slow,

Who since the Morning hour set out from Heav’n

Where God resides, and ere mid-day arriv’d

In Eden, distance inexpressible

By Numbers that have name. But this I urge,

Admitting Motion in the Heav’ns, to shew

Invalid that which thee to doubt it mov’d;

Not that I so affirm, though so it seem

To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.

God to remove his wayes from human sense,

Plac’d Heav’n from Earth so farr, that earthly sight,

If it presume, might erre in things too high,

And no advantage gaine. What if the Sun

Be Centre to the World, and other Starrs

By his attractive vertue and their own

Incited, dance about him various rounds?

Thir wandring course now high, now low, then hid,

Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,

In six thou seest, and what if sev’nth to these

The Planet Earth, so stedfast though she seem,

Insensibly three different Motions move?

Which else to several Spheres thou must ascribe,

Mov’d contrarie with thwart obliquities,

Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift

Nocturnal and Diurnal rhomb suppos’d,

Invisible else above all Starrs, the Wheele

Of Day and Night; which needs not thy beleefe,

If Earth industrious of her self fetch Day

Travelling East, and with her part averse

From the Suns beam meet Night, her other part

Still luminous by his ray. What if that light

Sent from her through the wide transpicuous aire,

To the terrestrial Moon be as a Starr

Enlightning her by Day, as she by Night

This Earth? reciprocal, if Land be there,

Fields and Inhabitants: Her spots thou seest

As Clouds, and Clouds may rain, and Rain produce

Fruits in her soft’nd Soile, for some to eate

Allotted there; and other Suns perhaps

With thir attendant Moons thou wilt descrie

Communicating Male and Femal Light,

Which two great Sexes animate the World,

Stor’d in each Orb perhaps with some that live.

For such vast room in Nature unpossest

By living Soule, desert and desolate,

Onely to shine, yet scarce to contribute

Each Orb a glimps of Light, conveyd so farr

Down to this habitable, which returnes

Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.

But whether thus these things, or whether not,

Whether the Sun predominant in Heav’n

Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun,

Hee from the East his flaming rode begin,

Or Shee from West her silent course advance

With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps

On her soft Axle, while she paces Eev’n,

And beares thee soft with the smooth Air along,

Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,

Leave them to God above, him serve and feare;

Of other Creatures, as him pleases best,

Wherever plac’t, let him dispose: joy thou

In what he gives to thee, this Paradise

And thy faire Eve; Heav’n is for thee too high

To know what passes there; be lowlie wise:

Think onely what concernes thee and thy being;

Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there

Live, in what state, condition or degree,

Contented that thus farr hath been reveal’d

Not of Earth onely but of highest Heav’n.

To whom thus Adam cleerd of doubt, repli’d.

How fully hast thou satisfi’d 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 farr off all anxious cares,

And not molest us, unless we our selves

Seek them with wandring thoughts, and notions vain.

But apt the Mind or Fancy is to roave

Uncheckt, and of her roaving is no end;

Till warn’d, or by experience taught, she learne,

That not to know at large of things remote

From use, obscure and suttle, 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 concerne

Unpractis’d, unprepar’d, 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 somthing not unseasonable to ask

By sufferance, and thy wonted favour deign’d.

Thee I have heard relating what was don

Ere my remembrance: now hear mee relate

My Storie, which perhaps thou hast not heard;

And Day is yet not spent; till then thou seest

How suttly to detaine 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 eare

Than Fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to thirst

And hunger both, from labour, at the houre

Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,

Though pleasant, but thy words with Grace Divine

Imbu’d, bring to thir sweetness no satietie.

To whom thus Raphael answer’d heav’nly meek.

Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,

Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee

Abundantly his gifts hath also pour’d

Inward and outward both, his image faire:

Speaking or mute all comliness and grace

Attends thee, and each word, each motion formes

Nor less think wee in Heav’n of thee on Earth

Than of our fellow servant, and inquire

Gladly into the wayes of God with Man:

For God we see hath honour’d 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,

Farr on excursion toward the Gates of Hell;

Squar’d in full Legion (such command we had)

To see that none thence issu’d forth a spie,

Or enemie, while God was in his work,

Least hee incenst at such eruption bold,

Destruction with Creation might have mixt.

Not that they durst without his leave attempt,

But us he sends upon his high behests

For state, as Sovran King, and to enure

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 return’d up to the coasts of Light

Ere Sabbath Eev’ning: so we had in charge.

But thy relation now; for I attend,

Pleas’d with thy words no less than thou with mine.

So spake 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

Induc’d me. As new wak’t from soundest sleep

Soft on the flourie herb I found me laid

In Balmie Sweat, which with his Beames the Sun

Soon dri’d, and on the reaking moisture fed.

Strait toward Heav’n my wondring Eyes I turnd,

And gaz’d a while the ample Skie, till rais’d

By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,

As thitherward endevoring, and upright

Stood on my feet; about me round I saw

Hill, Dale, and shadie Woods, and sunnie Plaines,

And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,

Creatures that livd, and movd, and walk’d, or flew,

Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil’d,

With fragrance and with joy my heart oreflow’d.

My self I then perus’d, and Limb by Limb

Survey’d, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran

With supple joints, as lively vigour led:

But who I was, or where, or from what cause,

Knew not; to speak I tri’d, and forthwith spake,

My Tongue obey’d and readily could name

What e’re I saw. Thou Sun, said I, faire Light,

And thou enlight’nd Earth, so fresh and gay,

Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plaines,

And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,

Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?

Not of my self; by some great Maker then,

In goodness and in power præeminent;

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 call’d, and stray’d I knew not whither,

From where I first drew Aire, and first beheld

This happie Light, when answer none return’d,

On a green shadie Bank profuse of Flours

Pensive I sate me down; there gentle sleep

First found me, and with soft oppression seis’d

My droused sense, untroubl’d, 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 mov’d

My Fancy to believe I yet had being,

And livd: One came, methought, of shape Divine,

And said, thy Mansion wants thee, Adam, rise,

First Man, of Men innumerable ordain’d

First Father, call’d by thee I come thy Guide

To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepar’d.

So saying, by the hand he took me rais’d,

And over Fields and Waters, as in Aire

Smooth sliding without step, last led me up

A woodie Mountain; whose high top was plaine,

A Circuit wide, enclos’d, with goodliest Trees

Planted, with Walks, and Bowers, that what I saw

Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemd. Each Tree

Load’n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye

Tempting, stirr’d in me sudden appetite

To pluck and eate; whereat I wak’d, and found

Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream

Had lively shadowd: Here had new begun

My wandring, had not hee who was my Guide

Up hither, from among the Trees appeer’d,

Presence Divine. Rejoycing, but with aw,

In adoration at his feet I fell

Submiss: he rear’d me, and Whom thou soughtst I am,

Said mildely, Author of all this thou seest

Above, or round about thee or beneath.

This Paradise I give thee, count it thine

To Till and keep, and of the Fruit to eate:

Of every Tree that in the Garden growes

Eate freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:

But of the Tree whose operation brings

Knowledg 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 warne thee, shun to taste,

And shun the bitter consequence: for know,

The day thou eat’st thereof, my sole command

Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt dye;

From that day mortal, and this happie State

Shalt loose, expell’d from hence into a World

Of woe and sorrow. Sternly he pronounc’d

The rigid interdiction, which resounds

Yet dreadful in mine eare, though in my choice

Not to incur; but soon his cleer aspect

Return’d and gracious purpose thus renew’d.

Not onely 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 Aire, Beast, Fish, and Fowle.

In signe whereof each Bird and Beast behold

After thir kindes; I bring them to receave

From thee thir Names, and pay thee fealtie

With low subjection; understand the same

Of Fish within thir watry residence,

Not hither summon’d, since they cannot change

Thir Element to draw the thinner Aire.

As thus he spake, each Bird and Beast behold

Approaching two and two, These cowring low

With blandishment, each Bird stoop’d on his wing.

I nam’d them, as they pass’d, and understood

Thir Nature, with such knowledg God endu’d

My sudden apprehension: but in these

I found not what me thought I wanted still;

And to the Heav’nly vision thus presum’d.

O by what Name, for thou above all these,

Above mankinde, or aught than mankinde higher,

Surpassest farr my naming, how may I

Adore thee, Author of this Universe,

And all this good to man, for whose well being

So amply, and with hands so liberal

Thou hast provided all things: but with mee

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’nd, thus repli’d.

What call’st thou solitude, is not the Earth

With various living creatures, and the Aire

Replenisht, and all these at thy command

To come and play before thee; know’st thou not

Thir language and thir wayes? They also know,

And reason not contemptibly; with these

Find pastime, and beare rule; thy Realm is large.

So spake the Universal Lord, and seem’d

So ordering. I with leave of speech implor’d,

And humble deprecation thus repli’d.

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 inferiour farr beneath me set?

Among unequals what societie

Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?

Which must be mutual, in proportion due

Giv’n and receiv’d; but in disparitie

The one intense, the other still remiss

Cannot well suite 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 rejoyce

Each with thir kinde, Lion with Lioness;

So fitly them in pairs thou hast combin’d;

Much less can Bird with Beast, or Fish with Fowle

So well converse, nor with the Ox the Ape;

Wors then can Man with Beast, and least of all.

Whereto th’ Almighty answer’d, not displeas’d.

A nice and suttle happiness I see

Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice

Of thy Associates, Adam, and wilt taste

No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitarie.

What think’st thou then of mee, and this my State,

Seem I to thee sufficiently possest

Of happiness, or not? who am alone

From all Eternitie, for none I know

Second to mee or like, equal much less.

How have I then with whom to hold converse

Save with the Creatures which I made, and those

To me inferiour, infinite descents

Beneath what other Creatures are to thee?

He ceas’d, I lowly answer’d. To attaine

The highth and depth of thy Eternal wayes

All human thoughts come short, Supream of things;

Thou in thy self art perfet, and in thee

Is no deficience 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

Shouldst propagat, 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 multipli’d,

In unitie defective, which requires

Collateral love, and deerest amitie.

Thou in thy secresie although alone,

Best with thy self accompanied, seek’st not

Social communication, yet so pleas’d,

Canst raise thy Creature to what highth thou wilt

Of Union or Communion, deifi’d;

I by conversing cannot these erect

From prone, nor in thir wayes complacence find.

Thus I embold’nd spake, and freedom us’d

Permissive, and acceptance found, which gain’d

This answer from the gratious voice Divine.

Thus farr to try thee, Adam, I was pleas’d,

And finde thee knowing not of Beasts alone,

Which thou hast rightly nam’d, but of thy self,

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 shouldst dislike,

And be so minded still; I, ere thou spak’st,

Knew it not good for Man to be alone,

And no such companie as then thou saw’st

Intended thee, for trial onely brought,

To see how thou could’st judge of fit and meet:

What next I bring shall please thee, be assur’d,

Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,

Thy wish, exactly to thy hearts desire.

Hee ended, or I heard no more, for now

My earthly by his Heav’nly overpowerd,

Which it had long stood under, streind to the highth

In that celestial Colloquie sublime,

As with an object that excels the sense,

Dazl’d and spent, sunk down, and sought repair

Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call’d

By Nature as in aide, and clos’d mine eyes.

Mine eyes he clos’d, but op’n left the Cell

Of Fancie my internal sight, by which

Abstract as in a transe methought I saw,

Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape

Still glorious before whom awake I stood;

Who stooping op’nd my left side, and took

From thence a Rib, with cordial spirits warme,

And Life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,

But suddenly with flesh fill’d up and heal’d:

The Rib he formd and fashond with his hands;

Under his forming hands a Creature grew,

Manlike, but different sex, so lovly faire,

That what seemd fair in all the World, seemd now

Mean, or in her summ’d up, in her containd

And in her looks, which from that time infus’d

Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,

And into all things from her Aire inspir’d

The spirit of love and amorous delight.

Shee disappeerd, and left me dark, I wak’d

To find her, or for ever to deplore

Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:

When out of hope, behold her, not farr off,

Such as I saw her in my dream, adornd

With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow

To make her amiable: On she came,

Led by her Heav’nly Maker, though unseen,

And guided by his voice, nor uninformd

Of nuptial Sanctitie and marriage Rites:

Grace was in all her steps, Heav’n in her Eye,

In every gesture dignitie and love.

I overjoyd could not forbear aloud.

This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill’d

Thy words, Creator bounteous and benigne,

Giver of all things faire, but fairest this

Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see

Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self

Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man

Extracted; for this cause he shall forgoe

Father and Mother, and to his Wife adhere;

And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule.

She heard me thus, and though divinely brought,

Yet Innocence and Virgin Modestie,

Her vertue and the conscience of her worth,

That would be woo’d, and not unsought be won,

Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir’d,

The more desirable, or to say all,

Nature her self, though pure of sinful thought,

Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn’d;

I follow’d her, she what was Honour knew,

And with obsequious Majestie approv’d

My pleaded reason. To the Nuptial Bowre

I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heav’n,

And happie Constellations on that houre

Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth

Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;

Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires

Whisper’d it to the Woods, and from thir wings

Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicie Shrub,

Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night

Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Eevning Starr

On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp.

Thus I have told thee all my State, and brought

My Storie to the sum of earthly bliss

Which I enjoy, and must confess to find

In all things else delight indeed, but such

As us’d or not, works in the mind no change,

Nor vehement desire, these delicacies

I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits and Flours,

Walks, and the melodie of Birds; but here

Farr otherwise, transported I behold,

Transported touch; here passion first I felt,

Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else

Superiour and unmov’d, here onely weake

Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.

Or Nature faild in mee, 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 bestow’d

Too much of Ornament, in outward shew

Elaborate, of inward less exact.

For well I understand in the prime end

Of Nature her th’ inferiour, in the mind

And inward Faculties, which most excell,

In outward also her resembling less

His Image who made both, and less expressing

The character of that Dominion giv’n

O’re other Creatures; yet when I approach

Her loveliness, so absolute she seems

And in her self compleat, so well to know

Her own, that what she wills to do or say,

Seems wisest, vertuousest, discreetest, best;

All higher knowledge in her presence falls

Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her

Looses discount’nanc’t, and like folly shewes;

Authority and Reason on her waite,

As one intended first, not after made

Occasionally; and to consummate all,

Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat

Build in her loveliest, and create an awe

About her, as a guard Angelic plac’t.

To whom the Angel with contracted brow.

Accuse not Nature, she hath don her part;

Do thou but thine, and be not diffident

Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou

Dismiss not her, when most thou needst her nigh,

By attributing overmuch to things

Less excellent, as thou thy self perceav’st.

For what admir’st thou, what transports thee so,

An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well

Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love,

Not thy subjection: weigh with her thy self;

Then value: Oft times nothing profits more

Than self esteem, grounded on just and right

Well manag’d; 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 honour thou maist 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 voutsaf’t

To Cattel and each Beast; which would not be

To them made common and divulg’d, if aught

Therein enjoy’d were worthy to subdue

The Soule of Man, or passion in him move.

What higher in her societie thou findst

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 judicious, is the scale

By which to heav’nly Love thou maist ascend,

Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause

Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found.

To whom thus half abash’t Adam repli’d.

Neither her out-side formd so fair, nor aught

In procreation common to all kindes

(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 mixt with Love

And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign’d

Union of Mind, or in us both one Soule;

Harmonie to behold in wedded pair

More grateful than harmonious sound to the eare.

Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose

What inward thence I feel, not therefore foild,

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 saist

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 thir Love

Express they, by looks onely, or do they mix

Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?

To whom the Angel with a smile that glow’d

Celestial rosie red, Loves proper hue,

Answer’d. Let it suffice thee that thou know’st

Us happie, 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, joynt, or limb, exclusive barrs:

Easier than Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,

Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure

Desiring; nor restrain’d conveyance need

As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul.

But I can now no more; the parting Sun

Beyond the Earths green Cape and verdant Isles

Hesperean sets, my Signal to depart.

Be strong, live happie, 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 plac’t; beware.

I in thy persevering shall rejoyce,

And all the Blest: stand fast; to stand or fall

Free in thine own Arbitrement it lies.

Perfet within, no outward aid require;

And all temptation to transgress repel.

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus

Follow’d with benediction. Since to part,

Go heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,

Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore.

Gentle to me and affable hath been

Thy condescension, and shall be honour’d ever

With grateful Memorie: 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 Bowre.

### Book IX

NO more of talk where God or Angel Guest

With Man, as with his Friend, familiar us’d

To sit indulgent, and with him partake

Rural repast, permitting him the while

Venial discourse unblam’d: I now must change

Those Notes to Tragic; foul distrust, and breach

Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt,

And disobedience: On the part of Heav’n

Now alienated, distance and distaste,

Anger and just rebuke, and judgement giv’n,

That brought into this World a world of woe,

Sinne and her shadow Death, and Miserie

Deaths Harbinger: Sad task, yet argument

Not less but more Heroic then the wrauth

Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu’d

Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall; or rage

Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous’d,

Or Neptun’s ire or Juno’s, that so long

Perplex’d the Greek and Cytherea’s Son;

If answerable style I can obtaine

Of my Celestial Patroness, who deignes

Her nightly visitation unimplor’d,

And dictates to me slumb’ring, or inspires

Easie my unpremeditated Verse:

Since first this Subject for Heroic Song

Pleas’d me long choosing, and beginning late;

Not sedulous by Nature to indite

Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument

Heroic deem’d, chief maistrie to dissect

With long and tedious havoc fabl’d Knights

In Battels feign’d; the better fortitude

Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom

Unsung; or to describe Races and Games,

Or tilting Furniture, emblazon’d Shields,

Impreses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;

Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgious Knights

At Joust and Torneament; then marshal’d Feast

Serv’d up in Hall with Sewers, and Seneshals;

The skill of Artifice or Office mean,

Not that which justly gives Heroic name

To Person or to Poem. Mee of these

Nor skilld nor studious, higher Argument

Remaines, sufficient of it self to raise

That name, unless an age too late, or cold

Climat, or Years damp my intended wing

Deprest, 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 Starr

Of Hesperus, whose Office is to bring

Twilight upon the Earth, short Arbiter

Twixt Day and Night, and now from end to end

Nights Hemisphere had veild the Horizon round:

When Satan who late fled before the threats

Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improv’d

In meditated fraud and malice, bent

On mans destruction, maugre what might hap

Of heavier on himself, fearless return’d.

By Night he fled, and at Midnight return’d.

From compassing the Earth, cautious of day,

Since Uriel Regent of the Sun descri’d

His entrance, and forewarnd the Cherubim

That kept thir watch; thence full of anguish driv’n,

The space of seven continu’d Nights he rode

With darkness, thrice the Equinoctial Line

He circl’d, four times cross’d the Carr of Night

From Pole to Pole, traversing each Colure;

On the eighth return’d, 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 wraught 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 involv’d in rising Mist, then sought

Where to lie hid; Sea he had searcht and Land

From Eden over Pontus, and the Poole

Mæotis, up beyond the River Ob;

Downward as farr Antartic; and in length

West from Orontes to the Ocean barr’d

At Darien, thence to the Land where flowes

Ganges and Indus: thus the Orb he roam’d

With narrow search; and with inspection deep

Consider’d every Creature, which of all

Most opportune might serve his Wiles, and found

The Serpent suttlest Beast of all the Field.

Him after long debate, irresolute

Of thoughts revolv’d, 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 wilie Snake,

Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark,

As from his wit and native suttletie

Proceeding, which in other Beasts observ’d

Doubt might beget of Diabolic pow’r

Active within beyond the sense of brute.

Thus he resolv’d, but first from inward griefe

His bursting passion into plaints thus pour’d:

O Earth, how like to Heav’n, if not preferr’d

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, danc’t round by other Heav’ns

That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps,

Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,

In thee concentring all thir precious beams

Of sacred influence: As God in Heav’n

Is Center, yet extends to all, so thou

Centring receav’st from all those Orbs; in thee,

Not in themselves, all thir known vertue appeers

Productive in Herb, Plant, and nobler birth

Of Creatures animate with gradual life

Of Growth, Sense, Reason, all summ’d up in Man.

With what delight could I have walkt thee round,

If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange

Of Hill, and Vallie, Rivers, Woods and Plaines,

Now Land, now Sea, and Shores with Forrest crownd,

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 maistring Heav’ns Supreame;

Nor hope to be my self less miserable

By what I seek, but others to make such

As I, though thereby worse to me redound:

For onely in destroying I find ease

To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyd,

Or won to what may work his utter loss,

For whom all this was made, all this will soon

Follow, as to him linkt in weal or woe,

In wo then: that destruction wide may range:

To mee shall be the glorie sole among

The infernal Powers, in one day to have marr’d

What he Almightie styl’d, six Nights and Days

Continu’d making, and who knows how long

Before had bin contriving, though perhaps

Not longer then since I in one Night freed

From servitude inglorious welnigh half

Th’ Angelic Name, and thinner left the throng

Of his adorers: hee to be aveng’d,

And to repaire his numbers thus impair’d,

Whether such vertue spent of old now faild

More Angels to Create, if they at least

Are his Created, or to spite us more,

Determin’d to advance into our room

A Creature form’d 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 pronounc’d, and, O indignitie!

Subjected to his service Angel wings,

And flaming Ministers to watch and tend

Thir earthy Charge: Of these the vigilance

I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist

Of midnight vapor glide obscure, and prie

In every Bush and Brake, where hap may finde

The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazie foulds

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 constraind

Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,

This essence to incarnate and imbrute,

That to the hight of Deitie aspir’d;

But what will not Ambition and Revenge

Descend to? who aspires must down as low

As high he soard, obnoxious first or last

To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,

Bitter ere long back on it self recoiles;

Let it; I reck not, so it light well aim’d,

Since higher I fall short, on him who next

Provokes my envie, this new Favorite

Of Heav’n, this Man of Clay, Son of despite,

Whom us the more to spite his Maker rais’d

From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.

So saying, through each Thicket Danck or Drie,

Like a black mist low creeping, he held on

His midnight search, where soonest he might finde

The Serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found

In Labyrinth of many a round self-rowld,

His head the midst, well stor’d with suttle wiles:

Not yet in horrid Shade or dismal Den,

Nor nocent yet, but on the grassie Herbe

Fearless unfeard he slept: in at his Mouth

The Devil enterd, and his brutal sense,

In heart or head, possessing soon inspir’d

With act intelligential; but his sleep

Disturbd not, waiting close th’ approach of Morn.

Now when as sacred Light began to dawne

In Eden on the humid Flours, that breathd

Thir morning incense, when all things that breath,

From th’ Earths great Altar send up silent praise

To the Creator, and his Nostrils fill

With grateful Smell, forth came the human pair

And joind thir vocal Worship to the Quire

Of Creatures wanting voice, that done, partake

The season, prime for sweetest Sents and Aires:

Then commune how that day they best may ply

Thir growing work: for much thir work outgrew

The hands dispatch of two Gardning so wide.

And Eve first to her Husband thus began.

Adam, well may we labour still to dress

This Garden, still to tend Plant, Herb and Flour,

Our pleasant task enjoyn’d, but till more hands

Aid us, the work under our labour 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 wilde. Thou therefore now advise

Or hear what to my minde first thoughts present,

Let us divide our labours, thou where choice

Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind

The Woodbine round this Arbour, or direct

The clasping Ivie where to climb, while I

In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt

With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon:

For while so near each other thus all day

Our taske we choose, what wonder if so near

Looks intervene and smiles, or object new

Casual discourse draw on, which intermits

Our dayes work brought to little, though begun

Early, and th’ hour of Supper comes unearn’d.

To whom mild answer Adam thus return’d.

Sole Eve, Associate sole, to me beyond

Compare above all living Creatures deare,

Well hast thou motion’d, well thy thoughts imployd

How we might best fulfill the work which here

God hath assign’d us, nor of me shalt pass

Unprais’d: for nothing lovelier can be found

In Woman, then to studie houshold good,

And good workes in her Husband to promote.

Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos’d

Labour, as to debarr 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 deni’d, and are of Love the food,

Love not the lowest end of human life.

For not to irksom toile, but to delight

He made us, and delight to Reason joyn’d.

These paths & Bowers doubt not but our joynt 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 somtimes is best societie,

And short retirement urges sweet returne.

But other doubt possesses me, least harm

Befall thee sever’d from me; for thou knowst

What hath bin warn’d us, what malicious Foe

Envying our happiness, and of his own

Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame

By sly assault; and somwhere nigh at hand

Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find

His wish and best advantage, us asunder,

Hopeless to circumvent us joynd, where each

To other speedie aide might lend at need;

Whether his first design be to withdraw

Our fealtie from God, or to disturb

Conjugal Love, then which perhaps no bliss

Enjoy’d by us excites his envie more;

Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side

That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.

The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,

Safest and seemliest by her Husband staies,

Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.

To whom the Virgin Majestie of Eve,

As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,

With sweet austeer composure thus reply’d,

Ofspring of Heav’n and Earth, and all Earths Lord,

That such an Enemie we have, who seeks

Our ruin, both by thee informd I learne,

And from the parting Angel over-heard

As in a shadie nook I stood behind,

Just then returnd at shut of Evening Flours.

But that thou shouldst my firmness therfore 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 wee, not capable of death or paine,

Can either not receave, or can repell.

His fraud is then thy fear, which plain inferrs

Thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love

Can by his fraud be shak’n or seduc’t;

Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy brest

Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?

To whom with healing words Adam replyd.

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 hee who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses

The tempted with dishonour foul, suppos’d

Not incorruptible of Faith, not prooff

Against temptation: thou thy self with scorne

And anger wouldst resent the offer’d wrong,

Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,

If such affront I labour to avert

From thee alone, which on us both at once

The Enemie, though bold, will hardly dare,

Or daring, first on mee th’ assault shall light.

Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;

Suttle he needs must be, who could seduce

Angels nor think superfluous others aid.

I from the influence of thy looks receave

Access in every Vertue, 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-reacht

Would utmost vigor raise, and rais’d unite.

Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel

When I am present, and thy trial choose

With me, best witness of thy Vertue tri’d.

So spake domestick Adam in his care

And Matrimonial Love; but Eve, who thought

Less attributed to her Faith sincere,

Thus her reply with accent sweet renewd.

If this be our condition, thus to dwell

In narrow circuit strait’nd by a Foe,

Suttle or violent, we not endu’d

Single with like defence, wherever met,

How are we happie, still in fear of harm?

But harm precedes not sin: onely our Foe

Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem

Of our integritie: his foul esteeme

Sticks no dishonor on our Front, but turns

Foul on himself; then wherefore shund or feard

By us? who rather double honour gaine

From his surmise prov’d false, find peace within,

Favour from Heav’n, our witness from th’ event.

And what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid

Alone, without exterior help sustaind?

Let us not then suspect our happie State

Left so imperfet by the Maker wise,

As not secure to single or combin’d.

Fraile is our happiness, if this be so,

And Eden were no Eden thus expos’d.

To whom thus Adam fervently repli’d.

O Woman, best are all things as the will

Of God ordain’d them, his creating hand

Nothing imperfet or deficient left

Of all that he Created, much less Man,

Or aught that might his happie State secure,

Secure from outward force; within himself

The danger lies, yet lies within his power:

Against his will he can receave no harme.

But God left free the Will, for what obeyes

Reason, is free, and Reason he made right

But bid her well beware, and still erect,

Least by some faire appeering good surpris’d

She dictate false, and misinforme the Will

To do what God expresly hath forbid,

Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoynes,

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 subornd,

And fall into deception unaware,

Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warnd.

Seek not temptation then, which to avoide

Were better, and most likelie if from mee

Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.

Wouldst thou approve thy constancie, approve

First thy obedience; th’ other who can know,

Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?

But if thou think, trial unsought may finde

Us both securer then thus warnd thou seemst,

Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;

Go in thy native innocence, relie

On what thou hast of vertue, summon all,

For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine.

So spake the Patriarch of Mankinde, but Eve

Persisted, yet submiss, though last, repli’d.

With thy permission then, and thus forewarnd

Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words

Touchd onely, that our trial, when least sought,

May finde us both perhaps farr less prepar’d,

The willinger I goe, 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 Husbands hand her hand

Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light

Oread or Dryad, or of Delia’s Traine,

Betook her to the Groves, but Delia’s self

In gate surpass’d and Goddess-like deport,

Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver armd,

But with such Gardning Tools as Art yet rude,

Guiltless of fire had formd, or Angels brought.

To Pales, or Pomona, thus adornd,

Likeliest she seemd, Pomona when she fled

Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime,

Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Her long with ardent look his Eye pursu’d

Delighted, but desiring more her stay.

Oft he to her his charge of quick returne

Repeated, shee to him as oft engag’d

To be returnd by Noon amid the Bowre,

And all things in best order to invite

Noontide repast, or Afternoons repose.

O much deceav’d, much failing, hapless Eve,

Of thy presum’d return! event perverse!

Thou never from that houre in Paradise

Foundst either sweet repast, or sound repose;

Such ambush hid among sweet Flours and Shades

Waited with hellish rancour imminent

To intercept thy way, or send thee back

Despoild of Innocence, of Faith, of Bliss.

For now, and since first break of dawne the Fiend,

Meer Serpent in appearance, forth was come,

And on his Quest, where likeliest he might finde

The onely two of Mankinde, but in them

The whole included Race, his purposd prey.

In Bowre and Field he sought, where any tuft

Of Grove or Garden-Plot more pleasant lay,

Thir tendance or Plantation for delight,

By Fountain or by shadie Rivulet

He sought them both, but wish’d his hap might find

Eve separate, he wish’d, but not with hope

Of what so seldom chanc’d, when to his wish,

Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,

Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,

Half spi’d, so thick the Roses bushing round

About her glowd, oft stooping to support

Each Flour of slender stalk, whose head though gay

Carnation, Purple, Azure, or spect with Gold,

Hung drooping unsustaind, them she upstaies

Gently with Mirtle band, mindless the while,

Her self, though fairest unsupported Flour,

From her best prop so farr, and storm so nigh.

Neerer he drew, and many a walk travers’d

Of stateliest Covert, Cedar, Pine, or Palme,

Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen

Among thick-wov’n Arborets and Flours

Imborderd on each Bank, the hand of Eve:

Spot more delicious then those Gardens feign’d

Or of reviv’d Adonis, or renownd

Alcinous, host of old Laertes Son,

Or that, not Mystic, where the Sapient King

Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse.

Much hee the Place admir’d, the Person more.

As one who long in populous City pent,

Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Aire,

Forth issuing on a Summers Morn to breathe

Among the pleasant Villages and Farmes

Adjoynd, from each thing met conceaves delight,

The smell of Grain, or tedded Grass, or Kine,

Or Dairie, each rural sight, each rural sound;

If chance with Nymphlike step fair Virgin pass,

What pleasing seemd, for her now pleases more,

She most, and in her look summs all Delight.

Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold

This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of Eve

Thus earlie, thus alone; her Heav’nly forme

Angelic, but more soft, and Feminine,

Her graceful Innocence, her every Aire

Of gesture or lest action overawd

His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav’d

His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:

That space the Evil one abstracted stood

From his own evil, and for the time remaind

Stupidly good, of enmitie disarm’d,

Of guile, of hate, of envie, of revenge;

But the hot Hell that alwayes in him burnes,

Though in mid Heav’n, soon ended his delight,

And tortures him now more, the more he sees

Of pleasure not for him ordain’d: 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 hautie, and of limb

Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,

Foe not informidable, exempt from wound,

I not; so much hath Hell debas’d, and paine

Infeebl’d me, to what I was in Heav’n.

Shee fair, divinely fair, fit Love for Gods,

Not terrible, though terrour be in Love

And beautie, not approacht by stronger hate,

Hate stronger, under shew of Love well feign’d,

The way which to her ruin now I tend.

So spake the Enemie of Mankind, enclos’d

In Serpent, Inmate bad, and toward Eve

Address’d his way, not with indented wave,

Prone on the ground, as since, but on his reare,

Circular base of rising foulds, that tour’d

Fould above fould a surging Maze, his Head

Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes;

With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect

Amidst his circling Spires, that on the grass

Floted redundant: pleasing was his shape,

And lovely, never since of Serpent kind

Lovelier, not those that in Illyria chang’d

Hermione and Cadmus, or the God

In Epidaurus; nor to which transformd

Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,

Hee with Olympias, this with her who bore

Scipio the highth of Rome . With tract oblique

At first, as one who sought access, but feard

To interrupt, side-long he works his way.

As when a Ship by skilful Stearsman wrought

Nigh Rivers mouth or Foreland, where the Wind

Veres oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her Saile;

So varied hee, and of his tortuous Traine

Curld many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,

To lure her Eye; shee busied heard the sound

Of rusling Leaves, but minded not, as us’d

To such disport before her through the Field,

From every Beast, more duteous at her call,

Then at Circean call the Herd disguis’d.

Hee boulder now, uncall’d before her stood;

But as in gaze admiring: Oft he bowd

His turret Crest, and sleek enamel’d Neck,

Fawning, and lick’d the ground whereon she trod.

His gentle dumb expression turnd at length

The Eye of Eve to mark his play; he glad

Of her attention gaind, with Serpent Tongue

Organic, or impulse of vocal Air,

His fraudulent temptation thus began.

Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps

Thou canst, who art sole Wonder, much less arm

Thy looks, the Heav’n of mildness, with disdain,

Displeas’d that I approach thee thus, and gaze

Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feard

Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir’d.

Fairest resemblance of thy Maker faire,

Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine

By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore

With ravishment beheld, there best beheld

Where universally admir’d; but here

In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,

Beholders rude, and shallow to discerne

Half what in thee is fair, one man except,

Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen

A Goddess among Gods, ador’d and serv’d

By Angels numberless, thy daily Train.

So gloz’d the Tempter, and his Proem tun’d;

Into the Heart of Eve his words made way,

Though at the voice much marveling; at length

Not unamaz’d she thus in answer spake.

What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc’t

By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?

The first at lest of these I thought deni’d

To Beasts, whom God on thir Creation-Day

Created mute to all articulat sound;

The latter I demurre, for in thir looks

Much reason, and in thir actions oft appeers.

Thee, Serpent, suttlest beast of all the field

I knew, but not with human voice endu’d;

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 reply’d.

Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve,

Easie to mee it is to tell thee all

What thou commandst and right thou shouldst be obeyd:

I was at first as other Beasts that graze

The trodden Herb, of abject thoughts and low,

As was my food, nor aught but food discern’d

Or Sex, and apprehended nothing high:

Till on a day roaving the field, I chanc’d

A goodly Tree farr distant to behold

Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixt,

Ruddie and Gold: I nearer drew to gaze;

When from the boughes a savorie odour blow’n,

Grateful to appetite, more pleas’d my sense,

Then smell of sweetest Fenel or the Teats

Of Ewe or Goat dropping with Milk at Eevn,

Unsuckt of Lamb or Kid, that tend thir play.

To satisfie the sharp desire I had

Of tasting those fair Apples, I resolv’d

Not to deferr; hunger and thirst at once,

Powerful perswaders, quick’nd at the scent

Of that alluring fruit, urg’d me so keene.

About the mossie Trunk I wound me soon,

For high from ground the branches would require

Thy utmost reach or Adams: 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 spar’d not, for such pleasure till that hour

At Feed or Fountain never had I found.

Sated at length, ere long I might perceave

Strange alteration in me, to degree

Of Reason in my inward Powers, and Speech

Wanted not long, though to this shape retain’d.

Thenceforth to Speculations high or deep

I turnd my thoughts, and with capacious mind

Considerd 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 Beauties heav’nly Ray

United I beheld; no Fair to thine

Equivalent or second, which compel’d

Mee thus, though importune perhaps, to come

And gaze, and worship thee of right declar’d

Sovran of Creatures, universal Dame.

So talk’d the spirited sly Snake; and Eve

Yet more amaz’d unwarie thus reply’d.

Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt

The vertue of that Fruit, in thee first prov’d:

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 untoucht,

Still hanging incorruptible, till men

Grow up to thir provision, and more hands

Help to disburden Nature of her Bearth.

To whom the wilie Adder, blithe and glad.

Empress, the way is readie, and not long,

Beyond a row of Myrtles, on a Flat,

Fast by a Fountain, one small Thicket past

Of blowing Myrrh and Balme; if thou accept

My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.

Lead then, said Eve. Hee leading swiftly rowld

In tangles, and made intricate seem strait,

To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy

Bright’ns his Crest, as when a wandring Fire

Compact of unctuous vapor, which the Night

Condenses, and the cold invirons round,

Kindl’d through agitation to a Flame,

Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends

Hovering and blazing with delusive Light,

Misleads th’ amaz’d Night-wanderer from his way

To Boggs and Mires, and oft through Pond or Poole,

There swallow’d up and lost, from succour farr.

So glister’d 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 spake.

Serpent, we might have spar’d our coming hither,

Fruitless to mee, though Fruit be here to excess,

The credit of whose vertue 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 our selves, our Reason is our Law.

To whom the Tempter guilefully repli’d.

Indeed? hath God then said that of the Fruit

Of all these Garden Trees ye shall not eate,

Yet Lords declar’d of all in Earth or Aire?

To whom thus Eve yet sinless. Of the Fruit

Of each Tree in the Garden we may eate,

But of the Fruit of this fair Tree amidst

The Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eate

Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, least ye die.

She scarse had said, though brief, when now more bold

The Tempter, but with shew of Zeale and Love

To Man, and indignation at his wrong,

New part puts on, and as to passion mov’d,

Fluctuats disturbd, yet comely and in act

Rais’d, as of som great matter to begin.

As when of old som Orator renound

In Athens or free Rome, where Eloquence

Flourishd, since mute, to som great cause addrest,

Stood in himself collected, while each part,

Motion, each act won audience ere the tongue,

Somtimes in highth began, as no delay

Of Preface brooking through his Zeal of Right.

So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown

The Tempter all impassiond thus began.

O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant,

Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power

Within me cleere, not onely to discerne

Things in thir Causes, but to trace the wayes

Of highest Agents, deemd however wise.

Queen of this Universe, doe not believe

Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die:

How should ye? by the Fruit? it gives you Life

To Knowledge, By the Threatner, look on mee,

Mee who have touch’d and tasted, yet both live,

And life more perfet have attaind then Fate

Meant mee, by ventring higher then 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 vertue, whom the pain

Of Death denounc’t, whatever thing Death be,

Deterrd not from atchieving what might leade

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 shunnd?

God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;

Not just, not God; not feard then, nor obeyd:

Your feare it self of Death removes the feare.

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 Eate thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere,

Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then

Op’nd and cleerd, 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,

I of brute human, yee of human Gods.

So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off

Human, to put on Gods, death to be wisht,

Though threat’nd, which no worse then this can bring.

And what are Gods that Man may not become

As they, participating God-like 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,

Warm’d by the Sun, producing every kind,

Them nothing: If they all things, who enclos’d

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 envie, and can envie dwell

In Heav’nly brests? these, these and many more

Causes import 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 easie entrance won:

Fixt on the Fruit she gaz’d, which to behold

Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound

Yet rung of his perswasive words, impregn’d

With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth;

Mean while the hour of Noon drew on, and wak’d

An eager appetite, rais’d by the smell

So savorie of that Fruit, which with desire,

Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,

Sollicited her longing eye; yet first

Pausing a while, thus to her self she mus’d.

Great are thy Vertues, doubtless, best of Fruits.

Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admir’d,

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 hee also who forbids thy use,

Conceales 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 inferrs 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 binde not. But if Death

Bind us with after-bands, what profits then

Our inward freedom? In the day we eate

Of this fair Fruit, our doom is, we shall die.

How dies the Serpent? hee hath eat’n and lives,

And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,

Irrational till then. For us alone

Was death invented? or to us deni’d

This intellectual food, for beasts reserv’d?

For Beasts it seems: yet that one Beast which first

Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy

The good befall’n him, Author unsuspect,

Friendly to man, farr from deceit or guile.

What fear I then, rather what know to feare

Under this ignorance of good and Evil,

Of God or Death, of Law or Penaltie?

Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine,

Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste,

Of vertue to make wise: what hinders then

To reach, and feed at once both Bodie and Mind?

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour

Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck’d, she eat:

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 guiltie Serpent, and well might, for Eve

Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else

Regarded, such delight till then, as seemd,

In Fruit she never tasted, whether true

Or fansied so, through expectation high

Of knowledg, nor was God-head from her thought.

Greedily she ingorg’d without restraint,

And knew not eating Death: Satiate at length,

And hight’nd as with Wine, jocond and boon,

Thus to her self she pleasingly began.

O Sovran, vertuous, precious of all Trees

In Paradise, of operation blest

To Sapience, hitherto obscur’d, infam’d,

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 fertil burden ease

Of thy full branches offer’d free to all;

Till dieted by thee I grow mature

In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know;

Though others envie what they cannot give;

For had the gift bin theirs, it had not here

Thus grown. Experience, next to thee I owe,

Best guide; not following thee, I had remaind

In ignorance, thou op’nst Wisdoms 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 appeer? shall I to him make known

As yet my change, and give him to partake

Full happiness with mee, or rather not,

But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power

Without Copartner? so to add what wants

In Femal Sex, the more to draw his Love,

And render me more equal, and perhaps,

A thing not undesireable, somtime

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. Confirm’d 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 turnd,

But first low Reverence don, as to the power

That dwelt within, whose presence had infus’d

Into the plant sciential sap, deriv’d

From Nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while

Waiting desirous her return, had wove

Of choicest Flours a Garland to adorne

Her Tresses, and her rural labours crown,

As Reapers oft are wont thir Harvest Queen.

Great joy he promis’d to his thoughts, and new

Solace in her return, so long delay’d;

Yet oft his heart, divine of somthing ill,

Misgave him; hee the faultring measure felt;

And forth to meet her went, the way she took

That Morn when first they parted; by the Tree

Of Knowledge he must pass, there he her met,

Scarse from the Tree returning; in her hand

A bough of fairest fruit that downie smil’d,

New gatherd, and ambrosial smell diffus’d.

To him she hasted, in her face excuse

Came Prologue, and Apologie to prompt,

Which with bland words at will she thus addrest.

Hast thou not wonderd, Adam, at my stay?

Thee I have misst, and thought it long, depriv’d

Thy presence, agonie of love till now

Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more

Mean I to trie, what rash untri’d I sought,

The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange

Hath bin the cause, and wonderful to heare:

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 bin tasted such: the Serpent wise,

Or not restraind as wee, or not obeying,

Hath eat’n of the fruit, and is become,

Not dead, as we are threatn’d, but thenceforth

Endu’d with human voice and human sense,

Reasoning to admiration, and with mee

Perswasively hath so prevaild, that I

Have also tasted, and have also found

Th’ effects to correspond, opener mine Eyes

Dimm 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, unshar’d with thee, and odious soon.

Thou therefore also taste, that equal Lot

May joyne us, equal Joy, as equal Love;

Least thou not tasting, different degree

Disjoyne us, and I then too late renounce

Deitie for thee, when Fate will not permit.

Thus Eve with Countnance blithe her storie told;

But in her Cheek distemper flushing glowd.

On th’ other side, Adam, soon as he heard

The fatal Trespass don by Eve, amaz’d,

Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill

Ran through his veins, and all his joynts relax’d;

From his slack hand the Garland wreath’d for Eve

Down drop’d, 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 Gods works, Creature in whom excell’d

Whatever can to sight or thought be formd,

Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!

How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,

Defac’t, deflourd, and now to Death devote?

Rather how hast thou yeelded to transgress

The strict forbiddance, how to violate

The sacred Fruit forbidd’n! som cursed fraud

Of Enemie hath beguil’d thee, yet unknown,

And mee with thee hath ruind, for with thee

Certain my resolution is to Die;

How can I live without thee, how forgoe

Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly joyn’d,

To live again in these wilde 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 disturbd

Submitting to what seemd remediless,

Thus in calm mood his Words to Eve he turnd.

Bold deed thou hast presum’d, adventrous Eve

And peril great provok’t, who thus hath dar’d

Had it been onely coveting to Eye

That sacred Fruit, sacred to abstinence,

Much more to taste it under banne to touch.

But past who can recall, or don undoe?

Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate, yet so

Perhaps thou shalt not Die, perhaps the Fact

Is not so hainous now, foretasted Fruit,

Profan’d first by the Serpent, by him first

Made common and unhallowd ere our taste;

Nor yet on him found deadly, he yet lives,

Lives, as thou saidst, and gaines to live as Man

Higher degree of Life, inducement strong

To us, as likely tasting to attaine

Proportional ascent, which cannot be

But to be Gods, or Angels Demi-gods.

Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,

Though threatning, will in earnest so destroy

Us his prime Creatures, dignifi’d so high,

Set over all his Works, which in our Fall,

For us created, needs with us must faile,

Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,

Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour loose,

Not well conceav’d of God, who though his Power

Creation could repeate, yet would be loath

Us to abolish, least the Adversary

Triumph and say; Fickle their State whom God

Most Favors, who can please him long; Mee first

He ruind, now Mankind; whom will he next?

Matter of scorne, not to be given the Foe,

However I with thee have fixt my Lot,

Certain to undergoe like doom, if Death

Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;

So forcible within my heart I feel

The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,

My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;

Our State cannot be severd, we are one,

One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self.

So Adam, and thus Eve to him repli’d.

O glorious trial of exceeding Love,

Illustrious evidence, example high!

Ingaging me to emulate, but short

Of thy perfection, how shall I attaine,

Adam, from whose deare side I boast me sprung,

And gladly of our Union heare thee speak,

One Heart, one Soul in both; whereof good prooff

This day affords, declaring thee resolvd,

Rather then Death or aught then Death more dread

Shall separate us, linkt in Love so deare,

To undergoe with mee one Guilt, one Crime,

If any be, of tasting this fair Fruit,

Whose vertue, for of good still good proceeds,

Direct, or by occasion hath presented

This happie trial of thy Love, which else

So eminently never had bin known.

Were it I thought Death menac’t would ensue

This my attempt, I would sustain alone

The worst, and not perswade thee, rather die

Deserted, then oblige thee with a fact

Pernicious to thy Peace, chiefly assur’d

Remarkably so late of thy so true,

So faithful Love unequald; but I feel

Farr otherwise th’ event, not Death, but Life

Augmented, op’nd Eyes, new Hopes, new Joyes,

Taste so Divine, that what of sweet before

Hath toucht my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.

On my experience, Adam, freely taste,

And fear of Death deliver to the Windes.

So saying, she embrac’d him, and for joy

Tenderly wept, much won that he his Love

Had so enobl’d, as of choice to incurr

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 scrupl’d not to eat

Against his better knowledge, not deceav’d,

But fondly overcome with Femal charm.

Earth trembl’d from her entrails, as again

In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,

Skie lowr’d, and muttering Thunder, som sad drops

Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin

Original; while Adam took no thought,

Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate

Her former trespass fear’d, the more to soothe

Him with her lov’d societie, that now

As with new Wine intoxicated both

They swim in mirth, and fansie that they feel

Divinitie within them breeding wings

Wherewith to scorne the Earth: but that false Fruit

Farr other operation first displaid,

Carnal desire enflaming, hee on Eve

Began to cast lascivious Eyes, she him

As wantonly repaid; in Lust they burne:

Till Adam thus ’gan Eve to dalliance move,

Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,

And elegant, of Sapience no small part,

Since to each meaning savour we apply,

And Palate call judicious; I the praise

Yeild thee, so well this day thou hast purvey’d.

Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain’d

From this delightful Fruit, nor known till now

True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be

In things to us forbidden, it might be wish’d,

For this one Tree had bin forbidden ten.

But come, so well refresh’t, now let us play,

As meet is, after such delicious Fare;

For never did thy Beautie since the day

I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn’d

With all perfections, so enflame my sense

With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now

Then ever, bountie of this vertuous Tree.

O Credulous Eve.

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy

Of amorous intent, well understood

Of Eve, whose Eye darted contagious Fire.

Her hand he seis’d, and to a shadie bank,

Thick overhead with verdant roof imbowr’d

He led her nothing loath; Flours were the Couch,

Pansies, and Violets, and Asphodel,

And Hyacinth, Earths freshest softest lap.

There they thir fill of Love and Loves disport

Took largely, of thir mutual guilt the Seale,

The solace of thir sin, till dewie sleep

Oppress’d them, wearied with thir amorous play.

Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,

That with exhilerating vapour bland

About thir spirits had plaid, and inmost powers

Made erre, was now exhal’d, and grosser sleep

Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams

Encumberd, now had left them, up they rose

As from unrest, and each the other viewing,

Soon found thir Eyes how op’nd, and thir minds

How dark’nd; innocence, that as a veile

Had shadow’d them from knowing ill, was gon,

Just confidence, and native righteousness

And honour from about them, naked left

To guiltie shame hee cover’d, but his Robe

Uncover’d more, so rose the Danite strong

Herculean Samson from the Harlot-lap

Of Philistean Dalilah, and wak’d

Shorn of his strength, They destitute and bare

Of all thir vertue: silent, and in face

Confounded long they sate, as struck’n mute,

Till Adam, though not less then Eve abasht,

At length gave utterance to these words constraind.

O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give eare

To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught

To counterfet Mans voice, true in our Fall,

False in our promis’d Rising; since our Eyes

Op’nd 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 Honour void,

Of Innocence, of Faith, of Puritie,

Our wonted Ornaments now soild and staind,

And in our Faces evident the signes

Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;

Even shame, the last of evils; of the first

Be sure then. How shall I behold the face

Henceforth of God or Angel, earst with joy

And rapture so oft beheld? those heav’nly shapes

Will dazle now this earthly, with thir blaze

Insufferably bright. O might I here

In solitude live savage, in some glade

Obscur’d, where highest Woods impenetrable

To Starr or Sun-light, spread thir 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 sowd,

And girded on our loyns, may cover round

Those middle parts, that this new commer, Shame,

There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.

So counsel’d hee, and both together went

Into the thickest Wood, there soon they chose

The Figtree, not that kind for Fruit renown’d,

But such as at this day to Indians known

In Malabar or Decan spreds her Armes

Braunching so broad and long, that in the ground

The bended Twigs take root, and Daughters grow

About the Mother Tree, a Pillard shade

High overarch’t, and echoing Walks between;

There oft the Indian Herdsman shunning heate

Shelters in coole, and tends his pasturing Herds

At Loopholes cut through thickest shade: Those Leaves

They gatherd, broad as Amazonian Targe,

And with what skill they had, together sowd,

To gird thir waste, vain Covering if to hide

Thir guilt and dreaded shame; O how unlike

To that first naked Glorie. Such of late

Columbus found th’ American so girt

With featherd Cincture, naked else and wilde

Among the Trees on Iles and woodie Shores.

Thus fenc’t, and as they thought, thir shame in part

Coverd, but not at rest or ease of Mind,

They sate them down to weep, nor onely Teares

Raind at thir Eyes, but high Winds worse within

Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,

Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore

Thir inward State of Mind, calm Region once

And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent:

For Understanding rul’d not, and the Will

Heard not her lore, both in subjection now

To sensual Appetite, who from beneathe

Usurping over sovran Reason claimd

Superior sway: From thus distemperd brest,

Adam, estrang’d in look and alterd stile,

Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewd.

Would thou hadst heark’nd to my words, and stai’d

With me, as I besought thee, when that strange

Desire of wandring this unhappie Morn,

I know not whence possessd thee; we had then

Remaind still happie, not as now, despoild

Of all our good, sham’d, naked, miserable.

Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve

The Faith they owe; when earnestly they seek

Such proof, conclude, they then begin to faile.

To whom soon mov’d with touch of blame thus Eve.

What words have past thy Lips, Adam severe,

Imput’st thou that to my default, or will

Of wandring, as thou call’st it, which who knows

But might as ill have happ’nd thou being by,

Or to thy self perhaps: hadst thou been there,

Or here th’ attempt, thou couldst not have discernd

Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;

No ground of enmitie between us known,

Why hee should mean me ill, or seek to harme.

Was I to have never parted from thy side?

As good have grown there still a liveless Rib.

Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head

Command me absolutely not to go,

Going into such danger as thou saidst?

Too facil then thou didst not much gainsay,

Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.

Hadst thou bin firm and fixt in thy dissent,

Neither had I transgress’d, nor thou with mee.

To whom then first incenst Adam repli’d,

Is this the Love, is this the recompence

Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, exprest

Immutable when thou wert lost, not I,

Who might have liv’d and joyd 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 warn’d thee, I admonish’d thee, foretold

The danger, and the lurking Enemie

That lay in wait; beyond this had bin force,

And force upon free Will hath here no place.

But confidence then bore thee on, secure

Either to meet no danger, or to finde

Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps

I also err’d in overmuch admiring

What seemd in thee so perfet, that I thought

No evil durst attempt thee, but I rue

That errour 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 to her self, if evil thence ensue,

Shee first his weak indulgence will accuse.

Thus they in mutual accusation spent

The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,

And of thir vain contest appeer’d no end.

### Book X

Meanwhile the hainous and despightfull act

Of Satan done in Paradise, and how

Hee in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,

Her Husband shee, to taste the fatall fruit,

Was known in Heav’n; for what can scape the Eye

Of God All-seeing, or deceave his Heart

Omniscient, who in all things wise and just,

Hinder’d not Satan to attempt the minde

Of Man, with strength entire, and free will arm’d,

Complete to have discover’d and repulst

Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend.

For still they knew, and ought to have still remember’d

The high Injunction not to taste that Fruit,

Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,

Incurr’d, what could they less, the penaltie,

And manifold in sin, deserv’d to fall.

Up into Heav’n from Paradise in haste

Th’ Angelic Guards ascended, mute and sad

For Man, for of his state by this they knew,

Much wondring how the suttle Fiend had stoln

Entrance unseen. Soon as th’ unwelcome news

From Earth arriv’d at Heaven Gate, displeas’d

All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare

That time Celestial visages, yet mixt

With pitie, violated not thir bliss.

About the new-arriv’d, in multitudes

Th’ ethereal People ran, to hear and know

How all befell: they towards the Throne Supream

Accountable made haste to make appear

With righteous plea, thir utmost vigilance,

And easily approv’d; when the most High

Eternal Father from his secret Cloud,

Amidst in Thunder utter’d thus his voice.

Assembl’d Angels, and ye Powers return’d

From unsuccessful charge, be not dismaid,

Nor troubl’d 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 cross’d the Gulf from Hell.

I told ye then he should prevail and speed

On his bad Errand, Man should be seduc’t

And flatter’d out of all, believing lies

Against his Maker; no Decree of mine

Concurring to necessitate his Fall,

Or touch with lightest moment of impulse

His free Will, to her own inclining left

In eevn scale. But fall’n he is, and now

What rests but that the mortal Sentence pass

On his transgression Death denounc’t that day,

Which he presumes already vain and void,

Because not yet inflicted, as he fear’d,

By some immediate stroak; but soon shall find

Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.

Justice shall not return as bountie scorn’d.

But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee

Vicegerent Son, to thee I have transferr’d

All Judgement whether in Heav’n, or Earth, or Hell.

Easie it might be seen that I intend

Mercie collegue with Justice, sending thee

Mans Friend his Mediator, his design’d

Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntarie,

And destin’d Man himself to judge Man fall’n.

So spake the Father, and unfoulding bright

Toward the right hand his Glorie, on the Son

Blaz’d forth unclouded Deitie; he full

Resplendent all his Father manifest

Express’d, and thus divinely answer’d milde.

Father Eternal, thine is to decree,

Mine both in Heav’n and Earth to do thy will

Supream, that thou in mee thy Son belov’d

Mayst ever rest well pleas’d. I go to judge

On Earth these thy transgressors, but thou knowst,

Whoever judg’d, the worst on mee must light,

When time shall be, for so I undertook

Before thee; and not repenting, this obtaine

Of right, that I may mitigate thir doom

On me deriv’d, yet I shall temper so

Justice with Mercie, as may illustrate most

Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.

Attendance none shall need, nor Train, where none

Are to behold the Judgement, but the judg’d,

Those two; the third best absent is condemn’d,

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 glorie: 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 strait; the speed of Gods

Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing’d.

Now was the Sun in Western cadence low

From Noon, and gentle Aires due at thir hour

To fan the Earth now wak’d, and usher in

The Eevning coole, when he from wrauth more coole

Came the mild Judge and Intercessor both

To sentence Man: the voice of God they heard

Now walking in the Garden, by soft windes

Brought to thir Ears, while day declin’d, they heard,

And from his presence hid themselves among

The thickest Trees, both Man and Wife, till God

Approaching, thus to Adam call’d aloud.

Where art thou Adam, wont with joy to meet

My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,

Not pleas’d, thus entertaind with solitude,

Where obvious dutie erewhile appear’d unsaught:

Or come I less conspicuous, or what change

Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth.

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though first

To offend, discount’nanc’t both, and discompos’d;

Love was not in thir looks, either to God

Or to each other, but apparent guilt,

And shame, and perturbation, and despaire,

Anger, and obstinacie, and hate, and guile.

Whence Adam faultring long, thus answer’d brief.

I heard thee in the Garden, and of thy voice

Affraid, being naked, hid my self. To whom

The gracious Judge without revile repli’d.

My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear’d,

But still rejoyc’t, how is it now become

So dreadful to thee? that thou art naked, who

Hath told thee? hast thou eaten of the Tree

Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?

To whom thus Adam sore beset repli’d.

O Heav’n! in evil strait this day I stand

Before my Judge, either to undergoe

My self the total Crime, or to accuse

My other self, the partner of my life;

Whose failing, while her Faith to me remaines,

I should conceal, and not expose to blame

By my complaint; but strict necessitie

Subdues me, and calamitous constraint

Least on my head both sin and punishment,

However insupportable, be all

Devolv’d; though should I hold my peace, yet thou

Wouldst easily detect what I conceale.

This Woman whom thou mad’st to be my help,

And gav’st me as thy perfet gift, so good,

So fit, so acceptable, so Divine,

That from her hand I could suspect no ill,

And what she did, whatever in it self,

Her doing seem’d to justifie the deed;

Shee gave me of the Tree, and I did eate.

To whom the sovran Presence thus repli’d.

Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey B

efore his voice, or was shee made thy guide,

Superior, or but equal, that to her

Thou did’st resigne thy Manhood, and the Place

Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,

And for thee, whose perfection farr excell’d

Hers in all real dignitie: Adornd

She was indeed, and lovely to attract

Thy Love, not thy Subjection, and her Gifts

Were such as under Government well seem’d,

Unseemly to beare rule, which was thy part

And person, hadst thou known thy self 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 overwhelm’d,

Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge

Bold or loquacious, thus abasht repli’d.

The Serpent me beguil’d and I did eate.

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay

To Judgement he proceeded on th’ accus’d

Serpent though brute, unable to transferre

The Guilt on him who made him instrument

Of mischief, and polluted from the end

Of his Creation; justly then accurst,

As vitiated in Nature: more to know

Concern’d not Man (since he no further knew)

Nor alter’d his offence; yet God at last

To Satan first in sin his doom apply’d

Though in mysterious terms, judg’d as then best:

And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall.

Because thou hast done this, thou art accurst

Above all Cattle, each Beast of the Field;

Upon thy Belly groveling thou shalt goe,

And dust shalt eat all the dayes of thy Life.

Between Thee and the Woman I will put

Enmitie, and between thine and her Seed;

Her Seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.

So spake this Oracle, then verifi’d

When Jesus son of Mary second Eve,

Saw Satan fall like Lightning down from Heav’n,

Prince of the Aire; then rising from his Grave

Spoild Principalities and Powers, triumpht

In open shew, and with ascention bright

Captivity led captive through the Aire,

The Realm it self of Satan long usurpt,

Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;

Eevn hee who now foretold his fatal bruise,

And to the Woman thus his Sentence turn’d.

Thy sorrow I will greatly multiplie

By thy Conception; Children thou shalt bring

In sorrow forth, and to thy Husbands will

Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule.

On Adam last thus judgement he pronounc’d.

Because thou hast heark’nd to the voice of thy Wife,

And eaten of the Tree concerning which

I charg’d thee, saying: Thou shalt not eate thereof,

Curs’d is the ground for thy sake, thou in sorrow

Shalt eate thereof all the days of thy Life;

Thorns also and Thistles it shall bring thee forth

Unbid, and thou shalt eate th’ Herb of th’ 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 returne.

So judg’d he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,

And th’ instant stroke of Death denounc’t that day

Remov’d farr off; then pittying how they stood

Before him naked to the aire, that now

Must suffer change, disdain’d not to begin

Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,

As when he wash’d his servants feet so now

As Father of his Familie he clad

Thir nakedness with Skins of Beasts, or slain,

Or as the Snake with youthful Coate repaid;

And thought not much to cloath his Enemies:

Nor hee thir outward onely with the Skins

Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more

Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,

Araying cover’d from his Fathers sight.

To him with swift ascent he up returnd,

Into his blissful bosom reassum’d

In glory as of old, to him appeas’d

All, though all-knowing, what had past with Man

Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile ere thus was sin’d and judg’d on Earth,

Within the Gates of Hell sate Sin and Death,

In counterview within the Gates, that now

Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame

Farr into Chaos, since the Fiend pass’d through,

Sin opening, who thus now to Death began.

O Son, why sit we here each other viewing

Idlely, while Satan our great Author thrives

In other Worlds, and happier Seat provides

For us his ofspring deare? It cannot be

But that success attends him; if mishap,

Ere this he had return’d, 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 giv’n me large

Beyond this Deep; whatever drawes me on,

Or sympathie, or som connatural force

Powerful at greatest distance to unite

With secret amity things of like kinde

By secretest conveyance. Thou my Shade

Inseparable must with mee along:

For Death from Sin no power can separate.

But least the difficultie of passing back

Stay his return perhaps over this Gulfe

Impassable, Impervious, let us try

Adventrous work, yet to thy power and mine

Not unagreeable, to found a path

Over this Maine from Hell to that new World

Where Satan now prevailes, a Monument

Of merit high to all th’ infernal Host,

Easing thir passage hence, for intercourse,

Or transmigration, as thir lot shall lead.

Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn

By this new felt attraction and instinct.

Whom thus the meager Shadow answerd soon.

Goe whither Fate and inclination strong

Leads thee, I shall not lag behinde, nor erre

The way, thou leading, such a sent I draw

Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste

The savour 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 snuff’d the smell

Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock

Of ravenous Fowl, though many a League remote,

Against the day of Battel, to a Field,

Where Armies lie encampt, come flying, lur’d

With sent of living Carcasses design’d

For death, the following day, in bloodie fight.

So sented the grim Feature, and upturn’d

His Nostril wide into the murkie Air,

Sagacious of his Quarry from so farr.

Then Both from out Hell Gates into the waste

Wide Anarchie of Chaos damp and dark

Flew divers, and with Power (thir Power was great)

Hovering upon the Waters; what they met

Solid or slimie, as in raging Sea

Tost 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 th’ imagin’d way

Beyond Petsora Eastward, to the rich

Cathaian Coast. The aggregated Soyle

Death with his Mace petrific, cold and dry,

As with a Trident smote, and fix’t 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 gather’d beach

They fasten’d, and the Mole immense wraught on

Over the foaming deep high Archt, a Bridge

Of length prodigious joyning to the Wall

Immovable of this now fenceless world

Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,

Smooth, easie, inoffensive down to Hell.

So, if great things to small may be compar’d,

Xerxes, the Libertie of Greece to yoke,

From Susa his Memnonian Palace high

Came to the Sea, and over Hellespont

Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joyn’d,

And scourg’d with many a stroak th’ indignant waves.

Now had they brought the work by wondrous Art

Pontifical, a ridge of pendent Rock

Over the vext Abyss, following the track

Of Satan, to the self same place where hee

First lighted from his Wing, and landed safe

From out of Chaos to the out side bare

Of this round World: with Pinns 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 interpos’d; three sev’ral wayes

In sight, to each of these three places led.

And now thir way to Earth they had descri’d,

To Paradise first tending, when behold

Satan in likeness of an Angel bright

Betwixt the Centaure and the Scorpion stearing

His Zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose:

Disguis’d he came, but those his Children dear

Thir Parent soon discern’d, though in disguise.

Hee after Eve seduc’t, unminded slunk

Into the Wood fast by, and changing shape

To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act

By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded

Upon her Husband, saw thir shame that sought

Vain covertures; but when he saw descend

The Son of God to judge them terrifi’d

Hee fled, not hoping to escape, but shun

The present, fearing guiltie what his wrauth

Might suddenly inflict; that past, return’d

By Night, and listening where the hapless Paire

Sate in thir sad discourse, and various plaint,

Thence gatherd his own doom, which understood

Not instant, but of future time. With joy

And tidings fraught, to Hell he now return’d,

And at the brink of Chaos, neer the foot

Of this new wondrous Pontifice, unhop’t

Met who to meet him came, his Ofspring dear.

Great joy was at thir meeting, and at sight

Of that stupendious Bridge his joy encreas’d.

Long hee admiring stood, till Sin, his faire

Inchanting Daughter, thus the silence broke.

O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,

Thy Trophies, which thou view’st as not thine own,

Thou art thir Author and prime Architect:

For I no sooner in my Heart divin’d,

My Heart, which by a secret harmonie

Still moves with thine, join’d in connexion sweet,

That thou on Earth hadst prosper’d, which thy looks

Now also evidence, but straight I felt

Though distant from thee Worlds between, yet felt

That I must after thee with this thy Son;

Such fatal consequence unites us three:

Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,

Nor this unvoyageable Gulf obscure

Detain from following thy illustrious track.

Thou hast atchiev’d our libertie, confin’d

Within Hell Gates till now, thou us impow’rd

To fortifie thus farr, and overlay

With this portentous Bridge the dark Abyss.

Thine now is all this World, thy vertue hath won

What thy hands builded not, thy Wisdom gain’d

With odds what Warr hath lost, and fully aveng’d

Our foile in Heav’n; here thou shalt Monarch reign,

There didst not; there let him still Victor sway,

As Battel hath adjudg’d, from this new World

Retiring, by his own doom alienated,

And henceforth Monarchie with thee divide

Of all things parted by th’ Empyreal bounds,

His Quadrature, from thy Orbicular World,

Or trie thee now more dang’rous to his Throne.

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answerd glad.

Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both,

High proof ye now have giv’n to be the Race

Of Satan (for I glorie in the name,

Antagonist of Heav’ns Almightie King)

Amply have merited of me, of all

Th’ Infernal Empire, that so neer Heav’ns dore

Triumphal with triumphal act have met,

Mine with this glorious Work, and made one Realm

Hell and this World, one Realm, one Continent

Of easie thorough-fare. Therefore while I

Descend through Darkness, on your Rode with ease

To my associate Powers, them to acquaint

With these successes, and with them rejoyce,

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 Aire,

Chiefly on Man, sole Lord of all declar’d,

Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.

My Substitutes I send ye, and Create

Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might

Issuing from mee: on your joynt vigor now

My hold of this new Kingdom all depends,

Through Sin to Death expos’d by my exploit.

If your joynt power prevailes, th’ affaires of Hell

No detriment need feare, goe and be strong.

So saying he dismiss’d them, they with speed

Thir course through thickest Constellations held

Spreading thir bane; the blasted Starrs lookt wan,

And Planets, Planet-strook, real Eclips

Then sufferd. Th’ other way Satan went down

The Causey to Hell Gate; on either side

Disparted Chaos over built exclaimd,

And with rebounding surge the barrs assaild,

That scorn’d his indignation: through the Gate,

Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass’d,

And all about found desolate; for those

Appointed to sit there, had left thir charge,

Flown to the upper World; the rest were all

Farr to the inland retir’d, about the walls

Of Pandæmonium, Citie and proud seate

Of Lucifer, so by allusion calld,

Of that bright Starr to Satan paragond.

There kept thir Watch the Legions, while the Grand

In Council sate, sollicitous what chance

Might intercept thir Emperour sent, so hee

Departing gave command, and they observ’d.

As when the Tartar from his Russian Foe

By Astracan over the Snowie Plaines

Retires, or Bactrian Sophi from the hornes

Of Turkish Crescent, leaves all waste beyond

The Realm of Aladule, in his retreate

To Tauris or Casbeen. So these the late

Heav’n-banisht Host, left desert utmost Hell

Many a dark League, reduc’t in careful Watch

Round thir Metropolis, and now expecting

Each hour thir great adventurer from the search

Of Forrein Worlds: he through the midst unmarkt,

In shew Plebeian Angel militant

Of lowest order, past; and from the dore

Of that Plutonian Hall, invisible

Ascended his high Throne, which under state

Of richest texture spred, at th’ upper end

Was plac’t in regal lustre. Down a while

He sate, and round about him saw unseen:

At last as from a Cloud his fulgent head

And shape Starr bright appeer’d, or brighter, clad

With what permissive glory since his fall

Was left him, or false glitter: All amaz’d

At that so sudden blaze the Stygian throng

Bent thir aspect, and whom they wish’d beheld,

Thir mighty Chief returnd: loud was th’ acclaime:

Forth rush’d in haste the great consulting Peers,

Rais’d from thir dark Divan, and with like joy

Congratulant approach’d him, who with hand

Silence, and with these words attention won.

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers,

For in possession such, not onely of right,

I call ye and declare ye now, returnd

Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth

Triumphant out of this infernal Pit

Abominable, accurst, the house of woe,

And Dungeon of our Tyrant: Now possess,

As Lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven

Little inferiour, by my adventure hard

With peril great atchiev’d. Long were to tell

What I have don, what sufferd, with what paine

Voyag’d th’ unreal, vast, unbounded deep

Of horrible confusion, over which

By Sin and Death a broad way now is pav’d

To expedite your glorious march; but I

Toild out my uncouth passage, forc’t to ride

Th’ untractable Abysse, plung’d in the womb

Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wilde,

That jealous of thir secrets fiercely oppos’d

My journey strange, with clamorous uproare

Protesting Fate supreame; thence how I found

The new created World, which fame in Heav’n

Long had foretold, a Fabrick wonderful

Of absolute perfection, therein Man

Plac’t in a Paradise, by our exile

Made happie: Him by fraud I have seduc’d

From his Creator, and the more to increase

Your wonder, with an Apple; he thereat

Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv’n up

Both his beloved Man and all his World,

To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,

Without our hazard, labour, or allarme,

To range in, and to dwell, and over Man

To rule, as over all he should have rul’d.

True is, mee also he hath judg’d, or rather

Mee not, but the brute Serpent in whose shape

Man I deceav’d: that which to mee belongs,

Is enmity, which he will put between

Mee and Mankinde; 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’ account

Of my performance: What remains, ye Gods,

But up and enter now into full bliss.

So having said, a while he stood, expecting

Thir universal shout and high applause

To fill his eare, when contrary he hears

On all sides, from innumerable tongues

A dismal universal hiss, the sound

Of public scorn; he wonderd, but not long

Had leasure, wondring at himself now more;

His Visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,

His Armes clung to his Ribs, his Leggs entwining

Each other, till supplanted down he fell

A monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone,

Reluctant, but in vaine: a greater power

Now rul’d him, punisht in the shape he sin’d,

According to his doom: he would have spoke,

But hiss for hiss returnd with forked tongue

To forked tongue, for now were all transform’d

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 taile,

Scorpion and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,

Cerastes hornd, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,

And Dipsas (not so thick swarm’d once the Soil

Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the Isle

Ophiusa) but still greatest hee the midst,

Now Dragon grown, larger then whom the Sun

Ingenderd in the Pythian Vale on slime,

Huge Python, and his Power no less he seem’d

Above the rest still to retain; they all

Him follow’d 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 thir glorious Chief;

They saw, but other sight instead, a crowd

Of ugly Serpents; horror on them fell,

And horrid sympathie; for what they saw,

They felt themselvs now changing; down thir arms,

Down fell both Spear and Shield, down they as fast,

And the dire hiss renew’d, and the dire form

Catcht by Contagion, like in punishment,

As in thir crime. Thus was th’ applause they meant,

Turn’d to exploding hiss, triumph to shame

Cast on themselves from thir own mouths. There stood

A Grove hard by, sprung up with this thir change,

His will who reigns above, to aggravate

Thir penance, laden with Fruit like that

Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve

Us’d by the Tempter: on that prospect strange

Thir earnest eyes they fix’d, imagining

For one forbidden Tree a multitude

Now ris’n, to work them furder woe or shame;

Yet parcht with scalding thurst and hunger fierce,

Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,

But on they rould in heaps, and up the Trees

Climbing, sat thicker then the snakie locks

That curld Megæra: greedily they pluck’d

The Frutage fair to sight, like that which grew

Neer that bituminous Lake where Sodom flam’d;

This more delusive, not the touch, but taste

Deceav’d; they fondly thinking to allay

Thir appetite with gust, instead of Fruit

Chewd bitter Ashes, which th’ offended taste

With spattering noise rejected: oft they assayd,

Hunger and thirst constraining, drugd as oft,

With hatefullest disrelish writh’d thir jaws

With soot and cinders fill’d; so oft they fell

Into the same illusion, not as Man

Whom they triumph’d once lapst. Thus were they plagu’d

And worn with Famin, long and ceasless hiss,

Till thir lost shape, permitted, they resum’d,

Yearly enjoynd, some say, to undergo

This annual humbling certain number’d days,

To dash thir pride, and joy for Man seduc’t.

However some tradition they dispers’d

Among the Heathen of thir purchase got,

And Fabl’d how the Serpent, whom they calld

Ophion with Eurynome, the wide-

Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule

Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv’n

And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.

Mean while in Paradise the hellish pair

Too soon arriv’d, Sin there in power before,

Once actual, now in body, and to dwell

Habitual habitant; behind her Death

Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet

On his pale Horse: to whom Sin thus began.

Second of Satan sprung, all conquering Death,

What thinkst thou of our Empire now, though earnd

With travail difficult, not better farr

Then stil at Hels dark threshold to have sate watch,

Unnam’d, undreaded, and thy self half starv’d?

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answerd soon.

To mee, who with eternal Famin pine,

Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven,

There best, where most with ravin I may meet;

Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems

To stuff this Maw, this vast unhide-bound Corps.

To whom th’ incestuous Mother thus repli’d.

Thou therefore on these Herbs, and Fruits, and Flours

Feed first, on each Beast next, and Fish, and Fowle,

No homely morsels, and whatever thing

The Sithe of Time mowes down, devour unspar’d,

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 wayes,

Both to destroy, or unimmortal make

All kinds, and for destruction to mature

Sooner or later; which th’ Almightie seeing,

From his transcendent Seat the Saints among,

To those bright Orders utterd 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 wastful Furies, who impute

Folly to mee, 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 gratifie 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 call’d and drew them thither

My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth

Which mans polluting Sin with taint hath shed

On what was pure, till cramm’d and gorg’d, nigh burst

With suckt and glutted offal, at one sling

Of thy victorious Arm, well-pleasing Son,

Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave at last

Through Chaos hurld, obstruct the mouth of Hell

For ever, and seal up his ravenous Jawes.

Then Heav’n and Earth renewd shall be made pure

To sanctitie that shall receive no staine:

Till then the Curse pronounc’t on both precedes.

He ended, and the Heav’nly Audience loud

Sung Halleluia, as the sound of Seas,

Through multitude that sung: Just are thy ways,

Righteous are thy Decrees on all thy Works;

Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,

Destin’d restorer of Mankind, by whom

New Heav’n and Earth shall to the Ages rise,

Or down from Heav’n descend. Such was thir song,

While the Creator calling forth by name

His mightie 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 tollerable, and from the North to call

Decrepit Winter, from the South to bring

Solstitial summers heat. To the blanc Moone

Her office they prescrib’d, to th’ other five

Thir planetarie motions and aspects

In Sextile, Square, and Trine, and Opposite,

Of noxious efficacie, and when to joyne

In Synod unbenigne, and taught the fixt

Thir influence malignant when to showre,

Which of them rising with the Sun, or falling,

Should prove tempestuous: To the Winds they set

Thir corners, when with bluster to confound

Sea, Aire, and Shoar, the Thunder when to rowle

With terror through the dark Aereal Hall.

Some say he bid his Angels turne ascanse

The Poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more

From the Suns Axle; they with labour push’d

Oblique the Centric Globe: Som say the Sun

Was bid turn Reines from th’ Equinoctial Rode

Like distant breadth to Taurus with the Seav’n

Atlantick Sisters, and the Spartan Twins

Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amaine

By Leo and the Virgin and the Scales,

As deep as Capricorne, to bring in change

Of Seasons to each Clime; else had the Spring

Perpetual smil’d on Earth with vernant Flours,

Equal in Days and Nights, except to those

Beyond the Polar Circles; to them Day

Had unbenighted shon, while the low Sun

To recompence his distance, in thir sight

Had rounded still th’ Horizon, and not known

Or East or West, which had forbid the Snow

From cold Estotiland, and South as farr

Beneath Magellan. At that tasted Fruit

The Sun, as from Thyestean Banquet, turn’d

His course intended; else how had the World

Inhabited, though sinless, more then now,

Avoided pinching cold and scorching heate?

These changes in the Heav’ns, though slow, produc’d

Like change on Sea and Land, sideral blast,

Vapour, and Mist, and Exhalation hot,

Corrupt and Pestilent: Now from the North

Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shoar

Bursting thir brazen Dungeon, armd with ice

And snow and haile and stormie gust and flaw,

Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud

And Thrascias rend the Woods and Seas upturn;

With adverse blast up-turns them from the South

Notus and Afer black with thundrous Clouds

From Serraliona; thwart of these as fierce

Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent Windes

Eurus and Zephir with thir lateral noise,

Sirocco, and Libecchio. Thus began

Outrage from liveless things; but Discord first

Daughter of Sin, among th’ irrational,

Death introduc’d through fierce antipathie:

Beast now with Beast gan war, and Fowle with Fowle,

And Fish with Fish; to graze the Herb all leaving,

Devourd each other; nor stood much in awe

Of Man, but fled him, or with count’nance grim

Glar’d on him passing: these were from without

The growing miseries, which Adam saw

Alreadie in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,

To sorrow abandond, but worse felt within,

And in a troubl’d Sea of passion tost,

Thus to disburd’n sought with sad complaint.

O miserable of happie! is this the end

Of this new glorious World, and mee so late

The Glory of that Glory, who now becom

Accurst of blessed, hide me from the face

Of God, whom to behold was then my highth

Of happiness: yet well, if here would end

The miserie, I deserv’d it, and would beare

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, Encrease and multiply,

Now death to hear! for what can I encrease

Or multiplie, 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 execration; so besides

Mine own that bide upon me, all from mee

Shall with a fierce reflux on mee redound,

On mee as on thir natural center light

Heavie, though in thir place. O fleeting joyes

Of Paradise, deare bought with lasting woes!

Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay

To mould me Man, did I sollicite thee

From darkness to promote me, or here place

In this delicious Garden? as my Will

Concurd not to my being, it were but right

And equal to reduce me to my dust,

Desirous to resigne, and render back

All I receav’d, unable to performe

Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold

The good I sought not. To the loss of that,

Sufficient penaltie, 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 refusd

Those terms whatever, when they were propos’d:

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 reprov’d, retort,

Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not

Wouldst 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 returne:

O welcom hour whenever! why delayes

His hand to execute what his Decree

Fixd on this day? why do I overlive,

Why am I mockt with death, and length’nd out

To deathless pain? how gladly would I meet

Mortalitie my sentence, and be Earth

Insensible, how glad would lay me down

As in my Mothers lap! There I should rest

And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more

Would Thunder in my ears, no fear of worse

To mee and to my ofspring would torment me

With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt

Pursues me still, least all I cannot die,

Least that pure breath of Life, the Spirit of Man

Which God inspir’d, 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 sinn’d; what dies but what had life

And sin? the Bodie properly hath neither.

All of me then shall die: let this appease

The doubt, since humane reach no further knows.

For though the Lord of all be infinite,

Is his wrauth also? be it, man is not so,

But mortal doom’d. 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 angers sake, finite to infinite

In punisht man, to satisfie his rigour

Satisfi’d never; that were to extend

His Sentence beyond dust and Natures Law,

By which all Causes else according still

To the reception of thir matter act,

Not to th’ extent of thir own Spheare. But say

That Death be not one stroak, as I suppos’d,

Bereaving sense, but endless miserie

From this day onward, which I feel begun

Both in me, and without me, and so last

To perpetuitie; Ay me, that fear

Comes thundring back with dreadful revolution

On my defensless head; both Death and I

Am found Eternal, and incorporate both,

Nor I on my part single, in mee all

Posteritie stands curst: Fair Patrimonie

That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able

To waste it all my self, and leave ye none!

So disinherited how would ye bless

Me now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind

For one mans fault thus guiltless be condemn’d,

If guiltless? But from mee what can proceed,

But all corrupt, both Mind and Will deprav’d,

Not to do onely, but to will the same

With me? how can they then acquitted stand

In sight of God? Him after all Disputes

Forc’t I absolve: all my evasions vain

And reasonings, though through Mazes, lead me still

But to my own conviction: first and last

On mee, mee onely, as the sourse and spring

Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;

So might the wrauth. Fond wish! couldst thou support

That burden heavier then the Earth to bear

Then all the World much heavier, though divided

With that bad Woman? Thus what thou desir’st,

And what thou fearst, alike destroyes 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 plung’d!

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud

Through the still Night, not now, as ere man fell,

Wholsom 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

Outstretcht he lay, on the cold ground, and oft

Curs’d his Creation, Death as oft accus’d

Of tardie execution, since denounc’t

The day of his offence. Why comes not Death,

Said hee, with one thrice acceptable stroke

To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,

Justice Divine not hast’n to be just?

But Death comes not at call, Justice Divine

Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.

O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales and Bowrs,

With other echo late I taught your Shades

To answer, and resound farr other Song.

Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,

Desolate where she sate, approaching nigh,

Soft words to his fierce passion she assay’d:

But her with stern regard he thus repell’d.

Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best

Befits thee with him leagu’d, thy self as false

And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,

Like his, and colour Serpentine may shew

Thy inward fraud, to warn all Creatures from thee

Henceforth; least that too heav’nly form, pretended

To hellish falshood, snare them. But for thee

I had persisted happie, had not thy pride

And wandring vanitie, when lest was safe,

Rejected my forewarning, and disdain’d

Not to be trusted, longing to be seen

Though by the Devil himself, him overweening

To over-reach, but with the Serpent meeting

Fool’d and beguil’d, by him thou, I by thee,

To trust thee from my side, imagin’d wise,

Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,

And understood not all was but a shew

Rather then solid vertu, all but a Rib

Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,

More to the part sinister from me drawn,

Well if thrown out, as supernumerarie

To my just number found. O why did God,

Creator wise, that peopl’d highest Heav’n

With Spirits Masculine, create at last

This noveltie 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 then befall’n,

And more that shall befall, innumerable

Disturbances on Earth through Femal snares,

And straight 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 perversness, but shall see her gaind

By a farr worse, or if she love, withheld

By Parents, or his happiest choice too late

Shall meet, alreadie linkt and Wedlock-bound

To a fell Adversarie, his hate or shame:

Which infinite calamitie shall cause

To Humane life, and houshold peace confound.

He added not, and from her turn’d, but Eve

Not so repulst, with Tears that ceas’d not flowing,

And tresses all disorderd, at his feet

Fell humble, and imbracing them, besaught

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 beare thee, and unweeting have offended,

Unhappilie deceav’d; 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 onely strength and stay: forlorn of thee,

Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?

While yet we live, scarse one short hour perhaps,

Between us two let there be peace, both joyning,

As joyn’d in injuries, one enmitie

Against a Foe by doom express assign’d us,

That cruel Serpent: On me exercise not

Thy hatred for this miserie befall’n,

On me alreadie lost, mee then thy self

More miserable; both have sin’d, but thou

Against God onely, I against God and thee,

And to the place of judgment will return,

There with my cries importune Heaven, that all

The sentence from thy head remov’d may light

On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,

Mee mee onely just object of his ire.

She ended weeping, and her lowlie plight,

Immovable till peace obtain’d from fault

Acknowledg’d and deplor’d, in Adam wraught

Commiseration; soon his heart relented

Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,

Now at his feet submissive in distress,

Creature so faire his reconcilement seeking,

His counsel whom she had displeas’d, his aide;

As one disarm’d, his anger all he lost,

And thus with peaceful words uprais’d her soon.

Unwarie, and too desirous, as before,

So now of what thou knowst not, who desir’st

The punishment all on thy self; alas,

Beare thine own first, ill able to sustaine

His full wrauth whose thou feelst as yet lest part,

And my displeasure bearst 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 frailtie and infirmer Sex forgiv’n,

To me committed and by me expos’d.

But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame

Each other, blam’d enough elsewhere, but strive

In offices of Love, how we may light’n

Each others burden in our share of woe;

Since this days Death denounc’t, if ought I see,

Will prove no sudden, but a slow-pac’t evill,

A long days dying to augment our paine,

And to our Seed (O hapless Seed!) deriv’d.

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, repli’d.

Adam, by sad experiment I know

How little weight my words with thee can finde,

Found so erroneous, thence by just event

Found so unfortunate; nevertheless,

Restor’d by thee, vile as I am, to place

Of new acceptance, hopeful to regaine

Thy Love, the sole contentment of my heart

Living or dying, from thee I will not hide

What thoughts in my unquiet brest 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, devourd

By Death at last, and miserable it is

To be to others cause of misery,

Our own begotten, and of our Loines to bring

Into this cursed World a woful Race,

That after wretched Life must be at last

Food for so foule a Monster, in thy power

It lies, yet ere Conception to prevent

The Race unblest, to being yet unbegot.

Childless thou art, Childless remaine:

So Death shall be deceav’d his glut, and with us two

Be forc’d to satisfie his Rav’nous Maw.

But if thou judge it hard and difficult,

Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain

From Loves due Rites, Nuptial imbraces sweet,

And with desire to languish without hope,

Before the present object languishing

With like desire, which would be miserie

And torment less then none of what we dread,

Then both our selves 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 our selves;

Why stand we longer shivering under feares,

That shew no end but Death, and have the power,

Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,

Destruction with destruction to destroy.

She ended heer, or vehement despaire

Broke off the rest; so much of Death her thoughts

Had entertaind, as di’d her Cheeks with pale.

But Adam with such counsel nothing sway’d,

To better hopes his more attentive minde

Labouring had rais’d, and thus to Eve repli’d.

Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems

To argue in thee somthing more sublime

And excellent then what thy minde contemnes;

But self-destruction therefore saught, refutes

That excellence thought in thee, and implies,

Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret

For loss of life and pleasure overlov’d.

Or if thou covet death, as utmost end

Of miserie, so thinking to evade

The penaltie pronounc’t, doubt not but God

Hath wiselier arm’d his vengeful ire then so

To be forestall’d; much more I fear least Death

So snatcht will not exempt us from the paine

We are by doom to pay; rather such acts

Of contumacie 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 minde with heed

Part of our Sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise

The Serpents head; piteous amends, unless

Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand Foe

Satan, who in the Serpent hath contriv’d

Against us this deceit: to crush his head

Would be revenge indeed; which will be lost

By death brought on our selves, or childless days

Resolv’d, as thou proposest; so our Foe

Shall scape his punishment ordain’d, and wee

Instead shall double ours upon our heads.

No more be mention’d then of violence

Against our selves, and wilful barrenness,

That cuts us off from hope, and savours onely

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 judg’d

Without wrauth or reviling; wee expected

Immediate dissolution, which we thought

Was meant by Death that day, when lo, to thee

Pains onely in Child-bearing were foretold,

And bringing forth, soon recompenc’t with joy,

Fruit of thy Womb: On mee the Curse aslope

Glanc’d on the ground, with labour I must earne

My bread; what harm? Idleness had bin worse;

My labour will sustain me; and least Cold

Or Heat should injure us, his timely care

Hath unbesaught provided, and his hands

Cloath’d us unworthie, pitying while he judg’d;

How much more, if we pray him, will his ear

Be open, and his heart to pitie incline,

And teach us further by what means to shun

Th’ inclement Seasons, Rain, Ice, Hail and Snow,

Which now the Skie with various Face begins

To shew us in this Mountain, while the Winds

Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks

Of these fair spreading Trees; which bids us seek

Som better shroud, som better warmth to cherish

Our Limbs benumm’d, ere this diurnal Starr

Leave cold the Night, how we his gather’d beams

Reflected, may with matter sere foment,

Or by collision of two bodies grinde

The Air attrite to Fire, as late the Clouds

Justling or pusht with Winds rude in thir shock

Tine the slant Lightning, whose thwart flame driv’n down

Kindles the gummie bark of Firr or Pine,

And sends a comfortable heat from farr,

Which might supplie the Sun: such Fire to use,

And what may else be remedie or cure

To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,

Hee will instruct us praying, and of Grace

Beseeching him, so as we need not fear

To pass commodiously this life, sustain’d

By him with many comforts, till we end

In dust, our final rest and native home.

What better can we do, then to the place

Repairing where he judg’d 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 unfeign’d, and humiliation meek.

Undoubtedly he will relent and turn

From his displeasure; in whose look serene,

When angry most he seem’d and most severe,

What else but favor, grace, and mercie shon?

So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve

Felt less remorse: they forthwith to the place

Repairing where he judg’d them prostrate fell

Before him reverent, and both confess’d

Humbly thir faults, and pardon beg’d, with tears

Watering the ground, and with thir sighs the Air

Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign

Of sorrow unfeign’d, and humiliation meek.

### Book XII

AS one who in his journey bates at Noone,

Though bent on speed, so her the Archangel 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 faille; objects divine

Must needs impair and wearied human sense:

Henceforth what is to com I will relate,

Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.

This second sours of Men, while yet but few;

And while the dread of judgement past remains

Fresh in thin minds, fearing the Deities,

With some regard to what is just and right

Shall lead thin lives and multi-line apace,

Laboring the soils, and reaping plenteous crop,

Corn wine and ogle; and from the herd or flock,

Oft sacrificing Bullock, Lamb, or Kid,

With large Wine-offerings poured, and sacred Feast,

Shall spend thin days in joy un blamed, 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 Heaven,

Or from Heaven claiming second Sovereignty;

And from Rebellion shall derive his name,

Though of Rebellion others he accuse.

Hee 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 Tower, whose top may reach to Heaven;

And get themselves a name, least far dispersed

In foreign Lands thin memory be lost,

Regardless whether good or evil fame.

But God who oft descends to visit men

Unseen, and through thin habitations walks

To mark thin doings, them beholding soon,

Comes down to see thin City, ere the Tower

Obstruct Heaven Towers, and in derision sets

Upon thin Tongues a various Spirit to rase

Quite out thin 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 Heaven

And looking down, to see the hubbub strange

And hear the din; thus was the building left

Ridiculous, and the work Confusion named.

Whereto thus Adam fatherly displeased.

O execrable Son so to aspire

Above his Brethren, to himself assuming

Authority usurped, from God not given:

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 abhorred

That Son, who on the quiet state of men

Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue

Rational Liberty; yet know with all,

Since thy original lapse, true Liberty

Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells

Twinned, and from her hath no individual 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 hee permits

Within himself unworthy Powers to reign

Over free Reason, God in Judgement just

Subjects him from without to violent Lords;

Who oft as undeservedly enthrall

His outward freedom: Tyranni must be,

Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.

Yet sometimes Nations will decline so low

From vertu, which is reason, that no wrong,

But Justice, and some fatal curse annexed

Deprives them of thin outward Liberty,

Thin inward lost: Witness th’ irreverent Son

Of him who built the Ark, who for the shame

Don 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 thin 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

(Cants thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,

While yet the Patriarch lived, who escaped the Flood,

As to forsake the living God, and fall

To worship thin own work in Wood and Stone

For Gods! yet him God the most High vouchsafe

To call by Vision from his Fathers house,

His kindred and false Gods, into a Land

Which he will shew him, and from him will raise

A mighty Nation, and upon him shower

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 Cants not, with what Faith

He leaves his Gods, his Friends, and native Soils

Ur of Chaldæa, passing now the Ford

To Harman, after a cumbrous Train

Of Herds and Flocks, and numerous servitude;

Not wandering 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 Sachem, and the neighboring Plains

Of Mores; there by promise he receives

Gift to his Progenies of all that Land;

From Hamath Northward to the Desert South

(Things by thin names I call, though yet unnamed)

From Hermann East to the great Western Sea,

Mount Hermann, yonder Sea, each place behold

In prospect, as I point them; on the share

Mount Carmel; here the double-founded stream

Jordan, true limit Eastward; but his Sons

Shall dwell to Senior, that long ridge of Hills.

This ponder, that all Nations of the Earth

Shall in his Seed be blessed; by that Seed

Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise

The Serpents head; whereof to thee anon

Planimeter shall be revealed. This Patriarch blest,

Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,

A Son, and of his Son a Grand-chide 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 thin overgrowth, as inmate guests

Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves

Inhospitably, and kills thin infant Males:

Till by two brethren (those two brethren call

Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim

His people from enthralment, they return

With glory and spoils back to thin premised Land.

But first the lawless Tyrant, who denies

To know thin God, or message to regard,

Must be compelled by Signs and Judgements dire;

To blood unshed the Rivers must be turned,

Frogs, Lice and Flies must all his Palace fill

With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;

His Cattle must of Rot and Murrain die,

Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,

And all his people; Thunder mixed with Haile,

Haile mixed with fire must rend th’ Egyptian Skies

And wheel on th’ Earth, devouring where it rules;

What it devours not, Herb, or Fruit, or Grain,

A dark some 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 dryer land between two crystal walls,

Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand

Divided, till his rescued gain thin 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 thin journey, and remove

Behind them, while th’ 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 thin Chariot wheels: when by command

Moses once more his potent Rod extends

Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;

On thin embattled ranks the Waves return,

And overwhelm thin War: the Race elect

Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance

Through the wilde Desert, not the readiest way,

Least entering on the Canaanite alarmed

War terrified them inexpert, and fear

Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather

Inglorious life with servitude; for life

To noble and ignoble is more sweet

Unstrained in Arms, where rashness leads not on.

This also shall they gain by thin delay

In the wide Wilderness, there they shall found

Thin government, and thin 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

And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise

The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve

Man kinds 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 thin 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 vouchsafe

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 Covenant, over these

A Mercies-seat of Gold between the wings

Of two bright Cherubim, before him burn

Seven Lamps as in a Zodiac representing

The Heavenly fires; over the Tent a Cloud

Shall rest by Day, a fiery gleams 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 Heaven stand still

A day entire, and Nights due course adjourn,

Mans voice commanding, Sun in Gideon stand,

And thou Moon in the vale of Avalon,

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 Heaven,

Enlightens of my darkness, gracious things

Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concerns

Just Abraham and his Seed: now first I find

Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,

Ere while 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 given;

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 given them to evince

Thin natural private, by stirring up

Sin against Law to fight; that when they see

Law can discover sin, but not remove,

Save by those shadowed 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 given

With purpose to resign them in full time

Up to a better Covenant, disciplined

From shadowed Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,

From imposition of strict Laws, to free

Acceptance of large Grace, from serval fear

To filial, works of Law to works of Faith.

And therefore shall not Moses, though of God

Highly beloved, 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 worlds wilderness long wandered man

Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.

Meanwhile they in thin earthly Canaan placed

Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins

National interrupt thin 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 pieties renowned

And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive

Irrevocable, that his Regal Throne

For ever 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 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

Wandering, shall in a glorious Temple enshrine.

Such follow him, as shall be registered

Part good, part bad, of bad the longer scrawl,

Whose foul Idolatries, and other faults

Heaped to the popular summer, will so incense

God, as to leave them, and expose thin Land,

Thin City, his Temple, and his holy Ark

With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey

To that proud City, whose high Walls thou sawed

Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.

There in captivity he lets them dwell

The space of seventy years, then brings them back,

Remembering Mercies, and his Covenant sworn

To David, established as the days of Heaven.

Returned from Babylon by leave of Kings

Thin Lords, whom God disposed, the house of God

They first re-edified, and for a while

In mean estate live moderate, till grown

In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;

But first among the Priests dissension springs,

Men who attend the Altar, and should most

Endeavor Peace: thin strife pollution brings

Upon the Temple it self: at last they seize

The Scepter, and regard not Davids Sons,

Then loose it to a stranger, that the true

Anointed King Messiah might be born

Barred of his right; yet at his Birth a Starr

Unseen before in Heaven proclaims him com,

And guides the Eastern Sages, who enquire

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 Quire

Of squadron 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 earths wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens.

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy

Surcharged, as had like grief bin 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, Haile,

High in the love of Heaven, 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 Paine: say where and when

Thin fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victors heel.

To whom thus Michael. Dream not of thin fight,

As of a Duel, or the local wounds

Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son

Manhood to God-head, with more strength to foil

Thy enemy; nor so is overcome

Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,

Disabled not to give thee thy deaths wound:

Which hee, who comes thy Savior, shall recur,

Not by destroying Satan, but his works

In thee and in thy Seed: nor can this be,

But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,

Obedience to the Law of God, imposed

On penalize of death, and suffering death,

The penalize to thy transgression due,

And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:

So only can high Justice rest re-paid.

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 thin own, though legal works.

For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,

Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned

A shameful and accurst, nailed to the Cross

By his own Nation, saline 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

Returns, 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 have dyad,

In sin for ever 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 thin stings

Then temporal death shall bruise the Victors 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 then 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 dyad.

All Nations they shall teach; for from that day

Not only to the Sons of Abrahams Loins

Salvation shall be Preached, but to the Sons

Of Abrahams Faith wherever through the world;

So in his seed all Nations shall be blest.

Then to the Heaven of Heavens 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 Gods right hand, exalted high

Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come,

When this worlds dissolution shall be ripe,

With glory and power to judge both quick and dead

To judge th’ unfaithful dead, but to reward

His faithful, and received them into bliss,

Whether in Heaven or Earth, for then the Earth

Shall all be Paradise, far happier place

Then this of Eden, and far happier days.

So spake th’ Archangel Michael, then paused,

As at the Worlds 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

Then 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 Heaven

Must renascent, what will betide the few

His faithful, left among th’ unfaithful herd,

The enemies of truth; who then shall guide

His people, who defend? will they not deal

Words with his followers then with him they dealt?

Be sure they will, said th’ Angel; but from Heaven

Hee 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 thin hearts shall write,

To guide them in all truth, and also arm

With spiritual Amour, able to resist

Satans assaults, and quench his fiery darts,

What Man can do against them, not afraid,

Though to the death, against such cruelties

With inward consolations recompenc’t,

And oft supported so as shall amaze

Their proudest perfecters: for the Spirit

Powered first on his Apostles, whom he sends

To evangelize the Nations, then on all

Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue

To speak all Tongues, 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 Heaven: at length

Their Ministry performed, and race well run,

Their doctrine and Their story written left,

They die; but in Their room, as they forewarn,

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,

Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven

To Their own vile advantages shall turn

Of lucre and ambition, and the truth

With superstitions and traditions taint,

Left only in those written Records pure,

Though not but by the Spirit understood.

Then shall they 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 given

To all Believer; and from that pretense,

Spiritual Laws by carnal power shall force

On every conscience; Laws which none shall finds

Left them enroled, or what the Spirit within

Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then

But force the Spirit of Grace it self, and bind

His consort Liberty; what, but unbuild

His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,

Their own Faith not another: for on Earth

Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard

Infallible? yet many will presume:

Whence heavy persecution shall arise

On all who in the worship persevere

Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,

Well deem in outward Rites and specious forms

Religion satisfied; Truth shall retire

Be stuck with slanderous 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 seed, obscurely then foretold,

Now ampler known thy Savior and thy Lord,

Last in the Clouds from Heaven 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 Heavens, 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 reapplied.

How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,

Measured this transient World, the Race of time,

Till time stand fixed: beyond is all abyss,

Eternities, 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 continue;

Beyond which was my folly to aspire.

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,

And love with fears 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 Truths sake

Is fortitude to highest victoria,

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 learnt, thou hast attained the summer

Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Stairs

Thou Knesset by name, and all th’ ethereal Powers,

All secrets of the deep, all Natures works,

Or works of God in Heaven, Airs, Earth, or Sea,

And all the riches of this World enjoys,

And all the rule, one Empire; only add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,

Add verte, Patience, Temperance, add Love,

By name to come called Charities, 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 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 happier end.

He ended, and they both descend the Hill;

Descended, Adam to the Bower where Eve

Lay sleeping ran before, but found her wacked;

And thus with words not sad she him received.

Whence thou returned, and whither wants, I know;

For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise,

Which he hath sent propitious, some great good

Presaging, since with sorrow and hearts 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 Heaven, 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 unworthier am voutsaft,

By me the Premised Seed shall all restore.

So spake our Mother Eve, and Adam heard

Well pleased, but answered not; for now too nigh

Th’ Archangel stood, and from the other Hill

To Their fixed Station, all in bright array

The Cherubim descended; on the ground

Gliding Madeiras, as Evening Mist

Risen from a River o’er the Marisa glides,

And gathers ground fast at the Laborers 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 hamstring Angel caught

Our lingering Parents, and to th’ Eastern Gate

Led them direct, and down the Cliff as fast

To the subjected Plains; then disappeared.

They looking back, all th’ Eastern side beheld

Of Paradise, so late Their happier seat,

Waved over by that flaming Brand, the Gate

With dreadful Faces thronged and firey Arms:

Som natural tears they draped, 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 wadding steps and slow,

Through Eden took Their solitaire way.

## 3.10.5 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does Milton begin *Paradise Lost* not in Eden but in Hell? Why is the first creation that we see that of Satan?
2. Milton made Satan so attractive that the Romantic poet William Blake would later assume sympathy between Milton and his creation, declaring that Milton was of the devil’s party without knowing it. Why does Milton make Satan so attractive, do you think?
3. Satan, Sin, and Death might be considered a parody of the Trinity. Why does Milton suggest a resemblance (albeit a perverted resemblance) between them? How does the Christian underpinning in Milton’s epic compare with Spenser’s?
4. How does Adam’s creation compare with Eve’s? What is the purpose in the differences and contrasts of their respective creation?
5. What consolation do Adam and Eve derive from their fall? How convincing is this consolation, do you think, and why?