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# *Paradise Lost*

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**by John Milton**

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# 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 10  
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, 20  
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 30

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 40  
 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  
 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,  
 With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell 50  
 In adamant 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, 60  
 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, 70  
 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 80  
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 90  
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 100  
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, 110  
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 120  
 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, 130  
 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, 140  
 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. 150

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, 160  
 Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?  
 What can it the 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, 170  
 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  
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 180  
 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. 190  
 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, 200  
 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, 210  
 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 220  
 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 230  
 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. 240  
 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, 250  
 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 260  
 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. 270

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, 280  
 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?" 290

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  
 Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 300  
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;  
 No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height!"

He scare 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, 310  
 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. 320

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 330  
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld  
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses  
 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 340  
 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 350  
 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.

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight  
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel; 360  
 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; 370  
 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.

380

Forthwith, form 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 390  
 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, 400  
 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, 410

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 420  
 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 430  
 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: 440  
 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 450  
 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, 460  
 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 470  
 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 480  
 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 490  
 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                    500  
 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                    510  
 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—                                 520  
 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                                 530  
 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 540  
 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; 550  
 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 560  
 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 570  
 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 580  
 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 590  
 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, 600  
 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; 610  
 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, 620  
 Begirt with British and Armoric knights;  
 And all who since, baptized or infidel,

Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,  
 Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,  
 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, 630  
 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 640  
 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 650  
 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, 660  
 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 670  
 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, 680  
 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 690  
 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; 700  
 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 710  
 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, 720  
 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, 730  
 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 740  
 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. 750

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— 760

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 770

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 780  
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 790  
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' Aegaeon isle. Thus they relate,  
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout  
 Fell long before; nor aught availed 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. 800

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 810  
 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.

820

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 830  
 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.

840

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.

850

## 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:— 10  
"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 20  
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 30  
 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, 40  
 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, 50  
 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, 60  
 The prison of his tyranny who reigns  
 By our delay? No! let us rather choose,  
 Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once  
 O'er 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 70  
 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 80  
 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 90  
 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 100  
 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 110  
 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— 120  
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 130  
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 140  
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 150  
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. 160

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— 170  
 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 180  
 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 190  
 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, 200  
 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 210  
 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 igominy, or bonds, or pain,  
 The sentence of their Conqueror. This is now  
 Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear, 220  
 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 230  
 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,  
 Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,  
 Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:— 240  
 "Either to disenthroned 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 250

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 260  
 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 270

Then most conspicuous when great things of small,  
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,  
 We can create, and in what place so'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. 280

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 290  
 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 300  
 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull  
 Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance  
 Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay  
 After the tempest. Such applause was heard  
 As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,  
 Advising peace: for such another field  
 They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear  
 Of thunder and the sword of Michael  
 Wrought still within them; and no less desire  
 To found this nether empire, which might rise, 310  
 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 320  
 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, 330  
 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 340  
 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 350  
 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 360  
 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. 370

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 380

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 390

In his disturbance; when his darling sons,  
 Hurl'd 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 400  
 To mingle and involve, done all to spite  
 The great Creator? But their spite still serves  
 His glory to augment. The bold design  
 Pleas'd 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, 410  
 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 420  
 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 430  
 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 440  
 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! Empyrean Thrones!  
 With reason hath deep silence and demur  
 Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way  
 And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light. 450  
 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. 460  
 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 470  
 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 480  
 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, 490  
 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. 500

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: 510  
 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 520  
 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 530  
 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: 540  
 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 550  
 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 560  
 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 570  
 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 enthral to Force or Chance.

580

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.

590

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.

600

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.

610

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 620  
 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 froze, and cold performs th' effect of fire.  
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled, 630  
 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, 640  
 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, 650  
 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, 660  
 Obominable, 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 670  
 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 680  
 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 690  
 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 700  
 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 710  
 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:— 720  
 "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, 730  
 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, 740  
 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 750  
 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.

760

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, 770  
 "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 780  
 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:— 790  
 "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, 800  
 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  
 Thysself in me thy perfect image viewing,  
 Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st  
 With me in secret that my womb conceived 810  
 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 820  
 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 830  
 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 840  
 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, 850  
 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, 860  
 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 870

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 purlieu of Heaven; and therein placed 880  
 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 890  
 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 900  
 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 910  
 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; 920  
 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 930  
 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, might pass through  
 With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;  
 So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth  
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.  
 Before their eyes in sudden view appear  
 The secrets of the hoary Deep—a dark 940  
 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 950  
 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, 960  
 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 970  
 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 980  
 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, 990  
 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 Arimaspians, 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, 1000  
 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 1010  
 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.

1020

T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:—"Ye Powers  
 And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,  
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy  
 With purpose to explore or to disturb  
 The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint  
 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, 1030  
 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.

1040

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 frightened 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,

1050

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."

1060

He ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply,  
 But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,  
 With fresh alacrity and force renewed  
 Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,  
 Into the wild expanse, and through the shock  
 Of fighting elements, on all sides round  
 Environed, wins his way; harder beset  
 And more endangered than when Argo passed  
 Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks,  
 Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned  
 Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steered.

1070

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, 1080  
 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.

1090

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 1100  
 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. 1110

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 unapproach'd 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 10  
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; 20  
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, 30

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 40  
 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 50  
 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, 60  
 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 70  
 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. 80

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 90

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, 100  
 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. 110

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, 120  
 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, 130  
 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 140  
 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 150  
 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 160  
 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.

170

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 180  
 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; 190  
 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. 200

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.

210

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, 220  
 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, 230  
 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? 240  
 He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute,  
 And silence was in Heaven: on Man's behalf  
 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, 250  
 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, 260  
 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 270  
 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 280  
 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 carcase 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 290

Of anger shall remain, but peace assured  
 And reconciliation: 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 300

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.

310

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.

320

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.

330

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      340  
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      350  
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,      360  
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      370  
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; 380  
 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 390  
 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; 400  
 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 410  
 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, 420

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, 430  
 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. 440

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, 450  
 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. 460

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 470  
 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 480  
 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; 490  
 None yet, but store hereafter from the earth  
 Up hither like aerial 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 500  
 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.

510

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.

520

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 crystalline 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

530

540

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 550  
 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. 560

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 570  
 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, 580  
 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; 590  
 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 desert ways with peril gone  
 All night; at last by break of cheerful dawn  
 Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill, 600  
 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 610  
 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 620  
 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 eccentric, hard to tell, 630

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, 640  
 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 650  
 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 660  
 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? 670  
 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, 680  
 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  
 Circl'd his head, nor less his locks behind  
 Illustrious on his shoulders fledg'd with wings  
 Lay waving round; on some great charge employed  
 He seem'd, or fixed in cogitation deep.

Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope  
 To find who might direct his wandering flight 690  
 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 smil'd celestial, and to every limb  
 Suitable grace diffus'd, so well he feign'd:  
 Under a coronet his flowing hair 700  
 In curls on either cheek play'd; 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,  
 Admonish'd by his ear, and straight was known  
 The Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the seven  
 Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne, 710  
 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; 720  
 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 730  
 His 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, 740  
 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 750  
 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 760  
 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 770  
 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 780  
 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, 790  
 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. 800

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.

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## 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, 10  
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; horror and doubt distract  
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir 20  
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, 30

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 40  
 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, 50  
 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 60  
 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? 70  
 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? 80  
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 90  
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 100  
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 reconciliation grow,  
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep: 110  
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse  
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear  
Short intermission bought with double smart.

This knows my Punisher; therefore as far  
From granting he, as I from begging, peace;  
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead  
Of us out-cast, exil'd, his new delight,  
Mankind created, and for him this world.

So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear; 120  
 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. 130

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 140  
 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 150  
 With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
 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. 160

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 170  
 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 180  
 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; 190  
 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 200  
 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; 210  
 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 220  
 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 230  
 From Auran eastward to the royal towers  
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,  
 Or where the sons of Eden long before  
 Dwelt in Telassar: In this pleasant soil  
 His far more pleasant garden God ordained;  
 Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow  
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;  
 And all amid them stood the tree of life,  
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit  
 Of vegetable gold; and next to life, 240  
 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 250  
 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 error under pendant shades 260  
 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, 270  
 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 280  
 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 290  
 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 300  
 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, 310  
 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; 320  
 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, 330  
 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, 340  
 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 350  
 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; 360  
 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 370

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 hastening 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, 380  
 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. 390

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, 400  
 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 410  
 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.

420

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

430

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.

440

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;

450

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 460  
 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.

470

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. 480

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 490  
 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 500  
 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, 510  
 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 520  
 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 530  
 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. 540  
 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 550  
 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 560  
 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 570  
 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 580

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 590  
 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. 600

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; 610  
 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 warrior thus returned. 620

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.

630

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.

640

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.

650

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,

660



And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;  
 While other animals unactive range,  
 And of their doings God takes no account. 670

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, 680  
 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; 690  
 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, 700  
 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 710  
 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 720  
 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, 730  
 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, 740  
 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 750  
 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, 760  
 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 hymenaeae sung,  
 What day the genial Angel to our sire  
 Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,  
 More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods 770  
 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, 780  
 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 790  
 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, 800  
 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 810  
 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, 820  
 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, 830  
 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 840  
 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. 850  
 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, 860  
 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 870  
 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 880  
 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.

890

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.

900

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.

910

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,

920

Will save us trial what the least can do 930  
 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, 940  
 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. 950

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 960  
 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, 970  
 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. 980

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, 990  
 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. 1000

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. 1010

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 1020  
 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 1030  
 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 liar traced,  
 Satan, and couldst thou faithful add? O name,  
 O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!  
 Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew? 1040  
 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 servilely adored  
 Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope  
 To dispossess him, and thyself to reign? 1050  
 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. 1060  
 Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,  
 Proud liminary Cherub! but ere then

Far heavier load thyself expect to feel  
 From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King  
 Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy 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 1070  
 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 1080  
 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, 1090  
 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 1100  
 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 V

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime  
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,  
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep  
Was airy-light, from pure digestion bred,  
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound  
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,  
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song  
Of birds on every bough; so much the more  
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve  
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek, 10  
As through unquiet rest: He, on his side  
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love  
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld  
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,  
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice  
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,  
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus. Awake,  
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,  
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight!  
Awake: The morning shines, and the fresh field 20  
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring  
Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,  
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,  
How nature paints her colours, how the bee  
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.  
Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye  
On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.  
O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose, 30

My glory, my perfection! glad I see  
 Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night  
 (Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,  
 If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,  
 Works of day past, or morrow's next design,  
 But of offence and trouble, which my mind  
 Knew never till this irksome night: Methought,  
 Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk  
 With gentle voice; I thought it thine: It said,  
 "Why sleepest thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time, 40  
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields  
 To the night-warbling bird, that now awake  
 Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song; now reigns  
 Full-orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light  
 Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,  
 If none regard; Heaven wakes with all his eyes,  
 Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?  
 In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment  
 Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze."  
 I rose as at thy call, but found thee not; 50  
 To find thee I directed then my walk;  
 And on, methought, alone I passed through ways  
 That brought me on a sudden to the tree  
 Of interdicted knowledge: fair it seemed,  
 Much fairer to my fancy than by day:  
 And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood  
 One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven  
 By us oft seen; his dewy locks distilled  
 Ambrosia; on that tree he also gazed;  
 And "O fair plant," said he, "with fruit surcharged, 60  
 Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,  
 Nor God, nor Man? Is knowledge so despised?  
 Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?  
 Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold  
 Longer thy offered good; why else set here?"  
 This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm  
 He plucked, he tasted; me damp horror chilled  
 At such bold words vouched with a deed so bold:  
 But he thus, overjoyed; "O fruit divine,  
 Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt, 70

Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit  
 For Gods, yet able to make Gods of Men:  
 And why not Gods of Men; since good, the more  
 Communicated, more abundant grows,  
 The author not impaired, but honoured more?  
 Here, happy creature, fair angelick Eve!  
 Partake thou also; happy though thou art,  
 Happier thou mayest be, worthier canst not be:  
 Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods  
 Thyself a Goddess, not to earth confined, 80  
 But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes  
 Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see  
 What life the Gods live there, and such live thou!"  
 So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,  
 Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part  
 Which he had plucked; the pleasant savoury smell  
 So quickened appetite, that I, methought,  
 Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds  
 With him I flew, and underneath beheld  
 The earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide 90  
 And various: Wondering at my flight and change  
 To this high exaltation; suddenly  
 My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,  
 And fell asleep; but O, how glad I waked  
 To find this but a dream! Thus Eve her night  
 Related, and thus Adam answered sad.

Best image of myself, and dearer half,  
 The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep  
 Affects me equally; nor can I like 100  
 This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear;  
 Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,  
 Created pure. But know that in the soul  
 Are many lesser faculties, that serve  
 Reason as chief; among these Fancy next  
 Her office holds; of all external things  
 Which the five watchful senses represent,  
 She forms imaginations, aery shapes,  
 Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames  
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call 110  
 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires

Into her private cell, when nature rests.

Oft in her absence mimick Fancy wakes  
To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes,  
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams;  
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.

Some such resemblances, methinks, I find  
Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream, 120  
But with addition strange; yet be not sad.

Evil into the mind of God or Man  
May come and go, so unreprieved, and leave  
No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope  
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,  
Waking thou never will consent to do.

Be not disheartened then, nor cloud those looks,  
That wont to be more cheerful and serene, 130  
Than when fair morning first smiles on the world;  
And let us to our fresh employments rise  
Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers  
That open now their choisest bosomed smells,  
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.

So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered;  
But silently a gentle tear let fall  
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;  
Two other precious drops that ready stood, 140  
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell  
Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse  
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.

But first, from under shady arborous roof  
Soon as they forth were come to open sight  
Of day-spring, and the sun, who, scarce up-risen,  
With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim, 150  
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,  
Discovering in wide landskip all the east  
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,  
Lowly they bowed adoring, and began  
Their orisons, each morning duly paid  
In various style; for neither various style

Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise  
 Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung  
 Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence  
 Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse, 160  
 More tuneable than needed lute or harp  
 To add more sweetness; and they thus began.  
 These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
 Almighty! Thine this universal frame,  
 Thus wonderous fair; Thyself how wonderous then!  
 Unspeakable, who sitst above these heavens  
 To us invisible, or dimly seen  
 In these thy lowest works; yet these declare  
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine. 170  
 Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,  
 Angels; for ye behold him, and with songs  
 And choral symphonies, day without night,  
 Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in Heaven  
 On Earth join all ye Creatures to extol  
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.  
 Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,  
 If better thou belong not to the dawn, 180  
 Sure pledge of day, that crownest the smiling morn  
 With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,  
 While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.  
 Thou Sun, of this great world both eye and soul,  
 Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise  
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climbest,  
 And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fallest.  
 Moon, that now meetest the orient sun, now flyest, 190  
 With the fixed Stars, fixed in their orb that flies;  
 And ye five other wandering Fires, that move  
 In mystick dance not without song, resound  
 His praise, who out of darkness called up light.  
 Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth  
 Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run  
 Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix  
 And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change  
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise. 200  
 Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise



From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,  
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,  
 In honour to the world's great Author rise;  
 Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,  
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,  
 Rising or falling still advance his praise.

His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow, 210  
 Breathe soft or loud; and, wave your tops, ye Pines,  
 With every plant, in sign of worship wave.  
 Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,  
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.  
 Join voices, all ye living Souls: Ye Birds,  
 That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,  
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise. 220

Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk  
 The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;  
 Witness if I be silent, morn or even,  
 To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,  
 Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.

Hail, universal Lord, be bounteous still  
 To give us only good; and if the night  
 Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed, 230  
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!  
 So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts  
 Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm.

On to their morning's rural work they haste,  
 Among sweet dews and flowers; where any row  
 Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far  
 Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check  
 Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine  
 To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines 240  
 Her marriageable arms, and with him brings  
 Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn  
 His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld  
 With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called  
 Raphael, the sociable Spirit, that deigned  
 To travel with Tobias, and secured  
 His marriage with the seventimes-wedded maid.

Raphael, said he, thou hearest what stir on Earth  
 Satan, from Hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,  
 Hath raised in Paradise; and how disturbed 250  
 This night the human pair; how he designs  
 In them at once to ruin all mankind.

Go therefore, half this day as friend with friend  
 Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade  
 Thou findest him from the heat of noon retired,  
 To respite his day-labour with repast,  
 Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,  
 As may advise him of his happy state,  
 Happiness in his power left free to will, 260  
 Left to his own free will, his will though free,  
 Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware  
 He swerve not, too secure: Tell him withal  
 His danger, and from whom; what enemy,  
 Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now  
 The fall of others from like state of bliss;  
 By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;  
 But by deceit and lies: This let him know,  
 Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend  
 Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned. 270

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled  
 All justice: Nor delayed the winged Saint  
 After his charge received; but from among  
 Thousand celestial Ardours, where he stood  
 Veiled with his gorgeous wings, up springing light,  
 Flew through the midst of Heaven; the angelick quires,  
 On each hand parting, to his speed gave way  
 Through all the empyreal road; till, at the gate  
 Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide 280  
 On golden hinges turning, as by work  
 Divine the sovran Architect had framed.

From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,  
 Star interposed, however small he sees,  
 Not unconformed to other shining globes,  
 Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crowned  
 Above all hills. As when by night the glass  
 Of Galileo, less assured, observes  
 Imagined lands and regions in the moon: 290

Or pilot, from amidst the Cyclades  
 Delos or Samos first appearing, kens  
 A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight  
 He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky  
 Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing  
 Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan  
 Winnows the buxom air; till, within soar  
 Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems  
 A phoenix, gazed by all as that sole bird,  
 When, to enshrine his reliques in the Sun's  
 Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies. 300

At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise  
 He lights, and to his proper shape returns  
 A Seraph winged: Six wings he wore, to shade  
 His lineaments divine; the pair that clad  
 Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast  
 With regal ornament; the middle pair  
 Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round  
 Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold 310  
 And colours dipt in Heaven; the third his feet  
 Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,  
 Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,  
 And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled  
 The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands  
 Of Angels under watch; and to his state,  
 And to his message high, in honour rise;  
 For on some message high they guessed him bound.

Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come 320  
 Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,  
 And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm;  
 A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here  
 Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will  
 Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet,  
 Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.

Him through the spicy forest onward come  
 Adam discerned, as in the door he sat  
 Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun 330  
 Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm  
 Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs:  
 And Eve within, due at her hour prepared

For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please  
 True appetite, and not disrelish thirst  
 Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,  
 Berry or grape: To whom thus Adam called.

Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold  
 Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape 340  
 Comes this way moving; seems another morn  
 Risen on mid-noon; some great behest from Heaven  
 To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe  
 This day to be our guest. But go with speed,  
 And, what thy stores contain, bring forth, and pour  
 Abundance, fit to honour and receive  
 Our heavenly stranger: Well we may afford  
 Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow  
 From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies  
 Her fertile growth, and by disburthening grows 350  
 More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare.

To whom thus Eve. Adam, earth's hallowed mould,  
 Of God inspired! small store will serve, where store,  
 All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;  
 Save what by frugal storing firmness gains  
 To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:  
 But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,  
 Each plant and juciest gourd, will pluck such choice  
 To entertain our Angel-guest, as he 360  
 Beholding shall confess, that here on Earth  
 God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven.

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste  
 She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent  
 What choice to choose for delicacy best,  
 What order, so contrived as not to mix  
 Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring  
 Taste after taste upheld with kindest change;  
 Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk 370  
 Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields  
 In India East or West, or middle shore  
 In Pontus or the Punick coast, or where  
 Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat  
 Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,  
 She gathers, tribute large, and on the board

Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink the grape  
 She crushes, inoffensive must, and meaths  
 From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed  
 She tempers dulcet creams; nor these to hold 380  
 Wants her fit vessels pure; then strows the ground  
 With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.

Mean while our primitive great sire, to meet  
 His God-like guest, walks forth, without more train  
 Accompanied than with his own complete  
 Perfections; in himself was all his state,  
 More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits  
 On princes, when their rich retinue long  
 Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold, 390  
 Dazzles the croud, and sets them all agree.

Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,  
 Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,  
 As to a superiour nature bowing low,  
 Thus said. Native of Heaven, for other place  
 None can than Heaven such glorious shape contain;  
 Since, by descending from the thrones above,  
 Those happy places thou hast deigned a while  
 To want, and honour these, vouchsafe with us 400  
 Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess  
 This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower  
 To rest; and what the garden choicest bears  
 To sit and taste, till this meridian heat  
 Be over, and the sun more cool decline.

Whom thus the angelick Virtue answered mild.

Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such  
 Created, or such place hast here to dwell, 410  
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,  
 To visit thee; lead on then where thy bower  
 O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,  
 I have at will. So to the sylvan lodge  
 They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,  
 With flowerets decked, and fragrant smells; but Eve,  
 Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair  
 Than Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feigned  
 Of three that in mount Ida naked strove,

Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil                   420  
 She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm  
 Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel Hail  
 Bestowed, the holy salutation used  
 Long after to blest Mary, second Eve.

Hail, Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful womb  
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,  
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God  
 Have heaped this table!—Raised of grassy turf                   430  
 Their table was, and mossy seats had round,  
 And on her ample square from side to side  
 All autumn piled, though spring and autumn here  
 Danced hand in hand. A while discourse they hold;  
 No fear lest dinner cool; when thus began  
 Our author. Heavenly stranger, please to taste  
 These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom  
 All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,  
 To us for food and for delight hath caused  
 The earth to yield; unsavoury food perhaps  
 To spiritual natures; only this I know,                   440  
 That one celestial Father gives to all.

To whom the Angel. Therefore what he gives  
 (Whose praise be ever sung) to Man in part  
 Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found  
 No ingrateful food: And food alike those pure  
 Intelligential substances require,  
 As doth your rational; and both contain  
 Within them every lower faculty  
 Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,           450  
 Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,  
 And corporeal to incorporeal turn.

For know, whatever was created, needs  
 To be sustained and fed: Of elements  
 The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,  
 Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires  
 Ethereal, and as lowest first the moon;  
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged  
 Vapours not yet into her substance turned.                   460

Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale

From her moist continent to higher orbs.  
 The sun that light imparts to all, receives  
 From all his alimantal recompence  
 In humid exhalations, and at even  
 Sups with the ocean. Though in Heaven the trees  
 Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines  
 Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn 470  
 We brush mellifluous dewes, and find the ground  
 Covered with pearly grain: Yet God hath here  
 Varied his bounty so with new delights,  
 As may compare with Heaven; and to taste  
 Think not I shall be nice. So down they sat,  
 And to their viands fell; nor seemingly  
 The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss  
 Of Theologians; but with keen dispatch  
 Of real hunger, and concoctive heat  
 To transubstantiate: What redounds, transpires 480  
 Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire  
 Of sooty coal the empirick alchemist  
 Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,  
 Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,  
 As from the mine. Mean while at table Eve  
 Ministered naked, and their flowing cups  
 With pleasant liquours crowned: O innocence  
 Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,  
 Then had the sons of God excuse to have been  
 Enamoured at that sight; but in those hearts 490  
 Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy  
 Was understood, the injured lover's hell.  
 Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,  
 Not burdened nature, sudden mind arose  
 In Adam, not to let the occasion pass  
 Given him by this great conference to know  
 Of things above his world, and of their being  
 Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw  
 Transcend his own so far; whose radiant forms, 500  
 Divine effulgence, whose high power, so far  
 Exceeded human; and his wary speech  
 Thus to the empyreal minister he framed.  
 Inhabitant with God, now know I well

Thy favour, in this honour done to Man;  
 Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed  
 To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,  
 Food not of Angels, yet accepted so,  
 As that more willingly thou couldst not seem 510  
 At Heaven's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare  
 To whom the winged Hierarch replied.

O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom  
 All things proceed, and up to him return,  
 If not depraved from good, created all  
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
 Endued with various forms, various degrees  
 Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;  
 But more refined, more spiritous, and pure, 520  
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending  
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,  
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
 Proportioned to each kind. So from the root  
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
 More aery, last the bright consummate flower  
 Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,  
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,  
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal, 530  
 To intellectual; give both life and sense,  
 Fancy and understanding; whence the soul  
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,  
 Discursive, or intuitive; discourse  
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,  
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same.

Wonder not then, what God for you saw good  
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you  
 To proper substance. Time may come, when Men  
 With Angels may participate, and find 540  
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;  
 And from these corporal nutriments perhaps  
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
 Improved by tract of time, and, winged, ascend  
 Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,  
 Here or in heavenly Paradises dwell;  
 If ye be found obedient, and retain



Unalterably firm his love entire,  
 Whose progeny you are. Mean while enjoy  
 Your fill what happiness this happy state  
 Can comprehend, incapable of more. 550

To whom the patriarch of mankind replied.

O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,  
 Well hast thou taught the way that might direct  
 Our knowledge, and the scale of nature set  
 From center to circumference; whereon,  
 In contemplation of created things,  
 By steps we may ascend to God. But say, 560  
 What meant that caution joined, If ye be found  
 Obedient? Can we want obedience then

To him, or possibly his love desert,  
 Who formed us from the dust and placed us here  
 Full to the utmost measure of what bliss  
 Human desires can seek or apprehend?  
 To whom the Angel. Son of Heaven and Earth,  
 Attend! That thou art happy, owe to God;  
 That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,  
 That is, to thy obedience; therein stand. 570

This was that caution given thee; be advised.

God made thee perfect, not immutable;  
 And good he made thee, but to persevere  
 He left it in thy power; ordained thy will  
 By nature free, not over-ruled by fate  
 Inextricable, or strict necessity:  
 Our voluntary service he requires,  
 Not our necessitated; such with him 580  
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how  
 Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve  
 Willing or no, who will but what they must  
 By destiny, and can no other choose?

Myself, and all the angelick host, that stand  
 In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state  
 Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;  
 On other surety none: Freely we serve,  
 Because we freely love, as in our will  
 To love or not; in this we stand or fall: 590

And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,  
 And so from Heaven to deepest Hell; O fall  
 From what high state of bliss, into what woe!  
 To whom our great progenitor. Thy words  
 Attentive, and with more delighted ear,  
 Divine instructor, I have heard, than when  
 Cherubick songs by night from neighbouring hills  
 Aereal musick send: Nor knew I not  
 To be both will and deed created free;  
 Yet that we never shall forget to love 600  
 Our Maker, and obey him whose command  
 Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts  
 Assured me, and still assure: Though what thou tellest  
 Hath passed in Heaven, some doubt within me move,  
 But more desire to hear, if thou consent,  
 The full relation, which must needs be strange,  
 Worthy of sacred silence to be heard;  
 And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun  
 Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins  
 His other half in the great zone of Heaven. 610

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,  
 After short pause assenting, thus began.  
 High matter thou enjoimest me, O prime of men,  
 Sad task and hard: For how shall I relate  
 To human sense the invisible exploits  
 Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,  
 The ruin of so many glorious once  
 And perfect while they stood? how last unfold 620  
 The secrets of another world, perhaps  
 Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good  
 This is dispensed; and what surmounts the reach  
 Of human sense, I shall delineate so,  
 By likening spiritual to corporal forms,  
 As may express them best; though what if Earth  
 Be but a shadow of Heaven, and things therein  
 Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?  
 As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild  
 Reigned where these Heavens now roll, where Earth now  
 rests 630  
 Upon her center poised; when on a day

(For time, though in eternity, applied  
 To motion, measures all things durable  
 By present, past, and future,) on such day  
 As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host  
 Of Angels by imperial summons called,  
 Innumerable before the Almighty's throne  
 Forthwith, from all the ends of Heaven, appeared  
 Under their Hierarchs in orders bright:  
 Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced, 640  
 Standards and gonfalons 'twixt van and rear  
 Stream in the air, and for distinction serve  
 Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees;  
 Or in their glittering tissues bear imblazed  
 Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love  
 Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs  
 Of circuit inexpressible they stood,  
 Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,  
 By whom in bliss imbosomed sat the Son,  
 Amidst as from a flaming mount, whose top 650  
 Brightness had made invisible, thus spake.  
 Hear, all ye Angels, progeny of light,  
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;  
 Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.  
 This day I have begot whom I declare  
 My only Son, and on this holy hill  
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
 At my right hand; your head I him appoint; 660  
 And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow  
 All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord:  
 Under his great vice-gerent reign abide  
 United, as one individual soul,  
 For ever happy: Him who disobeys,  
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day,  
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls  
 Into utter darkness, deep ingulfed, his place  
 Ordained without redemption, without end. 670  
 So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words  
 All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all.  
 That day, as other solemn days, they spent

In song and dance about the sacred hill;  
 Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere  
 Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels  
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,  
 Eccentrick, intervolved, yet regular  
 Then most, when most irregular they seem; 680  
 And in their motions harmony divine  
 So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear  
 Listens delighted. Evening now approached,  
 (For we have also our evening and our morn,  
 We ours for change delectable, not need;)

Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn  
 Desirous; all in circles as they stood,  
 Tables are set, and on a sudden piled  
 With Angels food, and rubied nectar flows  
 In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold, 690  
 Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.

On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,  
 They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet  
 Quaff immortality and joy, secure  
 Of surfeit, where full measure only bounds  
 Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered  
 With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.

Now when ambrosial night with clouds exhaled 700  
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade  
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed  
 To grateful twilight, (for night comes not there  
 In darker veil) and roseate dews disposed  
 All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest;  
 Wide over all the plain, and wider far  
 Than all this globous earth in plain outspread,  
 (Such are the courts of God) the angelick throng,  
 Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend  
 By living streams among the trees of life, 710  
 Pavilions numberless, and sudden reared,  
 Celestial tabernacles, where they slept  
 Fanned with cool winds; save those, who, in their course,  
 Melodious hymns about the sovran throne  
 Alternate all night long: but not so waked  
 Satan; so call him now, his former name

Is heard no more in Heaven; he of the first,  
 If not the first Arch-Angel, great in power,  
 In favour and pre-eminence, yet fraught  
 With envy against the Son of God, that day 720  
 Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed  
 Messiah King anointed, could not bear  
 Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired.

Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,  
 Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour  
 Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved  
 With all his legions to dislodge, and leave  
 Unworshipt, unobeyed, the throne supreme,  
 Contemptuous; and his next subordinate 730  
 Awakening, thus to him in secret spake.

Sleepest thou, Companion dear? What sleep can close  
 Thy eye-lids? and rememberest what decree  
 Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips  
 Of Heaven's Almighty. Thou to me thy thoughts  
 Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart;  
 Both waking we were one; how then can now  
 Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;  
 New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise 740

In us who serve, new counsels to debate  
 What doubtful may ensue: More in this place  
 To utter is not safe. Assemble thou  
 Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;  
 Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night  
 Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,  
 And all who under me their banners wave,  
 Homeward, with flying march, where we possess  
 The quarters of the north; there to prepare  
 Fit entertainment to receive our King, 750  
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,  
 Who speedily through all the hierarchies  
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.

So spake the false Arch-Angel, and infused  
 Bad influence into the unwary breast  
 Of his associate: He together calls,  
 Or several one by one, the regent Powers,  
 Under him Regent; tells, as he was taught,

That the Most High commanding, now ere night, 760  
 Now ere dim night had disincumbered Heaven,  
 The great hierarchal standard was to move;  
 Tells the suggested cause, and casts between  
 Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound  
 Or taint integrity: But all obeyed  
 The wonted signal, and superiour voice  
 Of their great Potentate; for great indeed  
 His name, and high was his degree in Heaven;  
 His countenance, as the morning-star that guides  
 The starry flock, allured them, and with lies 770  
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host.

Mean while the Eternal eye, whose sight discerns  
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,  
 And from within the golden lamps that burn  
 Nightly before him, saw without their light  
 Rebellion rising; saw in whom, how spread  
 Among the sons of morn, what multitudes  
 Were banded to oppose his high decree;  
 And, smiling, to his only Son thus said. 780

Son, thou in whom my glory I behold  
 In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,  
 Nearly it now concerns us to be sure  
 Of our Omnipotence, and with what arms  
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim  
 Of deity or empire: Such a foe  
 Is rising, who intends to erect his throne  
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north;  
 Nor so content, hath in his thought to try 790  
 In battle, what our power is, or our right.

Let us advise, and to this hazard draw  
 With speed what force is left, and all employ  
 In our defence; lest unawares we lose  
 This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.

To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear,  
 Lightning divine, ineffable, serene,  
 Made answer. Mighty Father, thou thy foes 800  
 Justly hast in derision, and, secure,  
 Laughest at their vain designs and tumults vain,

Matter to me of glory, whom their hate  
 Illustrates, when they see all regal power  
 Given me to quell their pride, and in event  
 Know whether I be dextrous to subdue  
 Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.

So spake the Son; but Satan, with his Powers,  
 Far was advanced on winged speed; an host 810  
 Innumerable as the stars of night,  
 Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun  
 Impearls on every leaf and every flower.

Regions they passed, the mighty regencies  
 Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,  
 In their triple degrees; regions to which  
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more  
 Than what this garden is to all the earth,  
 And all the sea, from one entire globose 820  
 Stretched into longitude; which having passed,  
 At length into the limits of the north

They came; and Satan to his royal seat  
 High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount  
 Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers  
 From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold;  
 The palace of great Lucifer, (so call  
 That structure in the dialect of men  
 Interpreted,) which not long after, he  
 Affecting all equality with God, 830

In imitation of that mount whereon  
 Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,  
 The Mountain of the Congregation called;  
 For thither he assembled all his train,  
 Pretending so commanded to consult  
 About the great reception of their King,  
 Thither to come, and with calumnious art  
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears.

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers; 840  
 If these magnifick titles yet remain  
 Not merely titular, since by decree  
 Another now hath to himself engrossed  
 All power, and us eclipsed under the name  
 Of King anointed, for whom all this haste

Of midnight-march, and hurried meeting here,  
 This only to consult how we may best,  
 With what may be devised of honours new,  
 Receive him coming to receive from us  
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile! 850  
 Too much to one! but double how endured,  
 To one, and to his image now proclaimed?  
 But what if better counsels might erect  
 Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?  
 Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend  
 The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust  
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves  
 Natives and sons of Heaven possessed before  
 By none; and if not equal all, yet free,  
 Equally free; for orders and degrees 860  
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.

Who can in reason then, or right, assume  
 Monarchy over such as live by right  
 His equals, if in power and splendour less,  
 In freedom equal? or can introduce  
 Law and edict on us, who without law  
 Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,  
 And look for adoration, to the abuse  
 Of those imperial titles, which assert 870  
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve.

Thus far his bold discourse without controul  
 Had audience; when among the Seraphim  
 Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored  
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,  
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe  
 The current of his fury thus opposed.

O argument blasphemous, false, and proud! 880  
 Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven  
 Expected, least of all from thee, Ingrate,  
 In place thyself so high above thy peers.

Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn  
 The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,  
 That to his only Son, by right endued  
 With regal scepter, every soul in Heaven



Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due  
 Confess him rightful King? unjust, thou sayest, 890  
 Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,  
 And equal over equals to let reign,  
 One over all with unsucceeded power.

Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute  
 With him the points of liberty, who made  
 Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven  
 Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?  
 Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,  
 And of our good and of our dignity 900  
 How provident he is; how far from thought  
 To make us less, bent rather to exalt  
 Our happy state, under one head more near  
 United. But to grant it thee unjust,  
 That equal over equals monarch reign:  
 Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,  
 Or all angelick nature joined in one,  
 Equal to him begotten Son? by whom,  
 As by his Word, the Mighty Father made  
 All things, even thee; and all the Spirits of Heaven 910  
 By him created in their bright degrees,  
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named  
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 Essential Powers; nor by his reign obscured,  
 But more illustrious made; since he the head  
 One of our number thus reduced becomes;  
 His laws our laws; all honour to him done  
 Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,  
 And tempt not these; but hasten to appease  
 The incensed Father, and the incensed Son, 920  
 While pardon may be found in time besought.

So spake the fervent Angel; but his zeal  
 None seconded, as out of season judged,  
 Or singular and rash: Whereat rejoiced  
 The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied.

That we were formed then sayest thou? and the work  
 Of secondary hands, by task transferred  
 From Father to his Son? strange point and new! 930  
 Doctrine which we would know whence learned: who saw

When this creation was? rememberest thou  
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?  
 We know no time when we were not as now;  
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised  
 By our own quickening power, when fatal course  
 Had circled his full orb, the birth mature  
 Of this our native Heaven, ethereal sons.

Our puissance is our own; our own right hand                    940  
 Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try  
 Who is our equal: Then thou shalt behold  
 Whether by supplication we intend  
 Address, and to begirt the almighty throne  
 Beseeching or besieging. This report,  
 These tidings carry to the anointed King;  
 And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.

He said; and, as the sound of waters deep,                    950  
 Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause  
 Through the infinite host; nor less for that  
 The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone  
 Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold.

O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,  
 Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall  
 Determined, and thy hapless crew involved  
 In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread  
 Both of thy crime and punishment: Henceforth                    960  
 No more be troubled how to quit the yoke  
 Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws  
 Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees  
 Against thee are gone forth without recall;  
 That golden scepter, which thou didst reject,  
 Is now an iron rod to bruise and break  
 Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise;  
 Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly  
 These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath  
 Impendent, raging into sudden flame,  
 Distinguish not: For soon expect to feel                    970  
 His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.

Then who created thee lamenting learn,  
 When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.

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

980

## BOOK VI

All night the dreadful Angel, unpursued,  
Through Heaven's wide champain held his way; till Morn,  
Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand  
Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave  
Within the mount of God, fast by his throne,  
Where light and darkness in perpetual round  
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven  
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;  
Light issues forth, and at the other door  
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour 10  
To veil the Heaven, though darkness there might well  
Seem twilight here: And now went forth the Morn  
Such as in highest Heaven arrayed in gold  
Empyrean; from before her vanished Night,  
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain  
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,  
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,  
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view:  
War he perceived, war in procinct; and found 20  
Already known what he for news had thought  
To have reported: Gladly then he mixed  
Among those friendly Powers, who him received  
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,  
That of so many myriads fallen, yet one  
Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill  
They led him high applauded, and present  
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,  
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard.  
Servant of God. Well done; well hast thou fought 30

The better fight, who single hast maintained  
 Against revolted multitudes the cause  
 Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;  
 And for the testimony of truth hast borne  
 Universal reproach, far worse to bear  
 Than violence; for this was all thy care  
 To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
 Judged thee perverse: The easier conquest now  
 Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,  
 Back on thy foes more glorious to return, 40  
 Than scorned thou didst depart; and to subdue  
 By force, who reason for their law refuse,  
 Right reason for their law, and for their King  
 Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.

Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,  
 And thou, in military prowess next,  
 Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons  
 Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,  
 By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight, 50  
 Equal in number to that Godless crew  
 Rebellious: Them with fire and hostile arms  
 Fearless assault; and, to the brow of Heaven  
 Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,  
 Into their place of punishment, the gulf  
 Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide  
 His fiery Chaos to receive their fall.

So spake the Sovran Voice, and clouds began  
 To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll 60  
 In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign  
 Of wrath awaked; nor with less dread the loud  
 Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow:  
 At which command the Powers militant,  
 That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate joined  
 Of union irresistible, moved on  
 In silence their bright legions, to the sound  
 Of instrumental harmony, that breathed  
 Heroick ardour to adventurous deeds  
 Under their God-like leaders, in the cause 70  
 Of God and his Messiah. On they move  
 Indissolubly firm; nor obvious hill,

Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream, divides  
 Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground  
 Their march was, and the passive air upbore  
 Their nimble tread; as when the total kind  
 Of birds, in orderly array on wing,  
 Came summoned over Eden to receive  
 Their names of thee; so over many a tract  
 Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,     80  
 Tenfold the length of this terrene: At last,  
 Far in the horizon to the north appeared  
 From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched  
 In battailous aspect, and nearer view  
 Bristled with upright beams innumerable  
 Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields  
 Various, with boastful argument portrayed,  
 The banded Powers of Satan hasting on  
 With furious expedition; for they weened  
 That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,     90  
 To win the mount of God, and on his throne  
 To set the Envier of his state, the proud  
 Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain  
 In the mid way: Though strange to us it seemed  
 At first, that Angel should with Angel war,  
 And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet  
 So oft in festivals of joy and love  
 Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire,  
 Hymning the Eternal Father: But the shout  
 Of battle now began, and rushing sound     100  
 Of onset ended soon each milder thought.

High in the midst, exalted as a God,  
 The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,  
 Idol of majesty divine, enclosed  
 With flaming Cherubim, and golden shields;  
 Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now  
 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,  
 A dreadful interval, and front to front  
 Presented stood in terrible array     110  
 Of hideous length: Before the cloudy van,  
 On the rough edge of battle ere it joined,  
 Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,

Came towering, armed in adamant and gold;  
 Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood  
 Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,  
 And thus his own undaunted heart explores.

O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest  
 Should yet remain, where faith and realty 120  
 Remain not: Wherefore should not strength and might  
 There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove  
 Where boldest, though to fight unconquerable?  
 His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,  
 I mean to try, whose reason I have tried  
 Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just,  
 That he, who in debate of truth hath won,  
 Should win in arms, in both disputes alike  
 Victor; though brutish that contest and foul,  
 When reason hath to deal with force, yet so 130  
 Most reason is that reason overcome.

So pondering, and from his armed peers  
 Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met  
 His daring foe, at this prevention more  
 Incensed, and thus securely him defied.

Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reached  
 The highth of thy aspiring unopposed,  
 The throne of God unguarded, and his side 140  
 Abandoned, at the terrour of thy power  
 Or potent tongue: Fool! not to think how vain  
 Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms;  
 Who out of smallest things could, without end,  
 Have raised incessant armies to defeat  
 Thy folly; or with solitary hand  
 Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow,  
 Unaided, could have finished thee, and whelmed  
 Thy legions under darkness: But thou seest  
 All are not of thy train; there be, who faith 150  
 Prefer, and piety to God, though then  
 To thee not visible, when I alone  
 Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent  
 From all: My sect thou seest; now learn too late  
 How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.

Whom the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,  
 Thus answered. Ill for thee, but in wished hour  
 Of my revenge, first sought for, thou returnest  
 From flight, seditious Angel! to receive 160  
 Thy merited reward, the first assay  
 Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,  
 Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose  
 A third part of the Gods, in synod met  
 Their deities to assert; who, while they feel  
 Vigour divine within them, can allow  
 Omnipotence to none. But well thou comest  
 Before thy fellows, ambitious to win  
 From me some plume, that thy success may show  
 Destruction to the rest: This pause between, 170  
 (Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know,  
 At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven  
 To heavenly souls had been all one; but now  
 I see that most through sloth had rather serve,  
 Ministring Spirits, trained up in feast and song!  
 Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of Heaven,  
 Servility with freedom to contend,  
 As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.  
 To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied. 180  
 Apostate! still thou errest, nor end wilt find  
 Of erring, from the path of truth remote:  
 Unjustly thou depravest it with the name  
 Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,  
 Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,  
 When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude,  
 To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled  
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, 190  
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;  
 Yet lewdly darest our ministring upbraid.  
 Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve  
 In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine  
 Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed;  
 Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect: Mean while  
 From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,  
 This greeting on thy impious crest receive.



200

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,  
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell  
 On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,  
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,  
 Such ruin intercept: Ten paces huge  
 He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee  
 His massy spear upstaid; as if on earth  
 Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,  
 Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,  
 Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seised 210  
 The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see  
 Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,  
 Presage of victory, and fierce desire  
 Of battle: Whereat Michael bid sound  
 The Arch-Angel trumpet; through the vast of Heaven  
 It sounded, and the faithful armies rung  
 Hosanna to the Highest: Nor stood at gaze  
 The adverse legions, nor less hideous joined  
 The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,  
 And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now 220  
 Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed  
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
 Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise  
 Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss  
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
 And flying vaulted either host with fire.

So under fiery cope together rushed  
 Both battles main, with ruinous assault  
 And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven 230  
 Resounded; and had Earth been then, all Earth  
 Had to her center shook. What wonder? when  
 Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought  
 On either side, the least of whom could wield  
 These elements, and arm him with the force  
 Of all their regions: How much more of power  
 Army against army numberless to raise  
 Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,  
 Though not destroy, their happy native seat;  
 Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent, 240

From his strong hold of Heaven, high over-ruled  
 And limited their might; though numbered such  
 As each divided legion might have seemed  
 A numerous host; in strength each armed hand  
 A legion; led in fight, yet leader seemed  
 Each warrior single as in chief, expert  
 When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway  
 Of battle, open when, and when to close  
 The ridges of grim war: No thought of flight,  
 None of retreat, no unbecoming deed 250  
 That argued fear; each on himself relied,  
 As only in his arm the moment lay  
 Of victory: Deeds of eternal fame  
 Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread  
 That war and various; sometimes on firm ground  
 A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,  
 Tormented all the air; all air seemed then  
 Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale  
 The battle hung; till Satan, who that day  
 Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms 260  
 No equal, ranging through the dire attack  
 Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length  
 Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled  
 Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway  
 Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down  
 Wide-wasting; such destruction to withstand  
 He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb  
 Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,  
 A vast circumference. At his approach  
 The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil 270  
 Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end  
 Intestine war in Heaven, the arch-foe subdued  
 Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown  
 And visage all inflamed first thus began.

Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,  
 Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest  
 These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,  
 Though heaviest by just measure on thyself,  
 And thy adherents: How hast thou disturbed 280  
 Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought

Misery, uncreated till the crime  
 Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled  
 Thy malice into thousands, once upright  
 And faithful, now proved false! But think not here  
 To trouble holy rest; Heaven casts thee out  
 From all her confines. Heaven, the seat of bliss,  
 Brooks not the works of violence and war.

Hence then, and evil go with thee along, 290  
 Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell;  
 Thou and thy wicked crew! there mingle broils,  
 Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,  
 Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,  
 Precipitate thee with augmented pain.

So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus  
 The Adversary. Nor think thou with wind  
 Of aery threats to awe whom yet with deeds  
 Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these 300  
 To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise  
 Unvanquished, easier to transact with me  
 That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats  
 To chase me hence? err not, that so shall end  
 The strife which thou callest evil, but we style  
 The strife of glory; which we mean to win,  
 Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell  
 Thou fablest; here however to dwell free,  
 If not to reign: Mean while thy utmost force,  
 And join him named Almighty to thy aid, 310  
 I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.

They ended parle, and both addressed for fight  
 Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue  
 Of Angels, can relate, or to what things  
 Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift  
 Human imagination to such highth  
 Of Godlike power? for likest Gods they seemed,  
 Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,  
 Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven. 320

Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air  
 Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields  
 Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood

In horreur: From each hand with speed retired,  
 Where erst was thickest fight, the angelick throng,  
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind  
 Of such commotion; such as, to set forth  
 Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke, 330  
 Among the constellations war were sprung,  
 Two planets, rushing from aspect malign  
 Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky  
 Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.

Together both with next to almighty arm  
 Up-lifted imminent, one stroke they aimed  
 That might determine, and not need repeat,  
 As not of power at once; nor odds appeared  
 In might or swift prevention: But the sword  
 Of Michael from the armoury of God 340  
 Was given him tempered so, that neither keen  
 Nor solid might resist that edge: it met  
 The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite  
 Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor staid,  
 But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared  
 All his right side: Then Satan first knew pain,  
 And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore  
 The griding sword with discontinuous wound  
 Passed through him: But the ethereal substance closed,  
 Not long divisible; and from the gash 350  
 A stream of necturous humour issuing flowed  
 Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,  
 And all his armour stained, ere while so bright.

Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run  
 By Angels many and strong, who interposed  
 Defence, while others bore him on their shields  
 Back to his chariot, where it stood retired  
 From off the files of war: There they him laid  
 Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame, 360  
 To find himself not matchless, and his pride  
 Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath  
 His confidence to equal God in power.

Yet soon he healed; for Spirits that live throughout  
 Vital in every part, not as frail man  
 In entrails, heart of head, liver or reins,

Cannot but by annihilating die;  
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound  
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air: 370  
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,  
 All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,  
 They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size  
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

Mean while in other parts like deeds deserved  
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,  
 And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array  
 Of Moloch, furious king; who him defied, 380  
 And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound  
 Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven  
 Refrained his tongue blasphemous; but anon  
 Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms  
 And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing  
 Uriel, and Raphael, his vaunting foe,  
 Though huge, and in a rock of diamond armed,  
 Vanquished Adramelech, and Asmadai,  
 Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods  
 Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in their flight,  
 Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail. 390

Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy  
 The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow  
 Ariel, and Arioch, and the violence  
 Of Ramiel scorched and blasted, overthrew.

I might relate of thousands, and their names  
 Eternize here on earth; but those elect  
 Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven, 400  
 Seek not the praise of men: The other sort,  
 In might though wonderous and in acts of war,  
 Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom  
 Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,  
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.

For strength from truth divided, and from just,  
 Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise  
 And ignominy; yet to glory aspires  
 Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:  
 Therefore eternal silence be their doom. 410

And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,  
 With many an inroad gored; deformed rout  
 Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground  
 With shivered armour strown, and on a heap  
 Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,  
 And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoiled  
 O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanick host  
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised,  
 Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain, 420  
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought  
 By sin of disobedience; till that hour  
 Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.

Far otherwise the inviolable Saints,  
 In cubick phalanx firm, advanced entire,  
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed;  
 Such high advantages their innocence  
 Gave them above their foes; not to have sinned,  
 Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood 430  
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained  
 By wound, though from their place by violence moved,  
 Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven  
 Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,  
 And silence on the odious din of war:  
 Under her cloudy covert both retired,  
 Victor and vanquished: On the foughten field  
 Michael and his Angels prevalent  
 Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,  
 Cherubick waving fires: On the other part, 440  
 Satan with his rebellious disappeared,  
 Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest,  
 His potentates to council called by night;  
 And in the midst thus undismayed began.

O now in danger tried, now known in arms  
 Not to be overpowered, Companions dear,  
 Found worthy not of liberty alone,  
 Too mean pretence! but what we more affect,  
 Honour, dominion, glory, and renown; 450  
 Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight,  
 (And if one day, why not eternal days?)  
 What Heaven's Lord had powerfullest to send

Against us from about his throne, and judged  
 Sufficient to subdue us to his will,  
 But proves not so: Then fallible, it seems,  
 Of future we may deem him, though till now  
 Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed,  
 Some disadvantage we endured and pain,  
 Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned; 460  
 Since now we find this our empyreal form  
 Incapable of mortal injury,  
 Imperishable, and, though pierced with wound,  
 Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.  
 Of evil then so small as easy think  
 The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,  
 Weapons more violent, when next we meet,  
 May serve to better us, and worse our foes,  
 Or equal what between us made the odds, 470  
 In nature none: If other hidden cause  
 Left them superiour, while we can preserve  
 Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,  
 Due search and consultation will disclose.  
 He sat; and in the assembly next upstood  
 Nisroch, of Principalities the prime;  
 As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,  
 Sore toiled, his riven arms to havock hewn,  
 And cloudy in aspect thus answering spake. 480  
 Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free  
 Enjoyment of our right as Gods; yet hard  
 For Gods, and too unequal work we find,  
 Against unequal arms to fight in pain,  
 Against unpained, impassive; from which evil  
 Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails  
 Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain  
 Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands  
 Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well 490  
 Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,  
 But live content, which is the calmest life:  
 But pain is perfect misery, the worst  
 Of evils, and, excessive, overturns  
 All patience. He, who therefore can invent  
 With what more forcible we may offend

Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm  
 Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves  
 No less than for deliverance what we owe. 500

Whereto with look composed Satan replied.  
 Not uninvented that, which thou aright  
 Believest so main to our success, I bring.  
 Which of us who beholds the bright surface  
 Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,  
 This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned  
 With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems, and gold;  
 Whose eye so superficially surveys 510  
 These things, as not to mind from whence they grow  
 Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,  
 Of spiritous and fiery spume, till touched  
 With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth  
 So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?  
 These in their dark nativity the deep  
 Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame;  
 Which, into hollow engines, long and round,  
 Thick rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire  
 Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth 520  
 From far, with thundering noise, among our foes  
 Such implements of mischief, as shall dash  
 To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands  
 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed  
 The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.  
 Nor long shall be our labour; yet ere dawn,  
 Effect shall end our wish. Mean while revive;  
 Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined  
 Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired. 530

He ended, and his words their drooping cheer  
 Enlightened, and their languished hope revived.  
 The invention all admired, and each, how he  
 To be the inventer missed; so easy it seemed  
 Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought  
 Impossible: Yet, haply, of thy race  
 In future days, if malice should abound,  
 Some one intent on mischief, or inspired 540



With devilish machination, might devise  
 Like instrument to plague the sons of men  
 For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.

Forthwith from council to the work they flew;  
 None arguing stood; innumerable hands  
 Were ready; in a moment up they turned  
 Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath  
 The originals of nature in their crude  
 Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam 550  
 They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art,  
 Concocted and adusted they reduced  
 To blackest grain, and into store conveyed:  
 Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this earth  
 Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,  
 Whereof to found their engines and their balls  
 Of missive ruin; part incentive reed  
 Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.

So all ere day-spring, under conscious night, 560  
 Secret they finished, and in order set,  
 With silent circumspection, unespied.

Now when fair morn orient in Heaven appeared,  
 Up rose the victor-Angels, and to arms  
 The matin trumpet sung: In arms they stood  
 Of golden panoply, refulgent host,  
 Soon banded; others from the dawning hills  
 Look round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,  
 Each quarter to descry the distant foe, 570  
 Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,  
 In motion or in halt: Him soon they met  
 Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow  
 But firm battalion; back with speediest sail  
 Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,  
 Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried.

Arm, Warriours, arm for fight; the foe at hand,  
 Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit  
 This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud 580  
 He comes, and settled in his face I see  
 Sad resolution, and secure: Let each  
 His adamantine coat gird well, and each

Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orb'd shield,  
 Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,  
 If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,  
 But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.

So warn'd he them, aware themselves, and soon  
 In order, quit of all impediment; 590  
 Instant without disturb they took alarm,  
 And onward mov'd embattled: When behold!  
 Not distant far with heavy pace the foe  
 Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube  
 Training his devilish enginery, impaled  
 On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,  
 To hide the fraud. At interview both stood  
 A while; but suddenly at head appear'd  
 Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud.

600

Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;  
 That all may see who hate us, how we seek  
 Peace and composure, and with open breast  
 Stand ready to receive them, if they like  
 Our overture; and turn not back perverse:  
 But that I doubt; however witness, Heaven!  
 Heaven, witness thou anon! while we discharge  
 Freely our part: ye, who appointed stand  
 Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch  
 What we propound, and loud that all may hear! 610  
 So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce  
 Had ended; when to right and left the front  
 Divided, and to either flank retir'd:  
 Which to our eyes discover'd, new and strange,  
 A triple mounted row of pillars laid  
 On wheels (for like to pillars most they seem'd,  
 Or hollow'd bodies made of oak or fir,  
 With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled.)  
 Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths  
 With hideous orifice gap'd on us wide, 620  
 Portending hollow truce: At each behind  
 A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed  
 Stood waving tipt with fire; while we, suspense,  
 Collected stood within our thoughts amused,

Not long; for sudden all at once their reeds  
 Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied  
 With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,  
 But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,  
 From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar  
 Embowelled with outrageous noise the air, 630  
 And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul  
 Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail  
 Of iron globes; which, on the victor host  
 Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,  
 That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,  
 Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell  
 By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel rolled;  
 The sooner for their arms; unarmed, they might  
 Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift  
 By quick contraction or remove; but now 640  
 Foul dissipation followed, and forced rout;  
 Nor served it to relax their serried files.

What should they do? if on they rushed, repulse  
 Repeated, and indecent overthrow  
 Doubled, would render them yet more despised,  
 And to their foes a laughter; for in view  
 Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,  
 In posture to displode their second tire  
 Of thunder: Back defeated to return 650  
 They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,  
 And to his mates thus in derision called.

O Friends! why come not on these victors proud  
 Ere while they fierce were coming; and when we,  
 To entertain them fair with open front  
 And breast, (what could we more?) propounded terms  
 Of composition, straight they changed their minds,  
 Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,  
 As they would dance; yet for a dance they seemed 660  
 Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps  
 For joy of offered peace: But I suppose,  
 If our proposals once again were heard,  
 We should compel them to a quick result.

To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood.

Leader! the terms we sent were terms of weight,  
 Of hard contents, and full of force urged home;  
 Such as we might perceive amused them all, 670  
 And stumbled many: Who receives them right,  
 Had need from head to foot well understand;  
 Not understood, this gift they have besides,  
 They show us when our foes walk not upright.

So they among themselves in pleasant vein  
 Stood scoffing, hightened in their thoughts beyond  
 All doubt of victory: Eternal Might  
 To match with their inventions they presumed 680  
 So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn,  
 And all his host derided, while they stood  
 A while in trouble: But they stood not long;  
 Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms  
 Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.

Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,  
 Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed!)  
 Their arms away they threw, and to the hills  
 (For Earth hath this variety from Heaven 690  
 Of pleasure situate in hill and dale,)  
 Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew;  
 From their foundations loosening to and fro,  
 They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,  
 Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops  
 Up-lifting bore them in their hands: Amaze,  
 Be sure, and terrour, seized the rebel host,  
 When coming towards them so dread they saw  
 The bottom of the mountains upward turned;  
 Till on those cursed engines' triple-row  
 They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence 700  
 Under the weight of mountains buried deep;  
 Themselves invaded next, and on their heads  
 Main promontories flung, which in the air  
 Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed;  
 Their armour helped their harm, crushed in and bruised  
 Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain  
 Implacable, and many a dolorous groan;  
 Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind  
 Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,

Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown. 710

The rest, in imitation, to like arms  
 Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore:  
 So hills amid the air encountered hills,  
 Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire;  
 That under ground they fought in dismal shade;  
 Infernal noise! war seem'd a civil game  
 To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped  
 Upon confusion rose: And now all Heaven 720  
 Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread;  
 Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits  
 Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,  
 Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen  
 This tumult, and permitted all, advised:  
 That his great purpose he might so fulfil,  
 To honour his anointed Son avenged  
 Upon his enemies, and to declare  
 All power on him transferred: Whence to his Son,  
 The Assessour of his throne, he thus began. 730

Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved,  
 Son, in whose face invisible is beheld  
 Visibly, what by Deity I am;  
 And in whose hand what by decree I do,  
 Second Omnipotence! two days are past,  
 Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,  
 Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame  
 These disobedient: Sore hath been their fight,  
 As likeliest was, when two such foes met armed; 740  
 For to themselves I left them; and thou knowest,  
 Equal in their creation they were formed,  
 Save what sin hath impaired; which yet hath wrought  
 Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;  
 Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last  
 Endless, and no solution will be found:  
 War wearied hath performed what war can do,  
 And to disordered rage let loose the reins  
 With mountains, as with weapons, armed; which makes  
 Wild work in Heaven, and dangerous to the main. 750

Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;  
 For thee I have ordained it; and thus far  
 Have suffered, that the glory may be thine  
 Of ending this great war, since none but Thou  
 Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace  
 Immense I have transfused, that all may know  
 In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare;  
 And, this perverse commotion governed thus,  
 To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir  
 Of all things; to be Heir, and to be King 760  
 By sacred unction, thy deserved right.

Go then, Thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might;  
 Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels  
 That shake Heaven's basis, bring forth all my war,  
 My bow and thunder, my almighty arms  
 Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;  
 Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out  
 From all Heaven's bounds into the utter deep:  
 There let them learn, as likes them, to despise 770  
 God, and Messiah his anointed King.

He said, and on his Son with rays direct  
 Shone full; he all his Father full expressed  
 Ineffably into his face received;  
 And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake.

O Father, O Supreme of heavenly Thrones,  
 First, Highest, Holiest, Best; thou always seek'st  
 To glorify thy Son, I always thee, 780  
 As is most just: This I my glory account,  
 My exaltation, and my whole delight,  
 That thou, in me well pleased, declarest thy will  
 Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.

Scepter and power, thy giving, I assume,  
 And gladlier shall resign, when in the end  
 Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee  
 For ever; and in me all whom thou lovest:  
 But whom thou hatest, I hate, and can put on 790  
 Thy terrours, as I put thy mildness on,  
 Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,  
 Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled;

To their prepared ill mansion driven down,  
 To chains of darkness, and the undying worm;  
 That from thy just obedience could revolt,  
 Whom to obey is happiness entire.

Then shall thy Saints unmixed, and from the impure  
 Far separate, circling thy holy mount, 800  
 Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,  
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them Chief.

So said, he, o'er his scepter bowing, rose  
 From the right hand of Glory where he sat;  
 And the third sacred morn began to shine,  
 Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with whirlwind  
 sound

The chariot of Paternal Deity,  
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,  
 Itself instinct with Spirit, but convoyed 810  
 By four Cherubick shapes; four faces each  
 Had wonderous; as with stars, their bodies all  
 And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels  
 Of beryl, and careering fires between;  
 Over their heads a crystal firmament,  
 Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure  
 Amber, and colours of the showery arch.

He, in celestial panoply all armed  
 Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought, 820  
 Ascended; at his right hand Victory  
 Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow  
 And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored;  
 And from about him fierce effusion rolled  
 Of smoke, and bickering flame, and sparkles dire:  
 Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,  
 He onward came; far off his coming shone;  
 And twenty thousand (I their number heard)  
 Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen;  
 He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime 830  
 On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,  
 Illustrious far and wide; but by his own  
 First seen: Them unexpected joy surprised,  
 When the great ensign of Messiah blazed  
 Aloft by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven;

Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced  
 His army, circumfused on either wing,  
 Under their Head imbodyed all in one.

Before him Power Divine his way prepared; 840  
 At his command the uprooted hills retired  
 Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went  
 Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,  
 And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.

This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,  
 And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,  
 Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.

In heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell? 850  
 But to convince the proud what signs avail,  
 Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?  
 They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,  
 Grieving to see his glory, at the sight  
 Took envy; and, aspiring to his highth,  
 Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud  
 Weening to prosper, and at length prevail  
 Against God and Messiah, or to fall  
 In universal ruin last; and now  
 To final battle drew, disdainng flight, 860  
 Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God  
 To all his host on either hand thus spake.

Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,  
 Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest:  
 Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God  
 Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;  
 And as ye have received, so have ye done,  
 Invincibly: But of this cursed crew 870  
 The punishment to other hand belongs;  
 Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints:  
 Number to this day's work is not ordained,  
 Nor multitude; stand only, and behold  
 God's indignation on these godless poured  
 By me; not you, but me, they have despised,  
 Yet envied; against me is all their rage,  
 Because the Father, to whom in Heaven s'preme  
 Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains,



Hath honoured me, according to his will. 880

Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned;  
 That they may have their wish, to try with me  
 In battle which the stronger proves; they all,  
 Or I alone against them; since by strength  
 They measure all, of other excellence  
 Not emulous, nor care who them excels;  
 Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.

So spake the Son, and into terrour changed 890  
 His countenance too severe to be beheld,  
 And full of wrath bent on his enemies.

At once the Four spread out their starry wings  
 With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs  
 Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound  
 Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.

He on his impious foes right onward drove,  
 Gloomy as night; under his burning wheels  
 The stedfast empyrean shook throughout, 900  
 All but the throne itself of God. Full soon  
 Among them he arrived; in his right hand  
 Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent  
 Before him, such as in their souls infixed  
 Plagues: They, astonished, all resistance lost,  
 All courage; down their idle weapons dropt:  
 O'er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode  
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,  
 That wished the mountains now might be again 910  
 Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.

Nor less on either side tempestuous fell  
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four  
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels  
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;  
 One Spirit in them ruled; and every eye  
 Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire  
 Among the accursed, that withered all their strength,  
 And of their wonted vigour left them drained,  
 Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen. 920

Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked

His thunder in mid volley; for he meant  
 Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven:  
 The overthrown he raised, and as a herd  
 Of goats or timorous flock together thronged  
 Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued  
 With terrors, and with furies, to the bounds  
 And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide,  
 Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed 930  
 Into the wasteful deep: The monstrous sight  
 Struck them with horror backward, but far worse  
 Urged them behind: Headlong themselves they threw  
 Down from the verge of Heaven; eternal wrath  
 Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

Hell heard the unsufferable noise, Hell saw  
 Heaven ruining from Heaven, and would have fled  
 Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep  
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound. 940

Nine days they fell: Confounded Chaos roared,  
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall  
 Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout  
 Incumbered him with ruin: Hell at last  
 Yawning received them whole, and on them closed;  
 Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire  
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.

Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired 950  
 Her mural breach, returning whence it rolled.

Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes,  
 Messiah his triumphal chariot turned:  
 To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood  
 Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,  
 With jubilee advanced; and, as they went,  
 Shaded with branching palm, each Order bright,  
 Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,  
 Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given, 960  
 Worthiest to reign: He, celebrated, rode  
 Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts  
 And temple of his Mighty Father throned  
 On high; who into glory him received,  
 Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on Earth,  
At thy request, and that thou mayest beware  
By what is past, to thee I have revealed  
What might have else to human race been hid; 970  
The discord which befel, and war in Heaven  
Among the angelick Powers, and the deep fall  
Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled  
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,  
Who now is plotting how he may seduce  
Thee also from obedience, that, with him  
Bereaved of happiness, thou mayest partake  
His punishment, eternal misery;  
Which would be all his solace and revenge,  
As a despite done against the Most High, 980  
Thee once to gain companion of his woe.  
But listen not to his temptations, warn  
Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard,  
By terrible example, the reward  
Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,  
Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress.

## BOOK VII

Descend from Heaven, Urania, by that name  
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine  
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,  
Above the flight of Pegasean wing!  
The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou  
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top  
Of old Olympus dwellest; but, heavenly-born,  
Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed,  
Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,  
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play 10  
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased  
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee  
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,  
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,  
Thy tempering: with like safety guided down  
Return me to my native element:  
Lest from this flying steed unreined, (as once  
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime,)  
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,  
Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn. 20  
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound  
Within the visible diurnal sphere;  
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,  
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged  
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,  
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;  
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,  
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou  
Visitest my slumbers nightly, or when morn 30

Purples the east: still govern thou my song,  
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance  
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race  
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard  
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears  
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned  
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend  
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores: 40  
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.

Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael,  
The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarned  
Adam, by dire example, to beware  
Apostasy, by what befel in Heaven  
To those apostates; lest the like befall  
In Paradise to Adam or his race,  
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,  
If they transgress, and slight that sole command, 50  
So easily obeyed amid the choice

Of all tastes else to please their appetite,  
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,  
The story heard attentive, and was filled  
With admiration and deep muse, to hear  
Of things so high and strange; things, to their thought  
So unimaginable, as hate in Heaven,  
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,  
With such confusion: but the evil, soon  
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those 60  
From whom it sprung; impossible to mix

With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed  
The doubts that in his heart arose: and now  
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know  
What nearer might concern him, how this world  
Of Heaven and Earth conspicuous first began;  
When, and whereof created; for what cause;  
What within Eden, or without, was done  
Before his memory; as one whose drouth  
Yet scarce allayed still eyes the current stream, 70  
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,  
Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest.

Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,  
 Far differing from this world, thou hast revealed,  
 Divine interpreter! by favour sent  
 Down from the empyrean, to forewarn  
 Us timely of what might else have been our loss,  
 Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;  
 For which to the infinitely Good we owe 80  
 Immortal thanks, and his admonishment  
 Receive, with solemn purpose to observe  
 Immutably his sovran will, the end  
 Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed  
 Gently, for our instruction, to impart  
 Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned  
 Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seemed,  
 Deign to descend now lower, and relate  
 What may no less perhaps avail us known,  
 How first began this Heaven which we behold 90  
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned  
 Innumerable; and this which yields or fills  
 All space, the ambient air wide interfused  
 Embracing round this floried Earth; what cause  
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest  
 Through all eternity, so late to build  
 In Chaos; and the work begun, how soon  
 Absolved; if unforbid thou mayest unfold  
 What we, not to explore the secrets ask  
 Of his eternal empire, but the more 100  
 To magnify his works, the more we know.

And the great light of day yet wants to run  
 Much of his race though steep; suspense in Heaven,  
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears,  
 And longer will delay to hear thee tell  
 His generation, and the rising birth  
 Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:  
 Or if the star of evening and the moon  
 Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring, 110  
 Silence; and Sleep, listening to thee, will watch;  
 Or we can bid his absence, till thy song  
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought:

And thus the Godlike Angel answered mild.

This also thy request, with caution asked,  
Obtain; though to recount almighty works  
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice, 120  
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?

Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve  
To glorify the Maker, and infer  
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld  
Thy hearing; such commission from above  
I have received, to answer thy desire  
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond, abstain  
To ask; nor let thine own inventions hope  
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,  
Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night; 130  
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven:  
Enough is left besides to search and know.

But knowledge is as food, and needs no less  
Her temperance over appetite, to know  
In measure what the mind may well contain;  
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns  
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

Know then, that, after Lucifer from Heaven 140  
(So call him, brighter once amidst the host  
Of Angels, than that star the stars among,)  
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep  
Into his place, and the great Son returned  
Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent  
Eternal Father from his throne beheld  
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake.

At least our envious Foe hath failed, who thought 150  
All like himself rebellious, by whose aid  
This inaccessible high strength, the seat  
Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,  
He trusted to have seised, and into fraud  
Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:  
Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,  
Their station; Heaven, yet populous, retains  
Number sufficient to possess her realms  
Though wide, and this high temple to frequent

With ministeries due, and solemn rites:  
 But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm 160  
 Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven,  
 My damage fondly deemed, I can repair  
 That detriment, if such it be to lose  
 Self-lost; and in a moment will create  
 Another world, out of one man a race  
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,  
 Not here; till, by degrees of merit raised,  
 They open to themselves at length the way  
 Up hither, under long obedience tried;  
 And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth, 170  
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.

Mean while inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven;  
 And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee  
 This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!  
 My overshadowing Spirit and Might with thee  
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep  
 Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth;  
 Boundless the Deep, because I Am who fill  
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space. 180

Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire,  
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
 To act or not, Necessity and Chance  
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.

So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake  
 His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.

Immediate are the acts of God, more swift 190  
 Than time or motion, but to human ears  
 Cannot without process of speech be told,  
 So told as earthly notion can receive.

Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven,  
 When such was heard declared the Almighty's will;  
 Glory they sung to the Most High, good will  
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace;  
 Glory to Him, whose just avenging ire  
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight 200  
 And the habitations of the just; to Him  
 Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordained



Good out of evil to create; instead  
 Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring  
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse  
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.

So sang the Hierarchies: Mean while the Son  
 On his great expedition now appeared,  
 Girt with Omnipotence, with radiance crowned 210  
 Of Majesty Divine; sapience and love  
 Immense, and all his Father in him shone.

About his chariot numberless were poured  
 Cherub, and Seraph, Potentates, and Thrones,  
 And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged  
 From the armoury of God; where stand of old  
 Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged  
 Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,  
 Celestial equipage; and now came forth 220  
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,  
 Attendant on their Lord: Heaven opened wide  
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound  
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
 The King of Glory, in his powerful Word  
 And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.

On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore  
 They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss  
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild, 230  
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds  
 And surging waves, as mountains, to assault  
 Heaven's highth, and with the center mix the pole.

Silence, ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, peace,  
 Said then the Omnifick Word; your discord end!  
 Nor staid; but, on the wings of Cherubim  
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode  
 Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;  
 For Chaos heard his voice: Him all his train 240  
 Followed in bright procession, to behold  
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.

Then staid the fervid wheels, and in his hand  
 He took the golden compasses, prepared  
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe

This universe, and all created things:  
 One foot he centered, and the other turned  
 Round through the vast profundity obscure;  
 And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,                   250  
 This be thy just circumference, O World!  
 Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,  
 Matter unformed and void: Darkness profound  
 Covered the abyss: but on the watery calm  
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,  
 And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth  
 Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purged  
 The black tartareous cold infernal dregs,  
 Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed  
 Like things to like; the rest to several place                   260  
 Disparted, and between spun out the air;  
 And Earth self-balanced on her center hung.

Let there be light, said God; and forthwith Light  
 Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
 Sprung from the deep; and from her native east  
 To journey through the aery gloom began,  
 Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
 Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
 Sojourned the while. God saw the light was good;                   270  
 And light from darkness by the hemisphere  
 Divided: light the Day, and darkness Night,  
 He named. Thus was the first day even and morn:  
 Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung  
 By the celestial quires, when orient light  
 Exhaling first from darkness they beheld;  
 Birth-day of Heaven and Earth; with joy and shout  
 The hollow universal orb they filled,  
 And touched their golden harps, and hymning praised  
 God and his works; Creator him they sung,                   280  
 Both when first evening was, and when first morn.

Again, God said, Let there be firmament  
 Amid the waters, and let it divide  
 The waters from the waters; and God made  
 The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,  
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused  
 In circuit to the uttermost convex

Of this great round; partition firm and sure,  
 The waters underneath from those above 290  
 Dividing: for as earth, so he the world  
 Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide  
 Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule  
 Of Chaos far removed; lest fierce extremes  
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:  
 And Heaven he named the Firmament: So even  
 And morning chorus sung the second day.

The Earth was formed, but in the womb as yet  
 Of waters, embryo immature involved, 300  
 Appeared not: over all the face of Earth  
 Main ocean flowed, not idle; but, with warm  
 Prolifick humour softening all her globe,  
 Fermented the great mother to conceive,  
 Sate with genial moisture; when God said,  
 Be gathered now ye waters under Heaven  
 Into one place, and let dry land appear.

Immediately the mountains huge appear  
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave 310  
 Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky:  
 So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low  
 Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,  
 Capacious bed of waters: Thither they  
 Hasted with glad precipitance, uprolled,  
 As drops on dust conglobing from the dry:  
 Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,  
 For haste; such flight the great command impressed  
 On the swift floods: As armies at the call

Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard) 320  
 Troop to their standard; so the watery throng,  
 Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,  
 If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,  
 Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill;  
 But they, or under ground, or circuit wide  
 With serpent error wandering, found their way,  
 And on the washy oose deep channels wore;  
 Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,  
 All but within those banks, where rivers now  
 Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train. 330

The dry land, Earth; and the great receptacle  
 Of congregated waters, he called Seas:  
 And saw that it was good; and said, Let the Earth  
 Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,  
 And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,  
 Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.

He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then  
 Desart and bare, unsightly, unadorned, 340  
 Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad  
 Her universal face with pleasant green;  
 Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered  
 Opening their various colours, and made gay  
 Her bosom, smelling sweet: and, these scarce blown,  
 Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept  
 The swelling gourd, up stood the corny reed  
 Embattled in her field, and the humble shrub,  
 And bush with frizzled hair implicit: Last  
 Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread 350  
 Their branches hung with copious fruit, or gemmed  
 Their blossoms: With high woods the hills were crowned;  
 With tufts the valleys, and each fountain side;  
 With borders long the rivers: that Earth now  
 Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where Gods might dwell,  
 Or wander with delight, and love to haunt  
 Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rained  
 Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground  
 None was; but from the Earth a dewy mist  
 Went up, and watered all the ground, and each 360  
 Plant of the field; which, ere it was in the Earth,  
 God made, and every herb, before it grew  
 On the green stem: God saw that it was good:  
 So even and morn recorded the third day.

Again the Almighty spake, Let there be lights  
 High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide  
 The day from night; and let them be for signs,  
 For seasons, and for days, and circling years;  
 And let them be for lights, as I ordain 370  
 Their office in the firmament of Heaven,  
 To give light on the Earth; and it was so.

And God made two great lights, great for their use

To Man, the greater to have rule by day,  
 The less by night, altern; and made the stars,  
 And set them in the firmament of Heaven  
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day  
 In their vicissitude, and rule the night,  
 And light from darkness to divide. God saw, 380  
 Surveying his great work, that it was good:  
 For of celestial bodies first the sun  
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,  
 Though of ethereal mould: then formed the moon  
 Globose, and every magnitude of stars,  
 And sowed with stars the Heaven, thick as a field:  
 Of light by far the greater part he took,  
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed  
 In the sun's orb, made porous to receive  
 And drink the liquid light; firm to retain 390  
 Her gathered beams, great palace now of light.

Hither, as to their fountain, other stars  
 Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,  
 And hence the morning-planet gilds her horns;  
 By tincture or reflection they augment  
 Their small peculiar, though from human sight  
 So far remote, with diminution seen,  
 First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,  
 Regent of day, and all the horizon round 400  
 Invested with bright rays, jocund to run  
 His longitude through Heaven's high road; the gray  
 Dawn, and the Pleiades, before him danced,  
 Shedding sweet influence: Less bright the moon,  
 But opposite in levelled west was set,  
 His mirrour, with full face borrowing her light  
 From him; for other light she needed none  
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps  
 Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,  
 Revolved on Heaven's great axle, and her reign 410  
 With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,  
 With thousand thousand stars, that then appeared  
 Spangling the hemisphere: Then first adorned  
 With their bright luminaries that set and rose,  
 Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters generate  
 Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul:  
 And let fowl fly above the Earth, with wings  
 Displayed on the open firmament of Heaven. 420

And God created the great whales, and each  
 Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously  
 The waters generated by their kinds;  
 And every bird of wing after his kind;  
 And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying.

Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,  
 And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;  
 And let the fowl be multiplied, on the Earth. 430

Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,  
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals  
 Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,  
 Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft  
 Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,  
 Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through groves  
 Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,  
 Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold;  
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend 440

Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food  
 In jointed armour watch: on smooth the seal  
 And bended dolphins play: part huge of bulk  
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,  
 Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,  
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep  
 Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,  
 And seems a moving land; and at his gills  
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea. 450

Mean while the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,  
 Their brood as numerous hatch, from the egg that soon  
 Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed  
 Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge  
 They summed their pens; and, soaring the air sublime,  
 With clang despised the ground, under a cloud  
 In prospect; there the eagle and the stork  
 On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build:  
 Part loosely wing the region, part more wise

In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way, 460  
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth  
 Their aery caravan, high over seas  
 Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing  
 Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane  
 Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air  
 Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes:  
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song  
 Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings  
 Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale  
 Ceased warbling, but all night tun'd her soft lays: 470  
 Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed  
 Their downy breast; the swan with arched neck,  
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows  
 Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit  
 The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower  
 The mid aerial sky: Others on ground  
 Walked firm; the crested cock whose clarion sounds  
 The silent hours, and the other whose gay train  
 Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue  
 Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus 480  
 With fish replenished, and the air with fowl,  
 Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.  
  
 The sixth, and of creation last, arose  
 With evening harps and matin; when God said,  
 Let the Earth bring forth soul living in her kind,  
 Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the Earth,  
 Each in their kind. The Earth obeyed, and straight  
 Opening her fertile womb teemed at a birth  
 Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms, 490  
 Limbed and full grown: Out of the ground up rose,  
 As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons  
 In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;  
 Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked:  
 The cattle in the fields and meadows green:  
 Those rare and solitary, these in flocks  
 Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.  
  
 The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared  
 The tawny lion, pawing to get free 500  
 His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,

And rampant shakes his brinded mane; the ounce,  
 The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole  
 Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw  
 In hillocks: The swift stag from under ground  
 Bore up his branching head: Scarce from his mould  
 Behemoth biggest born of earth upheaved  
 His vastness: Fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,  
 As plants: Ambiguous between sea and land  
 The river-horse, and scaly crocodile. 510

At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,  
 Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans  
 For wings, and smallest lineaments exact  
 In all the liveries decked of summer's pride  
 With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:  
 These, as a line, their long dimension drew,  
 Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all  
 Minims of nature; some of serpent-kind,  
 Wonderous in length and corpulence, involved 520  
 Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept  
 The parsimonious emmet, provident  
 Of future; in small room large heart enclosed;  
 Pattern of just equality perhaps  
 Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes  
 Of commonalty: Swarming next appeared  
 The female bee, that feeds her husband drone  
 Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells  
 With honey stored: The rest are numberless,  
 And thou their natures knowest, and gavest them names, 530  
 Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown  
 The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,  
 Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes  
 And hairy mane terrifick, though to thee  
 Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.

Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled  
 Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand  
 First wheeled their course: Earth in her rich attire  
 Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth, 540  
 By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,  
 Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remained:  
 There wanted yet the master-work, the end



Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone  
 And brute as other creatures, but endued  
 With sanctity of reason, might erect  
 His stature, and upright with front serene  
 Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence  
 Magnanimous to correspond with Heaven,  
 But grateful to acknowledge whence his good 550  
 Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes  
 Directed in devotion, to adore  
 And worship God Supreme, who made him chief  
 Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent  
 Eternal Father (for where is not he  
 Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake.

Let us make now Man in our image, Man  
 In our similitude, and let them rule  
 Over the fish and fowl of sea and air, 560  
 Beast of the field, and over all the Earth,  
 And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.

This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,  
 Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed  
 The breath of life; in his own image he  
 Created thee, in the image of God  
 Express; and thou becamest a living soul.

Male he created thee; but thy consort 570  
 Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said,  
 Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;  
 Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold  
 Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,  
 And every living thing that moves on the Earth.

Wherever thus created, for no place  
 Is yet distinct by name, thence, as thou knowest,  
 He brought thee into this delicious grove,  
 This garden, planted with the trees of God, 580  
 Delectable both to behold and taste;  
 And freely all their pleasant fruit for food  
 Gave thee; all sorts are here that all the Earth yields,  
 Variety without end; but of the tree,  
 Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,  
 Thou mayest not; in the day thou eatest, thou diest;

Death is the penalty imposed; beware,  
 And govern well thy appetite; lest Sin  
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death.

590

Here finished he, and all that he had made  
 Viewed, and behold all was entirely good;  
 So even and morn accomplished the sixth day:  
 Yet not till the Creator from his work  
 Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,  
 Up to the Heaven of Heavens, his high abode;  
 Thence to behold this new created world,  
 The addition of his empire, how it showed  
 In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,  
 Answering his great idea. Up he rode  
 Followed with acclamation, and the sound  
 Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned  
 Angelick harmonies: The earth, the air  
 Resounded, (thou rememberest, for thou heardest,)  
 The heavens and all the constellations rung,  
 The planets in their station listening stood,  
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.

600

Open, ye everlasting gates! they sung,  
 Open, ye Heavens! your living doors; let in  
 The great Creator from his work returned  
 Magnificent, his six days work, a World;  
 Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign  
 To visit oft the dwellings of just men,  
 Delighted; and with frequent intercourse  
 Thither will send his winged messengers  
 On errands of supernal grace. So sung  
 The glorious train ascending: He through Heaven,  
 That opened wide her blazing portals, led  
 To God's eternal house direct the way;  
 A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold  
 And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,  
 Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,  
 Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest  
 Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh  
 Evening arose in Eden, for the sun  
 Was set, and twilight from the east came on,

610

620

Forerunning night; when at the holy mount  
 Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne  
 Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure, 630  
 The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down  
 With his great Father; for he also went  
 Invisible, yet staid, (such privilege  
 Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained,  
 Author and End of all things; and, from work  
 Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh day,  
 As resting on that day from all his work,  
 But not in silence holy kept: the harp  
 Had work and rested not; the solemn pipe,  
 And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop, 640  
 All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,  
 Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice  
 Choral or unison: of incense clouds,  
 Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.  
 Creation and the six days acts they sung:  
 Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite  
 Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue  
 Relate thee! Greater now in thy return  
 Than from the giant Angels: Thee that day 650  
 Thy thunders magnified; but to create  
 Is greater than created to destroy.  
 Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound  
 Thy empire! Easily the proud attempt  
 Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,  
 Thou hast repelled; while impiously they thought  
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw  
 The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks  
 To lessen thee, against his purpose serves 660  
 To manifest the more thy might: his evil  
 Thou usest, and from thence createst more good.  
 Witness this new-made world, another Heaven  
 From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view  
 On the clear hyaline, the glassy sea;  
 Of amplitude almost immense, with stars  
 Numerous, and every star perhaps a world  
 Of destined habitation; but thou knowest  
 Their seasons: among these the seat of Men, 670

Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,  
Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy Men,  
And sons of Men, whom God hath thus advanced!  
Created in his image, there to dwell  
And worship him; and in reward to rule  
Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,  
And multiply a race of worshippers  
Holy and just: Thrice happy, if they know  
Their happiness, and persevere upright!  
So sung they, and the empyrean rung  
With halleluiahs: Thus was sabbath kept.

680

And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked  
How first this world and face of things began,  
And what before thy memory was done  
From the beginning; that posterity,  
Informed by thee, might know: If else thou seekest  
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.

## BOOK VIII

The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he a while  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;  
Then, as new waked, thus gratefully replied.

What thanks sufficient, or what recompence  
Equal, have I to render thee, divine  
Historian, who thus largely hast allayed  
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed  
This friendly condescension to relate 10  
Things, else by me unsearchable; now heard  
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,  
With glory attributed to the high  
Creator! Something yet of doubt remains,  
Which only thy solution can resolve.

When I behold this goodly frame, this world,  
Of Heaven and Earth consisting; and compute  
Their magnitudes; this Earth, a spot, a grain,  
An atom, with the firmament compared 20  
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll  
Spaces incomprehensible, (for such  
Their distance argues, and their swift return  
Diurnal,) merely to officiate light  
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,  
One day and night; in all her 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, 30

Greater so manifold, to this one use,  
 For aught appears, and on their orbs impose  
 Such restless revolution day by day  
 Repeated; while the sedentary Earth,  
 That better might with far less compass move,  
 Served by more noble than herself, attains  
 Her end without least motion, and receives,  
 As tribute, such a sumless journey brought  
 Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;  
 Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails. 40

So spake our sire, and by his countenance seemed  
 Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve  
 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,  
 With lowliness majestick from her seat,  
 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,  
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,  
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,  
 Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,  
 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew. 50

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
 Delighted, or not capable her ear  
 Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,  
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;  
 Her husband the relater she preferred  
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask  
 Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix  
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal caresses: from his lip 60  
 Not words alone pleased her. O! when meet now  
 Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?  
 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 proposed,  
 Benevolent and facile thus replied. 70

To ask or search, I blame thee not; for Heaven  
 Is as the book of God before thee set,

Wherein to read his wonderous works, and learn  
 His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years:  
 This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth,  
 Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest  
 From Man or Angel the great Architect  
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge  
 His secrets to be scanned by them who ought                    80  
 Rather admire; or, if they list to try  
 Conjecture, he his fabrick of the Heavens  
 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move  
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide  
 Hereafter; when they come to model Heaven  
 And calculate the stars, how they will wield  
 The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive  
 To save appearances; how gird the sphere  
 With centrick and eccentric scribbled o'er,  
 Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:                                    90  
 Already by thy reasoning this I guess,  
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest  
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve  
 The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,  
 Earth sitting still, when she alone receives  
 The benefit: Consider first, that great  
 Or bright infers not excellence: the Earth  
 Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,  
 Nor glistening, may of solid good contain  
 More plenty than the sun that barren shines;                    100  
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect,  
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,  
 His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.  
 Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries  
 Officious; but to thee, Earth's habitant.  
 And for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak  
 The Maker's high magnificence, who built  
 So spacious, and his line stretched out so far;                    110  
 That Man may know he dwells not in his own;  
 An edifice too large for him to fill,  
 Lodged in a small partition; and the rest  
 Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.  
 The swiftness of those circles attribute,

Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,  
 That to corporeal substances could add  
 Speed almost spiritual: Me thou thinkest not slow,      120  
 Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven  
 Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived  
 In Eden; distance inexpressible  
 By numbers that have name. But this I urge,  
 Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show  
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;  
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem  
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.

God, to remove his ways from human sense,  
 Placed Heaven from Earth so far, that earthly sight,      130  
 If it presume, might err in things too high,  
 And no advantage gain. What if the sun  
 Be center to the world; and other stars,  
 By his attractive virtue and their own  
 Incited, dance about him various rounds?  
 Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid,  
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,  
 In six thou seest; and what if seventh to these  
 The planet earth, so stedfast though she seem,  
 Insensibly three different motions move?      140  
 Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,  
 Moved contrary with thwart obliquities;  
 Or save the sun his labour, and that swift  
 Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,  
 Invisible else above all stars, the wheel  
 Of day and night; which needs not thy belief,  
 If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day  
 Travelling east, and with her part averse  
 From the sun's beam meet night, her other part  
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,      150  
 Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,  
 To the terrestrial moon be as a star,  
 Enlightening 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 softened soil for some to eat



Allotted there; and other suns perhaps,  
 With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,  
 Communicating male and female light; 160  
 Which two great sexes animate the world,  
 Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.

For such vast room in Nature unpossessed  
 By living soul, desert and desolate,  
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute  
 Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far  
 Down to this habitable, which returns  
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute. 170

But whether thus these things, or whether not;  
 But whether the sun, predominant in Heaven,  
 Rise on the earth; or earth rise on the sun;  
 He from the east his flaming road begin;  
 Or she from west her silent course advance,  
 With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps  
 On her soft axle, while she paces even,  
 And bears thee soft with the smooth hair along;  
 Sollicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;  
 Leave them to God above; him serve, and fear! 180

Of other creatures, as him pleases best,  
 Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou  
 In what he gives to thee, this Paradise  
 And thy fair Eve; Heaven is for thee too high  
 To know what passes there; be lowly wise:  
 Think only what concerns thee, and thy being;  
 Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there  
 Live, in what state, condition, or degree;  
 Contented that thus far hath been revealed  
 Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven. 190

To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied.  
 How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure  
 Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene!  
 And, freed from intricacies, taught to live  
 The easiest way; nor with perplexing thoughts  
 To interrupt the sweet of life, from which  
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,  
 And not molest us; unless we ourselves 200

Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove  
 Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;  
 Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn,  
 That, not to know at large of things remote  
 From use, obscure and subtle; but, to know  
 That which before us lies in daily life,  
 Is the prime wisdom: What is more, is fume,  
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence: 210  
 And renders us, in things that most concern,  
 Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.

Therefore from this high pitch let us descend  
 A lower flight, and speak of things at hand  
 Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise  
 Of something not unseasonable to ask,  
 By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.

Thee I have heard relating what was done 220  
 Ere my remembrance: now, hear me relate  
 My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;  
 And day is not yet spent; till then thou seest  
 How subtly to detain thee I devise;  
 Inviting thee to hear while I relate;  
 Fond! were it not in hope of thy reply:  
 For, while I sit with thee, I seem in Heaven;  
 And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear  
 Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst  
 And hunger both, from labour, at the hour 230  
 Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,  
 Though pleasant; but thy words, with grace divine  
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.

To whom thus Raphael answered heavenly meek.

Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,  
 Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee  
 Abundantly his gifts hath also poured  
 Inward and outward both, his image fair: 240  
 Speaking, or mute, all comeliness and grace  
 Attends thee; and each word, each motion, forms;  
 Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth  
 Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire

Gladly into the ways of God with Man:  
 For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set  
 On Man his equal love: Say therefore on;  
 For I that day was absent, as befel,  
 Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,  
 Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell; 250  
 Squared in full legion (such command we had)  
 To see that none thence issued forth a spy,  
 Or enemy, while God was in his work;  
 Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,  
 Destruction with creation might have mixed.  
 Not that they durst without his leave attempt;  
 But us he sends upon his high behests  
 For state, as Sovran King; and to inure  
 Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut, 260  
 The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;  
 But long ere our approaching heard within  
 Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,  
 Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.  
 Glad we returned up to the coasts of light  
 Ere sabbath-evening: so we had in charge.  
 But thy relation now; for I attend,  
 Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine. 270  
 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  
 Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,  
 Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,  
 In balmy sweat; which with his beams the sun  
 Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed. 280  
 Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,  
 And gazed a while the ample sky; till, raised  
 By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,  
 As thitherward endeavouring, and upright  
 Stood on my feet: about me round I saw  
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
 And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,  
 Creatures that lived and moved, and walked, or flew;

Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled; 290  
 With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.

Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
 Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
 With supple joints, as lively vigour led:  
 But who I was, or where, or from what cause,  
 Knew not; to speak I tried, and forthwith spake;  
 My tongue obeyed, and readily could name  
 Whate'er I saw. Thou Sun, said I, fair light,  
 And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay, 300  
 Ye Hills, and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plains,  
 And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,  
 Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?—  
 Not of myself;—by some great Maker then,  
 In goodness and in power pre-eminent:  
 Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,  
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,  
 And feel that I am happier than I know.—  
 While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,  
 From where I first drew air, and first beheld 310  
 This happy light; when, answer none returned,  
 On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,  
 Pensive I sat me down: There gentle sleep  
 First found me, and with soft oppression seized  
 My droued sense, untroubled, though I thought  
 I then was passing to my former state  
 Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:  
 When suddenly stood at my head a dream,  
 Whose inward apparition gently moved  
 My fancy to believe I yet had being, 320  
 And lived: One came, methought, of shape divine,  
 And said, "Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,  
 First Man, of men innumerable ordained  
 First Father! called by thee, I come thy guide  
 To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared."  
 So saying, by the hand he took me raised,  
 And over fields and waters, as in air  
 Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up  
 A woody mountain; whose high top was plain,  
 A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees 330

Planted, with walks, and bowers; that what I saw  
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree,  
 Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye  
 Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite  
 To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found  
 Before mine eyes all real, as the dream  
 Had lively shadowed: Here had new begun  
 My wandering, had not he, who was my guide  
 Up hither, from among the trees appeared,  
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe, 340  
 In adoration at his feet I fell  
 Submiss: He reared me, and "Whom thou soughtest I am,"  
 Said mildly, "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 eat:  
 Of every tree that in the garden grows  
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:  
 But of the tree whose operation brings 350  
 Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set  
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,  
 Amid the garden by the tree of life,  
 Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,  
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,  
 The day thou eatest thereof, my sole command  
 Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,  
 From that day mortal; and this happy state  
 Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world 360  
 Of woe and sorrow." Sternly he pronounced  
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds  
 Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice  
 Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect  
 Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed.

"Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth  
 To thee and to thy race I give; as lords  
 Possess it, and all things that therein live,  
 Or live in sea, or air; beast, fish, and fowl. 370

In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold  
 After their kinds; I bring them to receive

From thee their names, and pay thee fealty  
 With low subjection; understand the same  
 Of fish within their watery residence,  
 Not hither summoned, since they cannot change  
 Their element, to draw the thinner air."  
 As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold  
 Approaching two and two; these cowering low  
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing. 380

I named them, as they passed, and understood  
 Their nature, with such knowledge God endued  
 My sudden apprehension: But in these  
 I found not what methought I wanted still;  
 And to the heavenly Vision thus presumed.

O, by what name, for thou above all these,  
 Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,  
 Surpassest far my naming; how may I 390  
 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 me  
 I see not who partakes. In solitude  
 What happiness, who can enjoy alone,  
 Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?  
 Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,  
 As with a smile more brightened, thus replied.

400

What callest thou solitude? Is not the Earth  
 With various living creatures, and the air  
 Replenished, and all these at thy command  
 To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not  
 Their language and their ways? They also know,  
 And reason not contemptibly: With these  
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.

So spake the Universal Lord, and seemed  
 So ordering: I, with leave of speech implored, 410  
 And humble deprecation, thus replied.

Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power;  
 My Maker, be propitious while I speak.

Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,

And these inferiour far beneath me set?  
 Among unequals what society  
 Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?  
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due 420  
 Given and received; but, in disparity  
 The one intense, the other still remiss,  
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove  
 Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak  
 Such as I seek, fit to participate  
 All rational delight: wherein the brute  
 Cannot be human consort: They rejoice  
 Each with their kind, lion with lioness;  
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:  
 Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl 430  
 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;  
 Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.  
 Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeas'd.  
 A nice and subtle happiness, I see,  
 Thou to thyself propos'est, in the choice  
 Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste  
 No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary. 440  
 What thinkest thou then of me, and this my state?  
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed  
 Of happiness, or not? who am alone  
 From all eternity; for none I know  
 Second to me or like, equal much less.  
 How have I then with whom to hold converse,  
 Save with the creatures which I made, and those  
 To me inferiour, infinite descents  
 Beneath what other creatures are to thee? 450  
 He ceased; I lowly answer'd. To attain  
 The highth and depth of thy eternal ways  
 All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things!  
 Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee  
 Is no deficiencie 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 propagate, already Infinite;

And through all numbers absolute, though One: 460  
 But Man by number is to manifest  
 His single imperfection, and beget  
 Like of his like, his image multiplied,  
 In unity defective; which requires  
 Collateral love, and dearest amity.  
 Thou in thy secrecy although alone,  
 Best with thyself accompanied, seekest not  
 Social communication; yet, so pleased,  
 Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt 470  
 Of union or communion, deified:  
 I, by conversing, cannot these erect  
 From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.  
 Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used  
 Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained  
 This answer from the gracious Voice Divine.  
 Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased;  
 And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone, 480  
 Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself;  
 Expressing well the spirit within thee free,  
 My image, not imparted to the brute;  
 Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee  
 Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike;  
 And be so minded still: I, ere thou spakest,  
 Knew it not good for Man to be alone;  
 And no such company as then thou sawest  
 Intended thee; for trial only brought,  
 To see how thou couldest judge of fit and meet: 490  
 What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,  
 Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,  
 Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.  
 He ended, or I heard no more; for now  
 My earthly by his heavenly overpowered,  
 Which it had long stood under, strained to the highth  
 In that celestial colloquy sublime,  
 As with an object that excels the sense  
 Dazzled and spent, sunk down; and sought repair 500  
 Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called  
 By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.



Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell  
 Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,  
 Abstract as in a trance, methought I saw,  
 Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape  
 Still glorious before whom awake I stood:  
 Who stooping opened my left side, and took  
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm, 510  
 And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,  
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed:  
 The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;  
 Under his forming hands a creature grew,  
 Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair,  
 That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now  
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained  
 And in her looks; which from that time infused  
 Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,  
 And into all things from her air inspired 520  
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.

She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked  
 To find her, or for ever to deplore  
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:  
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,  
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned  
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow  
 To make her amiable: On she came,  
 Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen, 530  
 And guided by his voice; nor uninformed  
 Of nuptial sanctity, and marriage rites:  
 Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,  
 In every gesture dignity and love.

I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud.  
 This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled  
 Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,  
 Giver of all things fair! but fairest this 540  
 Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see  
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself  
 Before me: Woman is her name; of Man  
 Extracted: for this cause he shall forego  
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;  
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.

She heard me thus; and though divinely brought,  
 Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,  
 Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth, 550  
 That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,  
 Not obvious, not obtrusive, but, retired,  
 The more desirable; or, to say all,  
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,  
 Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned:  
 I followed her; she what was honour knew,  
 And with obsequious majesty approved  
 My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower  
 I led her blushing like the morn: All Heaven,  
 And happy constellations, on that hour 560  
 Shed their selectest influence; the Earth  
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;  
 Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs  
 Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings  
 Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,  
 Disporting, till the amorous bird of night  
 Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening-star  
 On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.

Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought 570  
 My story to the sum of earthly bliss,  
 Which I enjoy; and must confess to find  
 In all things else delight indeed, but such  
 As, used or not, works in the mind no change,  
 Nor vehement desire; these delicacies  
 I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,  
 Walks, and the melody of birds: but here  
 Far otherwise, transported I behold,  
 Transported touch; here passion first I felt,  
 Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else 580  
 Superiour and unmoved; here only weak  
 Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.

Or Nature failed in me, and left some part  
 Not proof enough such object to sustain;  
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps  
 More than enough; at least on her bestowed  
 Too much of ornament, in outward show  
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.

590

For well I understand in the prime end  
 Of Nature her the inferiour, in the mind  
 And inward faculties, which most excel;  
 In outward also her resembling less  
 His image who made both, and less expressing  
 The character of that dominion given  
 O'er other creatures: Yet when I approach  
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
 And in herself complete, so well to know  
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say, 600  
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:  
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
 Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her  
 Loses discountenanced, and like Folly shows;  
 Authority and Reason on her wait,  
 As one intended first, not after made  
 Occasionally; and, to consummate all,  
 Greatness of mind and Nobleness their seat  
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
 About her, as a guard angelick placed. 610

To whom the Angel with contracted brow.

Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part;  
 Do thou but thine; and be not diffident  
 Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not, if thou  
 Dismiss not her, when most thou needest her nigh,  
 By attributing overmuch to things  
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest.

620

For, what admirest 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 thyself;  
 Then value: Oft-times nothing profits more  
 Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right  
 Well managed; of that skill the more thou knowest,  
 The more she will acknowledge thee her head,  
 And to realities yield all her shows:  
 Made so adorn for thy delight the more, 630  
 So awful, that with honour thou mayest love

Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.

But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind  
Is propagated, seem such dear delight  
Beyond all other; think the same vouchsafed  
To cattle and each beast; which would not be  
To them made common and divulged, if aught  
Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue  
The soul of man, or passion in him move.

640

What higher in her society thou findest  
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 heavenly love thou mayest ascend,  
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause,  
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.

650

To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied.

Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught  
In procreation common to all kinds,  
(Though higher of the genial bed by far,  
And with mysterious reverence I deem,)  
So much delights me, as those graceful acts,  
Those thousand decencies, that daily flow  
From all her words and actions mixed with love  
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned  
Union of mind, or in us both one soul;  
Harmony to behold in wedded pair  
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.

660

Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose  
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,  
Who meet with various objects, from the sense  
Variously representing; yet, still free,  
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.

670

To love, thou blamest me not; for Love, thou sayest,  
Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;  
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:  
Love not the heavenly Spirits, and how their love  
Express they? by looks only? or do they mix

Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?  
 To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed  
 Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue,  
 Answered. Let it suffice thee that thou knowest 680  
 Us happy, and without love no happiness.

Whatever pure thou in the body enjoyest,  
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy  
 In eminence; and obstacle find none  
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;  
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,  
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure  
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need,  
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul. 690

But I can now no more; the parting sun  
 Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles  
 Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.

Be strong, live happy, and love! But, first of all,  
 Him, whom to love is to obey, and keep  
 His great command; take heed lest passion sway  
 Thy judgement to do aught, which else free will 700  
 Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons,  
 The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!  
 I in thy persevering shall rejoice,  
 And all the Blest: Stand fast; to stand or fall  
 Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.

Perfect within, no outward aid require;  
 And all temptation to transgress repel.

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus  
 Followed with benediction. Since to part, 710  
 Go, heavenly guest, ethereal Messenger,  
 Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore!  
 Gentle to me and affable hath been  
 Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever  
 With grateful memory: Thou to mankind  
 Be good and friendly still, and oft return!  
 So parted they; the Angel up to Heaven  
 From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

## 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 tragick; foul distrust, and breach  
Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt,  
And disobedience: on the part of Heaven  
Now alienated, distance and distaste, 10  
Anger and just rebuke, and judgement given,  
That brought into this world a world of woe,  
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery  
Death's harbinger: Sad task! yet argument  
Not less but more heroick than the wrath  
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued  
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage  
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd;  
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long  
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:  
If answerable style I can obtain 20  
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns  
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,  
And dictates to me slumbering; or inspires  
Easy my unpremeditated verse:  
Since first this subject for heroick song  
Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;  
Not sedulous by nature to indite  
Wars, hitherto the only argument  
Heroick deem'd chief mastery to dissect

With long and tedious havock fabled knights 30  
 In battles feign'd; the better fortitude  
 Of patience and heroick martyrdom  
 Unsung; or to describe races and games,  
 Or tilting furniture, imblazon'd shields,  
 Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,  
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights  
 At joust and tournament; then marshall'd feast  
 Serv'd up in hall with sewers and seneshals;  
 The skill of artifice or office mean,  
 Not that which justly gives heroick name 40  
 To person, or to poem. Me, of these  
 Nor skill'd nor studious, higher argument  
 Remains; sufficient of itself to raise  
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold  
 Climate, or years, damp my intended wing  
 Depress'd; and much they may, if all be mine,  
 Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.

The sun was sunk, and after him the star  
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring 50  
 Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter  
 'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end  
 Night's hemisphere had veil'd 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 Man's destruction, maugre what might hap  
 Of heavier on himself, fearless returned  
 By night he fled, and at midnight returned  
 From compassing the earth; cautious of day, 60  
 Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried  
 His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim  
 That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driven,  
 The space of seven continued nights he rode  
 With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line  
 He circled; four times crossed the car of night  
 From pole to pole, traversing each colure;  
 On the eighth returned; and, on the coast averse  
 From entrance or Cherubick watch, by stealth  
 Found unsuspected way. There was a place, 70

Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change,  
 Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,  
 Into a gulf shot under ground, till part  
 Rose up a fountain by the tree of life:  
 In with the river sunk, and with it rose  
 Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought  
 Where to lie hid; sea he had searched, and land,  
 From Eden over Pontus and the pool  
 Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;  
 Downward as far antarctick; and in length, 80  
 West from Orontes to the ocean barred  
 At Darien; thence to the land where flows  
 Ganges and Indus: Thus the orb he roamed  
 With narrow search; and with inspection deep  
 Considered every creature, which of all  
 Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found  
 The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.  
 Him after long debate, irresolute  
 Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose 90  
 Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom  
 To enter, and his dark suggestions hide  
 From sharpest sight: for, in the wily snake  
 Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,  
 As from his wit and native subtlety  
 Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed,  
 Doubt might beget of diabolick power  
 Active within, beyond the sense of brute.  
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief 100  
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured.  
 More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built  
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old!  
 O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred  
 For what God, after better, worse would build?  
 Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens  
 That shine, yet bear their bright officious lamps,  
 Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,  
 In thee concentring all their precious beams 110  
 Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven  
 Is center, yet extends to all; so thou,  
 Centring, receivest from all those orbs: in thee,



Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears  
 Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth  
 Of creatures animate with gradual life  
 Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.

With what delight could I have walked thee round,  
 If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange 120  
 Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,  
 Now land, now sea and shores with forest crowned,  
 Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these  
 Find place or refuge; and the more I see  
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel  
 Torment within me, as from the hateful siege  
 Of contraries: all good to me becomes  
 Bane, and in Heaven much worse would be my state.

But neither here seek I, no nor in Heaven 130  
 To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven's Supreme;  
 Nor hope to be myself less miserable  
 By what I seek, but others to make such  
 As I, though thereby worse to me redound:  
 For only in destroying I find ease  
 To my relentless thoughts; and, him destroyed,  
 Or won to what may work his utter loss,  
 For whom all this was made, all this will soon  
 Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe;  
 In woe then; that destruction wide may range: 140  
 To me shall be the glory sole among  
 The infernal Powers, in one day to have marred  
 What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days  
 Continued making; and who knows how long  
 Before had been contriving? though perhaps  
 Not longer than since I, in one night, freed  
 From servitude inglorious well nigh half  
 The angelick name, and thinner left the throng  
 Of his adorers: He, to be avenged,  
 And to repair his numbers thus impaired, 150  
 Whether such virtue spent of old now failed  
 More Angels to create, if they at least  
 Are his created, or, to spite us more,  
 Determined to advance into our room  
 A creature formed of earth, and him endow,

Exalted from so base original,  
 With heavenly spoils, our spoils: What he decreed,  
 He effected; Man he made, and for him built  
 Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,  
 Him lord pronounced; and, O indignity! 160

Subjected to his service angel-wings,  
 And flaming ministers to watch and tend  
 Their earthly charge: Of these the vigilance  
 I dread; and, to elude, thus wrapt in mist  
 Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and pry  
 In every bush and brake, where hap may find  
 The serpent sleeping; in whose mazy folds  
 To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.

O foul descent! that I, who erst contended 170  
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained  
 Into a beast; and, mixed with bestial slime,  
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
 That to the highth of Deity aspired!  
 But what will not ambition and revenge  
 Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low  
 As high he soared; obnoxious, first or last,  
 To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,  
 Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils:

Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed, 180  
 Since higher I fall short, on him who next  
 Provokes my envy, this new favourite  
 Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,  
 Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised  
 From dust: Spite then with spite is best repaid.

So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,  
 Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on  
 His midnight-search, where soonest he might find  
 The serpent; him fast-sleeping soon he found 190  
 In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,  
 His head the midst, well stored with subtile wiles:  
 Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,  
 Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,  
 Fearless unfeared he slept: in at his mouth  
 The Devil entered; and his brutal sense,  
 In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired

With act intelligential; but his sleep  
 Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn. 200

Now, when as sacred light began to dawn  
 In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed  
 Their morning incense, when all things, that breathe,  
 From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise  
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill  
 With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,  
 And joined their vocal worship to the quire  
 Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake  
 The season prime for sweetest scents and airs:  
 Then commune, how that day they best may ply 210  
 Their growing work: for much their work out-grew  
 The hands' dispatch of two gardening 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 flower,  
 Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands  
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows,  
 Luxurious by restraint; what we by day 220  
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,  
 One night or two with wanton growth derides  
 Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,  
 Or bear what to my mind 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 ivy where to climb; while I,  
 In yonder spring of roses intermixed  
 With myrtle, find what to redress till noon:  
 For, while so near each other thus all day 230  
 Our task we choose, what wonder if so near  
 Looks intervene and smiles, or object new  
 Casual discourse draw on; which intermits  
 Our day's work, brought to little, though begun  
 Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned?  
 To whom mild answer Adam thus returned.

Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond  
 Compare above all living creatures dear!

Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed, 240  
 How we might best fulfil the work which here  
 God hath assigned us; nor of me shalt pass  
 Unpraised: for nothing lovelier can be found  
 In woman, than to study household good,  
 And good works in her husband to promote.

Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed  
 Labour, as to debar us when we need  
 Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,  
 Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse 250  
 Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,  
 To brute denied, and are of love the food;  
 Love, not the lowest end of human life.

For not to irksome toil, but to delight,  
 He made us, and delight to reason joined.

These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands  
 Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide  
 As we need walk, till younger hands ere long 260  
 Assist us; But, if much converse perhaps  
 Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield:  
 For solitude sometimes is best society,  
 And short retirement urges sweet return.

But other doubt possesses me, lest harm  
 Befall thee severed from me; for thou knowest  
 What hath been warned us, what malicious foe  
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own 270  
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame  
 By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand  
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find  
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder;  
 Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each  
 To other speedy aid might lend at need:  
 Whether his first design be to withdraw  
 Our fealty from God, or to disturb  
 Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss  
 Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;  
 Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side 280  
 That gave thee being, still shades thee, and protects.

The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,

Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,  
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.

To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,  
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,  
With sweet austere composure thus replied.

290

Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's Lord!  
That such an enemy we have, who seeks  
Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,  
And from the parting Angel over-heard,  
As in a shady nook I stood behind,  
Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.

But, that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt  
To God or thee, because we have a foe  
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.

300

His violence thou fearest not, being such  
As we, not capable of death or pain,  
Can either not receive, or can repel.

His fraud is then thy fear; which plain infers  
Thy equal fear, that my firm faith and love  
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced;  
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,  
Adam, mis-thought of her to thee so dear?  
To whom with healing words Adam replied.

310

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  
The attempt itself, intended by our foe.

For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses  
The tempted with dishonour foul; supposed  
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof  
Against temptation: Thou thyself with scorn  
And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong,  
Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,  
If such affront I labour to avert  
From thee alone, which on us both at once  
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;  
Or daring, first on me the assault shall light.

320

Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;  
 Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce  
 Angels; nor think superfluous other's aid. 330

I, from the influence of thy looks, receive  
 Access in every virtue; in thy sight  
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were  
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,  
 Shame to be overcome or over-reached,  
 Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.

340

Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel  
 When I am present, and thy trial choose  
 With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?  
 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 renewed.

If this be our condition, thus to dwell  
 In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,  
 Subtle or violent, we not endued  
 Single with like defence, wherever met;  
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm?  
 But harm precedes not sin: only our foe,  
 Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem  
 Of our integrity: his foul esteem  
 Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns  
 Foul on himself; then wherefore shunned or feared  
 By us? who rather double honour gain  
 From his surmise proved false; find peace within,  
 Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event.

350

360

And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed  
 Alone, without exterior help sustained?  
 Let us not then suspect our happy state  
 Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,  
 As not secure to single or combined.

Frail is our happiness, if this be so,  
 And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.

370

To whom thus Adam fervently replied.  
 O Woman, best are all things as the will

Of God ordained them: His creating hand  
 Nothing imperfect or deficient left  
 Of all that he created, much less Man,  
 Or aught that might his happy state secure,  
 Secure from outward force; within himself  
 The danger lies, yet lies within his power: 380  
 Against his will he can receive no harm.

But God left free the will; for what obeys  
 Reason, is free; and Reason he made right,  
 But bid her well be ware, and still erect;  
 Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,  
 She dictate false; and mis-inform the will  
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.

Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins, 390  
 That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me.

Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve;  
 Since Reason not impossibly may meet  
 Some specious object by the foe suborned,  
 And fall into deception unaware,  
 Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.

Seek not temptation then, which to avoid  
 Were better, and most likely if from me 400  
 Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.

Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve  
 First thy obedience; the other who can know,  
 Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?  
 But, if thou think, trial unsought may find  
 Us both securer than thus warned thou seemest,  
 Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;  
 Go in thy native innocence, rely  
 On what thou hast of virtue; summon all! 410  
 For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine.

So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve  
 Persisted; yet submiss, though last, replied.

With thy permission then, and thus forewarned  
 Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words  
 Touched only; that our trial, when least sought,  
 May find us both perhaps far less prepared,

The willinger I go, nor much expect 420  
 A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;  
 So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand  
 Soft she withdrew; and, like a Wood-Nymph light,  
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,  
 Betook her to the groves; but Delia's self  
 In gait surpassed, and Goddess-like deport,  
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,  
 But with such gardening tools as Art yet rude, 430  
 Guiltless of fire, had formed, or Angels brought.

To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,  
 Likest she seemed, Pomona when she fled  
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,  
 Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Her long with ardent look his eye pursued  
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay. 440

Oft he to her his charge of quick return  
 Repeated; she to him as oft engaged  
 To be returned by noon amid the bower,  
 And all things in best order to invite  
 Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.

O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,  
 Of thy presumed return! event perverse!  
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise  
 Foundst either sweet repast, or sound repose; 450  
 Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,  
 Waited with hellish rancour imminent  
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back  
 Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss!  
 For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,  
 Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come;  
 And on his quest, where likeliest he might find  
 The only two of mankind, but in them  
 The whole included race, his purposed prey. 460

In bower and field he sought, where any tuft  
 Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,



Their tendance, or plantation for delight;  
 By fountain or by shady rivulet  
 He sought them both, but wished his hap might find  
 Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope  
 Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,  
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,  
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,  
 Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round 470  
 About her glowed, oft stooping to support  
 Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay  
 Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,  
 Hung drooping unsustained; them she upstays  
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while  
 Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,  
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.  
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed  
 Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm; 480  
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,  
 Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers  
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve:  
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned  
 Or of revived Adonis, or renowned  
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;  
 Or that, not mystick, where the sapient king  
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.  
 Much he the place admired, the person more. 490  
 As one who long in populous city pent,  
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,  
 Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe  
 Among the pleasant villages and farms  
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight;  
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,  
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;  
 If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,  
 What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more; 500  
 She most, and in her look sums all delight:  
 Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold  
 This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve  
 Thus early, thus alone: Her heavenly form  
 Angelick, but more soft, and feminine,

Her graceful innocence, her every air  
 Of gesture, or least action, overawed  
 His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved  
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:  
 That space the Evil-one abstracted stood 510  
 From his own evil, and for the time remained  
 Stupidly good; of enmity disarmed,  
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge:  
 But the hot Hell that always in him burns,  
 Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,  
 And tortures him now more, the more he sees  
 Of pleasure, not for him ordained: then soon  
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts  
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites.

520

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, 530  
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,  
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb  
 Heroick built, though of terrestrial mould;  
 Foe not formidable! exempt from wound,  
 I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain  
 Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.

She fair, divinely fair, fit love for Gods!  
 Not terrible, though terrour be in love  
 And beauty, not approached by stronger hate, 540  
 Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned;  
 The way which to her ruin now I tend.

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed  
 In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve  
 Addressed his way: not with indented wave,  
 Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,

Circular base of rising folds, that towered  
 Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head  
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes; 550  
 With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect  
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass  
 Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape  
 And lovely; never since of serpent-kind  
 Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed,  
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the god  
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed  
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen;  
 He with Olympias; this with her who bore  
 Scipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique 560  
 At first, as one who sought access, but feared  
 To interrupt, side-long he works his way.

As when a ship, by skilful steersmen wrought  
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind  
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:  
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train  
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,  
 To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound  
 Of rusling leaves, but minded not, as used 570  
 To such disport before her through the field,  
 From every beast; more duteous at her call,  
 Than at Circean call the herd disguised.

He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,  
 But as in gaze admiring: oft he bowed  
 His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,  
 Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod.

His gentle dumb expression turned at length 580  
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad  
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue  
 Organick, 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 Heaven of mildness, with disdain,  
 Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze  
 Insatiate; I thus single; nor have feared 590

Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.  
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,  
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine  
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore  
 With ravishment beheld! there best beheld,  
 Where universally admired; but here  
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,  
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern  
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except, 600  
 Who sees thee? and what is one? who should be seen  
 A Goddess among Gods, adored and served  
 By Angels numberless, thy daily train.

So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned:  
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way,  
 Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,  
 Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake.

What may this mean? language of man pronounced 610  
 By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?  
 The first, at least, of these I thought denied  
 To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day,  
 Created mute to all articulate sound:  
 The latter I demur; for in their looks  
 Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.

Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field  
 I knew, but not with human voice endued; 620  
 Redouble then this miracle, and say,  
 How camest thou speakable of mute, and how  
 To me so friendly grown above the rest  
 Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?  
 Say, for such wonder claims attention due.

To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied.  
 Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!  
 Easy to me it is to tell thee all  
 What thou commandest; and right thou shouldst be obeyed:  
 630

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 discerned  
 Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:

Till, on a day roving the field, I chanced  
 A goodly tree far distant to behold  
 Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixed,  
 Ruddy and gold: I nearer drew to gaze;  
 When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,  
 Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense 640  
 Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats  
 Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,  
 Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.

To satisfy the sharp desire I had  
 Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved  
 Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,  
 Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent  
 Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen. 650

About the mossy trunk I wound me soon;  
 For, high from ground, the branches would require  
 Thy utmost reach or Adam's: Round the tree  
 All other beasts that saw, with like desire  
 Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.

Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung  
 Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill  
 I spared not; for, such pleasure till that hour,  
 At feed or fountain, never had I found. 660

Sated at length, ere long I might perceive  
 Strange alteration in me, to degree  
 Of reason in my inward powers; and speech  
 Wanted not long; though to this shape retained.

Thenceforth to speculations high or deep  
 I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind  
 Considered all things visible in Heaven,  
 Or Earth, or Middle; all things fair and good: 670  
 But all that fair and good in thy divine  
 Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,  
 United I beheld; no fair to thine  
 Equivalent or second! which compelled  
 Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come  
 And gaze, and worship thee of right declared  
 Sovran of creatures, universal Dame!

So talked the spirited sly Snake; and Eve,  
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied. 680

Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt  
The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved:  
But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?  
For many are the trees of God that grow  
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown  
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,  
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,  
Still hanging incorruptible, till men  
Grow up to their provision, and more hands  
Help to disburden Nature of her birth. 690

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad.  
Empress, the way is ready, and not long;  
Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,  
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past  
Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept  
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon  
Lead then, said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled  
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, 700  
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy  
Brightens his crest; as when a wandering fire,  
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night  
Condenses, and the cold environs round,  
Kindled through agitation to a flame,  
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends,  
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,  
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way  
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;  
There swallowed up and lost, from succour far. 710

So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud  
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree  
Of prohibition, root of all our woe;  
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake.

Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,  
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,  
The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;  
Wonderous indeed, if cause of such effects. 720

But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;  
 God so commanded, and left that command  
 Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live  
 Law to ourselves; our reason is our law.

To whom the Tempter guilefully replied.

Indeed! hath God then said that of the fruit  
 Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat, 730  
 Yet Lords declared of all in earth or air?  
 To whom thus Eve, yet sinless. Of the fruit  
 Of each tree in the garden we may eat;  
 But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst  
 The garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat  
 Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold  
 The Tempter, but with show of zeal and love 740  
 To Man, and indignation at his wrong,  
 New part puts on; and, as to passion moved,  
 Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely and in act  
 Raised, as of some great matter to begin.

As when of old some orator renowned,  
 In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence  
 Flourished, since mute! to some great cause addressed,  
 Stood in himself collected; while each part,  
 Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue;  
 Sometimes in highth began, as no delay 750  
 Of preface brooking, through his zeal of right:  
 So standing, moving, or to highth up grown,  
 The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began.

O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,  
 Mother of science! now I feel thy power  
 Within me clear; not only to discern  
 Things in their causes, but to trace the ways  
 Of highest agents, deemed however wise. 760

Queen of this universe! do not believe  
 Those rigid threats of death: ye shall not die:  
 How should you? by the fruit? it gives you life  
 To knowledge; by the threatener? look on me,  
 Me, who have touched and tasted; yet both live,

And life more perfect have attained than Fate  
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.

Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast  
Is open? or will God incense his ire 770

For such a petty trespass? and not praise  
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain  
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,  
Deterred not from achieving what might lead  
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil;  
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil  
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?  
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;  
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:  
Your fear itself of death removes the fear. 780

Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe;  
Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,  
His worshippers? He knows that in the day  
Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,  
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then  
Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,  
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.

That ye shall be as Gods, since I as Man, 790  
Internal Man, is but proportion meet;  
I, of brute, human; ye, of human, Gods.

So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off  
Human, to put on Gods; death to be wished,  
Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring.

And what are Gods, that Man may not become  
As they, participating God-like food? 800  
The Gods are first, and that advantage use  
On our belief, that all from them proceeds:

I question it; for this fair earth I see,  
Warmed by the sun, producing every kind;  
Them, nothing: if they all things, who enclosed  
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,  
That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains  
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies  
The 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? 810  
 Or is it envy? and can envy dwell  
 In heavenly breasts? 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 easy entrance won:  
 Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold  
 Might tempt alone; and in her ears the sound  
 Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd 820  
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:  
 Mean while the hour of noon drew on, and waked  
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell  
 So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,  
 Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,  
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first  
 Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused.  
 Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,  
 Though kept from man, and worthy to be admir'd; 830  
 Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay  
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught  
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise:  
 Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use,  
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree  
 Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;  
 Forbids us then to taste! but his forbidding  
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good  
 By thee communicated, and our want:  
 For good unknown sure is not had; or, had 840  
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.  
 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,  
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?  
 Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death  
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then  
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eat  
 Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!  
 How dies the Serpent? he hath eaten and lives,  
 And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, 850  
 Irrational till then. For us alone  
 Was death invented? or to us denied

This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?  
 For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first  
 Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy  
 The good befallen him, author unsuspect,  
 Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.

What fear I then? rather, what know to fear  
 Under this ignorance of good and evil, 860  
 Of God or death, of law or penalty?  
 Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,  
 Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,  
 Of virtue to make wise: What hinders then  
 To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?  
 So saying, her rash hand in evil hour  
 Earth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, 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 870  
 The guilty Serpent; and well might; for Eve,  
 Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else  
 Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,  
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true  
 Or fancied so, through expectation high  
 Of knowledge; not was Godhead from her thought.

Greedily she ingorged without restraint,  
 And knew not eating death: Sate at length,  
 And hightened as with wine, jocund and boon, 880  
 Thus to herself she pleasingly began.

O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees  
 In Paradise! of operation blest  
 To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed.

And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end  
 Created; but henceforth my early care,  
 Not without song, each morning, and due praise,  
 Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease 890  
 Of thy full branches offered free to all;  
 Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature  
 In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know;  
 Though others envy what they cannot give:  
 For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here

Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,  
 Best guide; not following thee, I had remained  
 In ignorance; thou openest wisdom's way,  
 And givest access, though secret she retire.

900

And I perhaps am secret: Heaven is high,  
 High, and remote to see from thence distinct  
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps  
 May have diverted from continual watch  
 Our great Forbidder, safe with all his spies  
 About him. But to Adam in what sort  
 Shall I appear? shall I to him make known  
 As yet my change, and give him to partake  
 Full happiness with me, or rather not,  
 But keeps the odds of knowledge in my power  
 Without copartner? so to add what wants  
 In female sex, the more to draw his love,  
 And render me more equal; and perhaps,  
 A thing not undesirable, sometime  
 Superiour; for, inferiour, who is free  
 This may be well: But what if God have seen,  
 And death ensue? then I shall be no more!  
 And Adam, wedded to another Eve,  
 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;  
 A death to think! Confirmed then I resolve,  
 Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:  
 So dear I love him, that with him all deaths  
 I could endure, without him live no life.

910

920

So saying, from the tree her step she turned;  
 But first low reverence done, as to the Power  
 That dwelt within, whose presence had infused  
 Into the plant scintial sap, derived  
 From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,  
 Waiting desirous her return, had wove  
 Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn  
 Her tresses, and her rural labours crown;  
 As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.

930

Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new  
 Solace in her return, so long delayed:  
 Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,

Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt;  
 And forth to meet her went, the way she took  
 That morn when first they parted: by the tree 940  
 Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met,  
 Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand  
 A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,  
 New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.

To him she hasted; in her face excuse  
 Came prologue, and apology too prompt;  
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed.

Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay? 950  
 Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived  
 Thy presence; agony of love till now  
 Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more  
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,  
 The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange  
 Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:

This tree is not, as we are told, a tree  
 Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown  
 Opening the way, but of divine effect

To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste; 960  
 And hath been tasted such: The serpent wise,  
 Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,  
 Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,  
 Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth  
 Endued with human voice and human sense,  
 Reasoning to admiration; and with me

Persuasively hath so prevailed, that I  
 Have also tasted, and have also found  
 The effects to correspond; opener mine eyes,  
 Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart, 970  
 And growing up to Godhead; which for thee  
 Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.

For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss;  
 Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.

Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot  
 May join us, equal joy, as equal love;  
 Lest, thou not tasting, different degree  
 Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce 980

Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit.

Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;  
But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.

On the other side Adam, soon as he heard  
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,  
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill  
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed;  
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve       990  
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed:  
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length  
First to himself he inward silence broke.

O fairest of Creation, last and best  
Of all God's works, Creature in whom excelled  
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,  
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!  
How art thou lost! how on a sudden lost,  
Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!       1000

Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress  
The strict forbiddance, how to violate  
The sacred fruit forbidden! Some cursed fraud  
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,  
And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee  
Certain my resolution is to die:  
How can I live without thee! how forego  
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined,  
To live again in these wild woods forlorn!  
Should God create another Eve, and I       1010

Another rib afford, yet loss of thee  
Would never from my heart: no, no! I feel  
The link of Nature draw me: flesh of flesh,  
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state  
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.

So having said, as one from sad dismay  
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturbed  
Submitting to what seemed remediless,  
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned.       1020

Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,  
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,  
Had it been only coveting to eye

That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,  
 Much more to taste it under ban to touch.

But past who can recall, or done undo?  
 Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate; yet so  
 Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact 1030  
 Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,  
 Profaned first by the serpent, by him first  
 Made common, and unhallowed, ere our taste;  
 Nor yet on him found deadly; yet he lives;  
 Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,  
 Higher degree of life; inducement strong  
 To us, as likely tasting to attain  
 Proportional ascent; which cannot be  
 But to be Gods, or Angels, demi-Gods.

1040

Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,  
 Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy  
 Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,  
 Set over all his works; which in our fall,  
 For us created, needs with us must fail,  
 Dependant made; so God shall uncreate,  
 Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose;  
 Not well conceived of God, who, though his power  
 Creation could repeat, yet would be loth  
 Us to abolish, lest the Adversary 1050  
 Triumph, and say; "Fickle their state whom God  
 Most favours; who can please him long? Me first  
 He ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?"  
 Matter of scorn, not to be given the Foe.

However I with thee have fixed my lot,  
 Certain to undergo like doom: If death  
 Consort with thee, death is to me as life;  
 So forcible within my heart I feel  
 The bond of Nature draw me to my own; 1060  
 My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;  
 Our state cannot be severed; we are one,  
 One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.

So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied.

O glorious trial of exceeding love,

Illustrious evidence, example high!  
 Engaging me to emulate; but, short  
 Of thy perfection, how shall I attain, 1070  
 Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,  
 And gladly of our union hear thee speak,  
 One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof  
 This day affords, declaring thee resolved,  
 Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,  
 Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,  
 To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,  
 If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;  
 Whose virtue for of good still good proceeds,  
 Direct, or by occasion, hath presented 1080  
 This happy trial of thy love, which else  
 So eminently never had been known?  
 Were it I thought death menaced would ensue  
 This my attempt, I would sustain alone  
 The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die  
 Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact  
 Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly assured  
 Remarkably so late of thy so true,  
 So faithful, love unequalled: but I feel  
 Far otherwise the event; not death, but life 1090  
 Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,  
 Taste so divine, that what of sweet before  
 Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.  
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,  
 And fear of death deliver to the winds.  
 So saying, she embraced him, and for joy  
 Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love  
 Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur 1100  
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.  
 In recompence (for such compliance bad  
 Such recompence best merits) from the bough  
 She gave him of that fair enticing fruit  
 With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,  
 Against his better knowledge; not deceived,  
 But fondly overcome with female charm.  
 Earth trembled from her entrails, as again 1110

In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;  
 Sky loured; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops  
 Wept at completing of the mortal sin  
 Original: while Adam took no thought,  
 Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate  
 Her former trespass feared, the more to sooth  
 Him with her loved society; that now,  
 As with new wine intoxicated both,  
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel  
 Divinity within them breeding wings, 1120  
 Wherewith to scorn the earth: But that false fruit  
 Far other operation first displayed,  
 Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve  
 Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him  
 As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn:  
 Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move.

Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,  
 And elegant, of sapience no small part;  
 Since to each meaning savour we apply, 1130  
 And palate call judicious; I the praise  
 Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.

Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained  
 From this delightful fruit, nor known till now  
 True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be  
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wished,  
 For this one tree had been forbidden ten.

But come, so well refreshed, now let us play, 1140  
 As meet is, after such delicious fare;  
 For never did thy beauty, since the day  
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned  
 With all perfections, so inflame my sense  
 With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now  
 Than ever; bounty of this virtuous tree!  
 So said he, and forbore not glance or toy  
 Of amorous intent; well understood  
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.

1150

Her hand he seised; and to a shady bank,  
 Thick over-head with verdant roof imbowered,  
 He led her nothing loth; flowers were the couch,



Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,  
And hyacinth; Earth's freshest softest lap.

There they their fill of love and love's disport  
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,  
The solace of their sin; till dewy sleep  
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play, 1160  
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,  
That with exhilarating vapour bland  
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers  
Made err, was now exhaled; and grosser sleep,  
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams  
Incumbered, now had left them; up they rose  
As from unrest; and, each the other viewing,  
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds  
How darkened; innocence, that as a veil  
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone; 1170  
Just confidence, and native righteousness,  
And honour, from about them, naked left  
To guilty Shame; he covered, but his robe  
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,  
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap  
Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked  
Shorn of his strength. They destitute and bare  
Of all their virtue: Silent, and in face  
Confounded, long they sat, as stricken mute:  
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed, 1180  
At length gave utterance to these words constrained.

O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear  
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught  
To counterfeit Man's voice; true in our fall,  
False in our promised rising; since our eyes  
Opened 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, 1190  
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,  
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,  
And in our faces evident the signs  
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;  
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first

Be sure then.—How shall I behold the face  
 Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy  
 And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes  
 Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze  
 Insufferably bright. O! might I here 1200  
 In solitude live savage; in some glade  
 Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable  
 To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad  
 And brown as evening: Cover me, ye Pines!  
 Ye Cedars, with innumerable boughs  
 Hide me, where I may never see them more!—  
 But let us now, as in bad plight, devise  
 What best may for the present serve to hide  
 The parts of each from other, that seem most  
 To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen; 1210  
 Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together sewed,  
 And girded on our loins, may cover round  
 Those middle parts; that this new comer, Shame,  
 There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.

So counselled he, and both together went  
 Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose  
 The fig-tree; not that kind for fruit renowned,  
 But such as at this day, to Indians known,  
 In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms 1220  
 Branching so broad and long, that in the ground  
 The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow  
 About the mother tree, a pillared shade  
 High over-arched, and echoing walks between:  
 There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,  
 Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds  
 At loop-holes cut through thickest shade: Those leaves  
 They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe;  
 And, with what skill they had, together sewed,  
 To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide 1230  
 Their guilt and dreaded shame! O, how unlike  
 To that first naked glory! Such of late  
 Columbus found the American, so girt  
 With feathered cincture; naked else, and wild  
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.

Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part

Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,  
 They sat them down to weep; nor only tears  
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within 1240  
 Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,  
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore  
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once  
 And full of peace, now tost and turbulent:  
 For Understanding ruled not, and the Will  
 Heard not her lore; both in subjection now  
 To sensual Appetite, who from beneath  
 Usurping over sovran Reason claimed  
 Superiour sway: From thus distempered breast,  
 Adam, estranged in look and altered style, 1250  
 Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed.

Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and staid  
 With me, as I besought thee, when that strange  
 Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,  
 I know not whence possessed thee; we had then  
 Remained still happy; not, as now, despoiled  
 Of all our good; shamed, naked, miserable!  
 Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve  
 The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek 1260  
 Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail.

To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve.  
 What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe!  
 Imputest thou that to my default, or will  
 Of wandering, as thou callest it, which who knows  
 But might as ill have happened thou being by,  
 Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,  
 Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned 1270  
 Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;  
 No ground of enmity between us known,  
 Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm.

Was I to have never parted from thy side?  
 As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.  
 Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,  
 Command me absolutely not to go,  
 Going into such danger, as thou saidst? 1280  
 Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay;

Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.

Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,  
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied.

Is this the love, is this the recompence  
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve! expressed 1290

Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I;  
Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,  
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?

And am I now upbraided as the cause  
Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,  
It seems, in thy restraint: What could I more  
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold  
The danger, and the lurking enemy  
That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force;  
And force upon free will hath here no place. 1300

But confidence then bore thee on; secure  
Either to meet no danger, or to find  
Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps  
I also erred, in overmuch admiring  
What seemed in thee so perfect, that I thought  
No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue  
The error now, which is become my crime,  
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall 1310  
Him, who, to worth in women overtrusting,  
Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;  
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,  
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.

Thus they in mutual accusation spent  
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;  
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

## BOOK X

Mean while the heinous and despitelful act  
Of Satan, done in Paradise; and how  
He, in the serpent, had perverted Eve,  
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,  
Was known in Heaven; for what can 'scape the eye  
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart  
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,  
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind  
Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed,  
Complete to have discovered and repulsed, 10  
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.

For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,  
The high injunction, not to taste that fruit,  
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,  
(Incurred what could they less?) the penalty;  
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.

Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste  
The angelick guards ascended, mute, and sad, 20  
For Man; for of his state by this they knew,  
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen  
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news  
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased  
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare  
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed  
With pity, violated not their bliss.

About the new-arrived, in multitudes  
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know 30  
How all befel: They towards the throne supreme,

Accountable, made haste, to make appear,  
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance  
 And easily approved; when the Most High  
 Eternal Father, from his secret cloud,  
 Amidst in thunder uttered thus his voice.

Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned  
 From unsuccessful charge; be not dismayed,  
 Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth, 40  
 Which your sincerest care could not prevent;  
 Foretold so lately what would come to pass,  
 When first this tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.

I told ye then he should prevail, and speed  
 On his bad errand; Man should be seduced,  
 And flattered out of all, believing lies  
 Against his Maker; no decree of mine  
 Concurring to necessitate his fall,  
 Or touch with lightest moment of impulse 50  
 His free will, to her own inclining left  
 In even scale. But fallen he is; and now  
 What rests, but that the mortal sentence pass  
 On his transgression,—death denounced that day?  
 Which he presumes already vain and void,  
 Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,  
 By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find  
 Forbearance no acquittance, ere day end.

Justice shall not return as bounty scorned. 60  
 But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee,  
 Vicegerent Son? To thee I have transferred  
 All judgement, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.

Easy it may be seen that I intend  
 Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee  
 Man's friend, his Mediator, his designed  
 Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary,  
 And destined Man himself to judge Man fallen. 70

So spake the Father; and, unfolding bright  
 Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son  
 Blazed forth unclouded Deity: He full  
 Resplendent all his Father manifest  
 Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild.

Father Eternal, thine is to decree;  
 Mine, both in Heaven and Earth, to do thy will  
 Supreme; that thou in me, thy Son beloved, 80  
 Mayest ever rest well pleased. I go to judge  
 On earth these thy transgressours; but thou knowest,  
 Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,  
 When time shall be; for so I undertook  
 Before thee; and, not repenting, this obtain  
 Of right, that I may mitigate their doom  
 On me derived; yet I shall temper so  
 Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most  
 Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.

90

Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none  
 Are to behold the judgement, but the judged,  
 Those two; the third best absent is condemned,  
 Convict by flight, and rebel to all law:  
 Conviction to the serpent none belongs.

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose  
 Of high collateral glory: Him Thrones, and Powers,  
 Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant,  
 Accompanied to Heaven-gate; from whence 100  
 Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.

Down he descended straight; the speed of Gods  
 Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.

Now was the sun in western cadence low  
 From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,  
 To fan the earth now waked, and usher in  
 The evening cool; when he, from wrath more cool,  
 Came the mild Judge, and Intercessour both, 110  
 To sentence Man: The voice of God they heard  
 Now walking in the garden, by soft winds  
 Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,  
 And from his presence hid themselves among  
 The thickest trees, both man and wife; till God,  
 Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud.

Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet  
 My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,  
 Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude, 120

Where obvious duty ere while appeared unsought:  
 Or come I less conspicuous, or what change  
 Absents thee, or what chance detains?—Come forth!  
 He came; and with him Eve, more loth, though first  
 To offend; discountenanced both, and discomposed;  
 Love was not in their looks, either to God,  
 Or to each other; but apparent guilt,  
 And shame, and perturbation, and despair,  
 Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.

130

Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief.

I heard thee in the garden, and of thy voice  
 Afraid, being naked, hid myself. To whom  
 The gracious Judge without revile replied.

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

140

O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand  
 Before my Judge; either to undergo  
 Myself the total crime, or to accuse  
 My other self, the partner of my life;  
 Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,  
 I should conceal, and not expose to blame  
 By my complaint: but strict necessity  
 Subdues me, and calamitous constraint;  
 Lest on my head both sin and punishment,  
 However insupportable, be all  
 Devolved; though should I hold my peace, yet thou  
 Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.—  
 This Woman, whom thou madest to be my help,  
 And gavest me as thy perfect gift, so good,  
 So fit, so acceptable, so divine,  
 That from her hand I could suspect no ill,  
 And what she did, whatever in itself,  
 Her doing seemed to justify the deed;  
 She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

150

160



To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied.  
 Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey  
 Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,  
 Superiour, or but equal, that to her  
 Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place  
 Wherein God set thee above her made of thee, 170  
 And for thee, whose perfection far excelled  
 Hers in all real dignity? Adorned  
 She was indeed, and lovely, to attract  
 Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts  
 Were such, as under government well seemed;  
 Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part  
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright.  
 So having said, he thus to Eve in few.

180  
 Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?  
 To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,  
 Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge  
 Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied.

The Serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.  
 Which when the Lord God heard, without delay  
 To judgement he proceeded on the accused  
 Serpent, though brute; unable to transfer 190  
 The guilt on him, who made him instrument  
 Of mischief, and polluted from the end  
 Of his creation; justly then accursed,  
 As vitiated in nature: More to know  
 Concerned not Man, (since he no further knew)  
 Nor altered his offence; yet God at last  
 To Satan first in sin his doom applied,  
 Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:  
 And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall.

200  
 Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed  
 Above all cattle, each beast of the field;  
 Upon thy belly groveling thou shalt go,  
 And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.  
 Between thee and the woman I will put  
 Enmity, and between thine and her seed;

Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.  
 So spake this oracle, then verified 210  
 When Jesus, Son of Mary, second Eve,  
 Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heaven,  
 Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave  
 Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed  
 In open show; and, with ascension bright,  
 Captivity led captive through the air,  
 The realm itself of Satan, long usurped;  
 Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;  
 Even he, who now foretold his fatal bruise;  
 And to the Woman thus his sentence turned. 220

Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply  
 By thy conception; children thou shalt bring  
 In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will  
 Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.  
 On Adam last thus judgement he pronounced.  
 Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,  
 And eaten of the tree, concerning which 230  
 I charged thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat thereof:  
 Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow  
 Shalt eat thereof, all the days of thy life;  
 Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth  
 Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;  
 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,  
 Till thou return unto the ground; for thou  
 Out of the ground wast taken, know thy birth,  
 For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return. 240

So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent;  
 And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,  
 Removed far off; then, pitying how they stood  
 Before him naked to the air, that now  
 Must suffer change, disdained not to begin  
 Thenceforth the form of servant to assume;  
 As when he washed his servants feet; so now,  
 As father of his family, he clad  
 Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,  
 Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid; 250

And thought not much to clothe his enemies;  
 Nor he their outward only with the skins  
 Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more.

Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness,  
 Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.

To him with swift ascent he up returned,  
 Into his blissful bosom reassumed  
 In glory, as of old; to him appeased 260  
 All, though all-knowing, what had passed with Man  
 Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Mean while, ere thus was sinned and judged on Earth,  
 Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,  
 In counterview within the gates, that now  
 Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame  
 Far into Chaos, since the Fiend passed through,  
 Sin opening; who thus now to Death began.

270

O Son, why sit we here each other viewing  
 Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives  
 In other worlds, and happier seat provides  
 For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be  
 But that success attends him; if mishap,  
 Ere this he had returned, with fury driven  
 By his avengers; since no place like this  
 Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.

Methinks I feel new strength within me rise, 280  
 Wings growing, and dominion given me large  
 Beyond this deep; whatever draws me on,  
 Or sympathy, or some connatural force,  
 Powerful at greatest distance to unite,  
 With secret amity, things of like kind,  
 By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade  
 Inseparable, must with me along;  
 For Death from Sin no power can separate.

But, lest the difficulty of passing back 290  
 Stay his return perhaps over this gulf  
 Impassable, impervious; let us try  
 Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine  
 Not unagreeable, to found a path

Over this main from Hell to that new world,  
 Where Satan now prevails; a monument  
 Of merit high to all the infernal host,  
 Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,  
 Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead. 300

Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn  
 By this new-felt attraction and instinct.  
 Whom thus the meager Shadow answered soon.  
 Go, whither Fate, and inclination strong,  
 Leads thee; I shall not lag behind, nor err  
 The way, thou leading; such a scent I draw  
 Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste  
 The savour of death from all things there that live: 310  
 Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest  
 Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell  
 Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock  
 Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,  
 Against the day of battle, to a field,  
 Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured  
 With scent of living carcasses designed  
 For death, the following day, in bloody fight: 320  
 So scented the grim Feature, and upturned  
 His nostril wide into the murky air;  
 Sagacious of his quarry from so far.

Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste  
 Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,  
 Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great)  
 Hovering upon the waters, what they met  
 Solid or slimy, as in raging sea  
 Tost up and down, together crouded drove, 330  
 From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell;  
 As when two polar winds, blowing adverse  
 Upon the Cronian sea, together drive  
 Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way  
 Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich  
 Cathaian coast. The aggregated soil  
 Death with his mace petrifick, cold and dry,

As with a trident, smote; and fixed as firm  
 As Delos, floating once; the rest his look  
 Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move; 340  
 And with Asphaltick slime, broad as the gate,  
 Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach  
 They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on  
 Over the foaming deep high-arched, a bridge  
 Of length prodigious, joining to the wall  
 Immoveable of this now fenceless world,  
 Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,  
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive, down to Hell.

So, if great things to small may be compared, 350  
 Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,  
 From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,  
 Came to the sea: and, over Hellespont  
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,  
 And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.

Now had they brought the work by wonderous art  
 Pontifical, a ridge of pendant rock,  
 Over the vexed abyss, following the track  
 Of Satan to the self-same place where he 360  
 First lighted from his wing, and landed safe  
 From out of Chaos, to the outside bare  
 Of this round world: With pins of adamant  
 And chains they made all fast, too fast they made  
 And durable! And now in little space  
 The confines met of empyrean Heaven,  
 And of this World; and, on the left hand, Hell  
 With long reach interposed; three several ways  
 In sight, to each of these three places led. 370

And now their way to Earth they had descried,  
 To Paradise first tending; when, behold!  
 Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,  
 Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering  
 His zenith, while the sun in Aries rose:  
 Disguised he came; but those his children dear  
 Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.  
 He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk  
 Into the wood fast by; and, changing shape, 380

To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act  
 By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded  
 Upon her husband; saw their shame that sought  
 Vain covertures; but when he saw descend  
 The Son of God to judge them, terrified  
 He fled; not hoping to escape, but shun  
 The present; fearing, guilty, what his wrath  
 Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned  
 By night, and listening where the hapless pair  
 Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint, 390  
 Thence gathered his own doom; which understood  
 Not instant, but of future time, with joy  
 And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned;  
 And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot  
 Of this new wonderous pontifice, unhop'd  
 Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.

Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight  
 Of that stupendous bridge his joy encreased. 400

Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair  
 Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke.

O Parent, these are thy magnifick deeds,  
 Thy trophies! which thou viewest as not thine own;  
 Thou art their author, and prime architect:  
 For I no sooner in my heart divined,  
 My heart, which by a secret harmony  
 Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet,  
 That thou on earth hadst prospered, which thy looks 410  
 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 our bounds,  
 Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure  
 Detain from following thy illustrious track.

Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined  
 Within Hell-gates till now; thou us impow'rd 420  
 To fortify thus far, and overlay,  
 With this portentous bridge, the dark abyss.

Thine now is all this world; thy virtue hath won  
 What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained  
 With odds what war hath lost, and fully avenged  
 Our foil in Heaven; here thou shalt monarch reign,  
 There didst not; there let him still victor sway,  
 As battle hath adjudged; from this new world  
 Retiring, by his own doom alienated; 430

And henceforth monarchy with thee divide  
 Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,  
 His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;  
 Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.

Whom thus the Prince of darkness answered glad.

Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both;  
 High proof ye now have given to be the race  
 Of Satan (for I glory in the name, 440  
 Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King,)  
 Amply have merited of me, of all

The infernal empire, that so near Heaven's door  
 Triumphal with triumphal act have met,  
 Mine, with this glorious work; and made one realm,  
 Hell and this world, one realm, one continent  
 Of easy thorough-fare. Therefore, while I  
 Descend through darkness, on your road with ease,  
 To my associate Powers, them to acquaint 450  
 With these successes, and with them rejoice;  
 You two this way, among these numerous orbs,  
 All yours, right down to Paradise descend;  
 There dwell, and reign in bliss; thence on the earth  
 Dominion exercise and in the air,  
 Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared;  
 Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.

My substitutes I send ye, and create  
 Plenipotent on earth, of matchless might  
 Issuing from me: on your joint vigour now 460  
 My hold of this new kingdom all depends,  
 Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.

If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell  
 No detriment need fear; go, and be strong!  
 So saying he dismissed them; they with speed

Their course through thickest constellations held,  
 Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,  
 And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse  
 Then suffered. The other way Satan went down 470  
 The causey to Hell-gate: On either side  
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,  
 And with rebounding surge the bars assailed,  
 That scorned his indignation: Through the gate,  
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,  
 And all about found desolate; for those,  
 Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,  
 Flown to the upper world; the rest were all  
 Far to the inland retired, about the walls  
 Of Pandemonium; city and proud seat 480  
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion called  
 Of that bright star to Satan paragoned;  
 There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand  
 In council sat, solicitous what chance  
 Might intercept their emperor sent; so he  
 Departing gave command, and they observed.

As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,  
 By Astracan, over the snowy plains,  
 Retires; or Bactrin Sophi, from the horns 490  
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond  
 The realm of Aladule, in his retreat  
 To Tauris or Casbeen: So these, the late  
 Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell  
 Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch  
 Round their metropolis; and now expecting  
 Each hour their great adventurer, from the search  
 Of foreign worlds: He through the midst unmarked,  
 In show plebeian Angel militant  
 Of lowest order, passed; and from the door 500  
 Of that Plutonian hall, invisible  
 Ascended his high throne; which, under state  
 Of richest texture spread, at the upper end  
 Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while  
 He sat, and round about him saw unseen:  
 At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head  
 And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter; clad



With what permissive glory since his fall  
 Was left him, or false glitter: All amazed  
 At that so sudden blaze the Stygian throng 510  
 Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,  
 Their mighty Chief returned: loud was the acclaim:  
 Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers,  
 Raised from their dark Divan, and with like joy  
 Congratulant approached him; who with hand  
 Silence, and with these words attention, won.

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;  
 For in possession such, not only of right,  
 I call ye, and declare ye now; returned 520  
 Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth  
 Triumphant out of this infernal pit  
 Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,  
 And dungeon of our tyrant: Now possess,  
 As Lords, a spacious world, to our native Heaven  
 Little inferiour, by my adventure hard  
 With peril great achieved. Long were to tell  
 What I have done; what suffered; with what pain  
 Voyaged th' unreal, vast, unbounded deep  
 Of horrible confusion; over which 530  
 By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,  
 To expedite your glorious march; but I  
 Toiled out my uncouth passage, forced to ride  
 The untractable abyss, plunged in the womb  
 Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild;  
 That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed  
 My journey strange, with clamorous uproar  
 Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found  
 The new created world, which fame in Heaven  
 Long had foretold, a fabrick wonderful 540  
 Of absolute perfection! therein Man  
 Placed in a Paradise, by our exile  
 Made happy: Him by fraud I have seduced  
 From his Creator; and, the more to encrease  
 Your wonder, with an apple; he, thereat  
 Offended, worth your laughter! hath given up  
 Both his beloved Man, and all his world,  
 To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,

Without our hazard, labour, or alarm;  
 To range in, and to dwell, and over Man 550  
 To rule, as over all he should have ruled.

True is, me also he hath judged, or rather  
 Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape  
 Man I deceived: that which to me belongs,  
 Is enmity which he will put between  
 Me and mankind; I am to bruise his heel;  
 His seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:  
 A world who would not purchase with a bruise,  
 Or much more grievous pain?—Ye have the account 560  
 Of my performance: What remains, ye Gods,  
 But up, and enter now into full bliss?

So having said, a while he stood, expecting  
 Their universal shout, and high applause,  
 To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears  
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues,  
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound  
 Of publick scorn; he wondered, but not long  
 Had leisure, wondering at himself now more,  
 His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare; 570  
 His arms clung to his ribs; his legs entwining  
 Each other, till supplanted down he fell

A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,  
 Reluctant, but in vain; a greater power  
 Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,  
 According to his doom: he would have spoke,  
 But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue  
 To forked tongue; for now were all transformed  
 Alike, to serpents all, as accessories  
 To his bold riot: Dreadful was the din 580

Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now  
 With complicated monsters head and tail,  
 Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbaena dire,  
 Cerastes horned, Hydrus, and Elops drear,  
 And Dipsas; (not so thick swarmed once the soil  
 Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle  
 Ophiusa,) but still greatest he the midst,  
 Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the sun  
 Ingendered in the Pythian vale or slime,

Huge Python, and his power no less he seemed 590  
 Above the rest still to retain; they all  
 Him followed, issuing forth to the open field,  
 Where all yet left of that revolted rout,  
 Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array;  
 Sublime with expectation when to see  
 In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief;  
 They saw, but other sight instead! a croud  
 Of ugly serpents; horror on them fell,  
 And horrid sympathy; for, what they saw,  
 They felt themselves, now changing; down their arms, 600  
 Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast;  
 And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form  
 Caught, by contagion; like in punishment,  
 As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant,  
 Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame  
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood  
 A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,  
 His will who reigns above, to aggravate  
 Their penance, laden with fair fruit, like that  
 Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve 610  
 Used by the Tempter: on that prospect strange  
 Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining  
 For one forbidden tree a multitude  
 Now risen, to work them further woe or shame;  
 Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,  
 Though to delude them sent, could not abstain;  
 But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees  
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks  
 That curled Megaera: greedily they plucked  
 The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew 620  
 Near that bituminous lake where Sodom flamed;  
 This more delusive, not the touch, but taste  
 Deceived; they, fondly thinking to allay  
 Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit  
 Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste  
 With spattering noise rejected: oft they assayed,  
 Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,  
 With hatefullest disrelish writhed their jaws,  
 With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell

Into the same illusion, not as Man 630  
 Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they  
 plagued

And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,  
 Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed;  
 Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo,  
 This annual humbling certain numbered days,  
 To dash their pride, and joy, for Man seduced.

However, some tradition they dispersed  
 Among the Heathen, of their purchase got,  
 And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called 640  
 Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide-  
 Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule  
 Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn driven  
 And Ops, ere yet Dictaeon Jove was born.

Mean while in Paradise the hellish pair  
 Too soon arrived; 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 650  
 On his pale horse: to whom Sin thus began.

Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death!  
 What thinkest thou of our empire now, though earned  
 With travel difficult, not better far  
 Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,  
 Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half starved?  
 Whom thus the Sin-born monster answered soon.

To me, who with eternal famine pine, 660  
 Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven;  
 There best, where most with ravine I may meet;  
 Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems  
 To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corps.

To whom the incestuous mother thus replied.

Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and flowers,  
 Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl;  
 No homely morsels! and, whatever thing 670  
 The sith of Time mows down, devour unspared;  
 Till I, in Man residing, through the race,  
 His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect;

And season him thy last and sweetest prey.

This said, they both betook them several ways,  
 Both to destroy, or unimmortal make  
 All kinds, and for destruction to mature  
 Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,  
 From his transcendent seat the Saints among, 680  
 To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice.

See, with what heat these dogs of Hell advance  
 To waste and havock yonder world, which I  
 So fair and good created; and had still  
 Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man  
 Let in these wasteful furies, who impute  
 Folly to me; so doth the Prince of Hell  
 And his adherents, that with so much ease  
 I suffer them to enter and possess 690  
 A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem  
 To gratify my scornful enemies,  
 That laugh, as if, transported with some fit  
 Of passion, I to them had quitted all,  
 At random yielded up to their misrule;  
 And know not that I called, and drew them thither,  
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth  
 Which Man's polluting sin with taint hath shed  
 On what was pure; til, crammed and gorged, nigh burst  
 With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling 700  
 Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,  
 Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave, at last,  
 Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell  
 For ever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.

Then Heaven and Earth renewed shall be made pure  
 To sanctity, that shall receive no stain:  
 Till then, the curse pronounced on both precedes.

He ended, and the heavenly audience loud 710  
 Sung Halleluiah, 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,  
 Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom  
 New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,

Or down from Heaven descend.—Such was their song;  
 While the Creator, calling forth by name  
 His mighty Angels, gave them several charge, 720  
 As sorted best with present things. The sun  
 Had first his precept so to move, so shine,  
 As might affect the earth with cold and heat  
 Scarce tolerable; and from the north to call  
 Decrepit winter; from the south to bring  
 Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc moon  
 Her office they prescribed; to the other five  
 Their planetary motions, and aspects,  
 In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,  
 Of noxious efficacy, and when to join 730  
 In synod unbenign; and taught the fixed  
 Their influence malignant when to shower,  
 Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,  
 Should prove tempestuous: To the winds they set  
 Their corners, when with bluster to confound  
 Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll  
 With terrour through the dark aerial hall.

Some say, he bid his Angels turn ascense  
 The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,  
 From the sun's axle; they with labour pushed 740  
 Oblique the centrick globe: Some say, the sun  
 Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road  
 Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven  
 Atlantick Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,  
 Up to the Tropick Crab: thence down amain  
 By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,  
 As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change  
 Of seasons to each clime; else had the spring  
 Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers, 750  
 Equal in days and nights, except to those  
 Beyond the polar circles; to them day  
 Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun,  
 To recompense his distance, in their sight  
 Had rounded still the horizon, and not known  
 Or east or west; which had forbid the snow  
 From cold Estotiland, and south as far  
 Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit

The sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned  
 His course intended; else, how had the world  
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now, 760  
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?  
 These changes in the Heavens, though slow, produced  
 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 shore,  
 Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,  
 And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,  
 Boreas, and Caecias, and Argestes loud,  
 And Thrascias, rend the woods, and seas upturn; 770  
 With adverse blast upturns them from the south  
 Notus, and Afer black with thunderous clouds  
 From Serraliona; thwart of these, as fierce,  
 Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent winds,  
 Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral noise,  
 Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began  
 Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,  
 Daughter of Sin, among the irrational  
 Death introduced, through fierce antipathy:  
 Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl, 780  
 And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving,  
 Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe  
 Of Man, but fled him; or, with countenance grim,  
 Glared on him passing. These were from without  
 The growing miseries, which Adam saw  
 Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,  
 To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within;  
 And, in a troubled sea of passion tost,  
 Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint.

790

O miserable of happy! Is this the end  
 Of this new glorious world, and me so late  
 The glory of that glory, who now become  
 Accursed, of blessed? hide me from the face  
 Of God, whom to behold was then my highth  
 Of happiness!—Yet well, if here would end  
 The misery; I deserved it, and would bear

My own deservings; but this will not serve:  
 All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,  
 Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard 800  
 Delightfully, Encrease and multiply;  
 Now death to hear! for what can I encrease,  
 Or multiply, but curses on my head?  
 Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling  
 The evil on him brought by me, will curse  
 My head? Ill fare our ancestor impure,  
 For this we may thank Adam! but his thanks  
 Shall be the execration: so, besides  
 Mine own that bide upon me, all from me  
 Shall with a fierce reflux on me rebound; 810  
 On me, as on their natural center, light  
 Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys  
 Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!  
 Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
 To mould me Man? did I solicit thee  
 From darkness to promote me, or here place  
 In this delicious garden? As my will  
 Concurred not to my being, it were but right  
 And equal to reduce me to my dust;  
 Desirous to resign and render back 820  
 All I received; unable to perform  
 Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold  
 The good I sought not. To the loss of that,  
 Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added  
 The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable  
 Thy justice seems; yet to say truth, too late  
 I thus contest; then should have been refused  
 Those terms whatever, when they were proposed:  
 Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,  
 Then cavil the conditions? And, though God 830  
 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. 840  
 Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,  
 That dust I am, and shall to dust return.  
 O welcome hour whenever! Why delays  
 His hand to execute what his decree  
 Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive,  
 Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out  
 To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet 850  
 Mortality my sentence, and be earth  
 Insensible! How glad would lay me down  
 As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,  
 And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more  
 Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse  
 To me, and to my offspring, would torment me  
 With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt  
 Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;  
 Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of Man  
 Which God inspired, cannot together perish 860  
 With this corporeal clod; then, in the grave,  
 Or in some other dismal place, who knows  
 But I shall die a living death? O thought  
 Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath  
 Of life that sinned; what dies but what had life  
 And sin? The body properly had neither,  
 All of me then shall die: let this appease  
 The doubt, since human reach no further knows.  
 For though the Lord of all be infinite,  
 Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so, 870  
 But mortal doomed. How can he exercise  
 Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end?  
 Can he make deathless death? That were to make  
 Strange contradiction, which to God himself  
 Impossible is held; as argument  
 Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,  
 For anger's sake, finite to infinite,  
 In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour,  
 Satisfied never? That were to extend  
 His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law; 880  
 By which all causes else, according still

To the reception of their matter, act;  
 Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say  
 That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,  
 Bereaving sense, but endless misery  
 From this day onward; which I feel begun  
 Both in me, and without me; and so last  
 To perpetuity;—Ay me! that fear  
 Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution  
 On my defenceless head; both Death and I 890  
 Am found eternal, and incorporate both;  
 Nor I on my part single; in me all  
 Posterity stands cursed: Fair patrimony  
 That I must leave ye, Sons! O, were I able  
 To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!  
 So disinherited, how would you bless  
 Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind,  
 For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemned,  
 It guiltless? But from me what can proceed,  
 But all corrupt; both mind and will depraved 900  
 Not to do only, but to will the same  
 With me? How can they then acquitted stand  
 In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,  
 Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,  
 And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still  
 But to my own conviction: first and last  
 On me, me only, as the source and spring  
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;  
 So might the wrath! Fond wish! couldst thou support  
 That burden, heavier than the earth to bear; 910  
 Than all the world much heavier, though divided  
 With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desirest,  
 And what thou fearest, alike destroys all hope  
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable  
 Beyond all past example and future;  
 To Satan only like both crime and doom.

O Conscience! into what abyss of fears  
 And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which  
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged! 920  
 Thus Adam to himself lamented loud,  
 Through the still night; not now, as ere Man fell,

Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air  
 Accompanied; with damps, and dreadful gloom;  
 Which to his evil conscience represented  
 All things with double terrour: On the ground  
 Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground; and oft  
 Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused  
 Of tardy execution, since denounced  
 The day of his offence. Why comes not Death, 930  
 Said he, with one thrice-acceptable stroke  
 To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,  
 Justice Divine not hasten to be just?  
 But Death comes not at call; Justice Divine  
 Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries,  
 O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!  
 With other echo late I taught your shades  
 To answer, and resound far other song.—  
 Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,  
 Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh, 940  
 Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed:  
 But her with stern regard he thus repelled.

Out of my sight, thou Serpent! That name best  
 Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false  
 And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,  
 Like his, and colour serpentine, may show  
 Thy inward fraud; to warn all creatures from thee  
 Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended  
 To hellish falshood, snare them! But for thee 950  
 I had persisted happy; had not thy pride  
 And wandering vanity, when least was safe,  
 Rejected my forewarning, and disdained  
 Not to be trusted; longing to be seen,  
 Though by the Devil himself; him overweening  
 To over-reach; but, with the serpent meeting,  
 Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee  
 To trust thee from my side; imagined wise,  
 Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;  
 And understood not all was but a show, 960  
 Rather than solid virtue; all but a rib  
 Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,  
 More to the part sinister, from me drawn;

Well if thrown out, as supernumerary  
 To my just number found. O! why did God,  
 Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
 With Spirits masculine, create at last  
 This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
 Of nature, and not fill the world at once  
 With Men, as Angels, without feminine; 970  
 Or find some other way to generate  
 Mankind? This mischief had not been befallen,  
 And more that shall befall; innumerable  
 Disturbances on earth through female snares,  
 And strait conjunction with this sex: for either  
 He never shall find out fit mate, but such  
 As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;  
 Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain  
 Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained  
 By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld 980  
 By parents; or his happiest choice too late  
 Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound  
 To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:  
 Which infinite calamity shall cause  
 To human life, and houshold peace confound.

He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,  
 Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing  
 And tresses all disordered, at his feet  
 Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought 990  
 His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint.

Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness Heaven  
 What love sincere, and reverence in my heart  
 I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,  
 Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant  
 I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,  
 Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,  
 Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,  
 My only strength and stay: Forlorn of thee, 1000  
 Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?  
 While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,  
 Between us two let there be peace; both joining,  
 As joined in injuries, one enmity  
 Against a foe by doom express assigned us,

That cruel Serpent: On me exercise not  
 Thy hatred for this misery befallen;  
 On me already lost, me than thyself  
 More miserable! Both have sinned; but thou  
 Against God only; I against God and thee; 1010  
 And to the place of judgement will return,  
 There with my cries importune Heaven; that all  
 The sentence, from thy head removed, may light  
 On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe;  
 Me, me only, just object of his ire!  
 She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,  
 Immoveable, till peace obtained from fault  
 Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought  
 Commiseration: Soon his heart relented  
 Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight, 1020  
 Now at his feet submissive in distress;  
 Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,  
 His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid:  
 As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,  
 And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon.  
 Unwary, and too desirous, as before,  
 So now of what thou knowest not, who desirest  
 The punishment all on thyself; alas!  
 Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain 1030  
 His full wrath, whose thou feelest as yet least part,  
 And my displeasure bearest so ill. If prayers  
 Could alter high decrees, I to that place  
 Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,  
 That on my head all might be visited;  
 Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,  
 To me committed, and by me exposed.  
 But rise;—let us no more contend, nor blame  
 Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive 1040  
 In offices of love, how we may lighten  
 Each other's burden, in our share of woe;  
 Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,  
 Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil;  
 A long day's dying, to augment our pain;  
 And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.  
 To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied.

Adam, by sad experiment I know 1050  
 How little weight my words with thee can find,  
 Found so erroneous; thence by just event  
 Found so unfortunate: Nevertheless,  
 Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place  
 Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain  
 Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart  
 Living or dying, from thee I will not hide  
 What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,  
 Tending to some relief of our extremes,  
 Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable, 1060  
 As in our evils, and of easier choice.  
 If care of our descent perplex us most,  
 Which must be born to certain woe, devoured  
 By Death at last; and miserable it is  
 To be to others cause of misery,  
 Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring  
 Into this cursed world a woeful race,  
 That after wretched life must be at last  
 Food for so foul a monster; in thy power 1070  
 It lies, yet ere conception to prevent  
 The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.  
 Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death  
 Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two  
 Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.  
 But if thou judge it hard and difficult,  
 Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain  
 From love's due rights, nuptial embraces sweet; 1080  
 And with desire to languish without hope,  
 Before the present object languishing  
 With like desire; which would be misery  
 And torment less than none of what we dread;  
 Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free  
 From what we fear for both, let us make short,—  
 Let us seek Death;—or, he not found, supply  
 With our own hands his office on ourselves:  
 Why stand we longer shivering under fears,  
 That show no end but death, and have the power, 1090  
 Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,  
 Destruction with destruction to destroy?—

She ended here, or vehement despair  
 Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts  
 Had entertained, as dyed her cheeks with pale.

But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,  
 To better hopes his more attentive mind  
 Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied.

1100

Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems  
 To argue in thee something more sublime  
 And excellent, than what thy mind contemns;  
 But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes  
 That excellence thought in thee; and implies,  
 Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret  
 For loss of life and pleasure overloved.

Or if thou covet death, as utmost end  
 Of misery, so thinking to evade  
 The penalty pronounced; doubt not but God  
 Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire, than so  
 To be forestalled; much more I fear lest death,  
 So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain  
 We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts  
 Of contumacy will provoke the Highest  
 To make death in us live: Then let us seek

1110

Some safer resolution, which methinks  
 I have in view, calling to mind with heed  
 Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise  
 The Serpent's head; piteous amends! unless  
 Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,  
 Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived  
 Against us this deceit: To crush his head  
 Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost  
 By death brought on ourselves, or childless days  
 Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe  
 Shal 'scape his punishment ordained, and we  
 Instead shall double ours upon our heads.

1120

1130

No more be mentioned then of violence  
 Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness,  
 That cuts us off from hope; and savours only  
 Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,

Reluctance against God and his just yoke  
 Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild  
 And gracious temper he both heard, and judged,  
 Without wrath or reviling; we expected  
 Immediate dissolution, which we thought  
 Was meant by death that day; when lo! to thee           1140  
 Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,  
 And bringing forth; soon recompensed with joy,  
 Fruit of thy womb: On me the curse aslope  
 Glanced on the ground; with labour I must earn  
 My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;  
 My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold  
 Or heat should injure us, his timely care  
 Hath, unbesought, provided; and his hands  
 Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged;  
 How much more, if we pray him, will his ear           1150  
 Be open, and his heart to pity incline,  
 And teach us further by what means to shun  
 The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!  
 Which now the sky, with various face, begins  
 To show us in this mountain; while the winds  
 Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks  
 Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek  
 Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish  
 Our limbs benumbed, ere this diurnal star  
 Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams           1160  
 Reflected may with matter sere foment;  
 Or, by collision of two bodies, grind  
 The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds  
 Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,  
 Tine the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driven down  
 Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine;  
 And sends a comfortable heat from far,  
 Which might supply the sun: Such fire to use,  
 And what may else be remedy or cure  
 To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,           1170  
 He will instruct us praying, and of grace  
 Beseeching him; so as we need not fear  
 To pass commodiously this life, sustained  
 By him with many comforts, till we end



In dust, our final rest and native home.

What better can we do, than, to the place  
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall  
Before him reverent; and there confess  
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears 1180  
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air  
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign  
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn  
From his displeasure; in whose look serene,  
When angry most he seemed and most severe,  
What else but favour, grace, and mercy, shone?  
So spake our father penitent; nor Eve 1190  
Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place  
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell  
Before him reverent; and both confessed  
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged; with tears  
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air  
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign  
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

## BOOK XI

Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood  
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above  
Prevenient grace descending had removed  
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh  
Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed  
Unutterable; which the Spirit of prayer  
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight  
Than loudest oratory: Yet their port  
Not of mean suitors; nor important less  
Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair       10  
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,  
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore  
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine  
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers  
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds  
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed  
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then clad  
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,  
By their great intercessour, came in sight  
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son       20  
Presenting, thus to intercede began.

See Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung  
From thy implanted grace in Man; these sighs  
And prayers, which in this golden censer mixed  
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring;  
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed  
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those  
Which, his own hand manuring, all the trees  
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen       30

From innocence. Now therefore, bend thine ear  
 To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;  
 Unskilful with what words to pray, let me  
 Interpret for him; me, his advocate  
 And propitiation; all his works on me,  
 Good, or not good, ingraft; my merit those  
 Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.

Accept me; and, in me, from these receive  
 The smell of peace toward mankind: let him live 40  
 Before thee reconciled, at least his days  
 Numbered, though sad; till death, his doom, (which I  
 To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse,)  
 To better life shall yield him: where with me  
 All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss;  
 Made one with me, as I with thee am one.

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene.

All thy request for Man, accepted Son, 50  
 Obtain; all thy request was my decree:  
 But, longer in that Paradise to dwell,  
 The law I gave to Nature him forbids:  
 Those pure immortal elements, that know,  
 No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,  
 Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off,  
 As a distemper, gross, to air as gross,  
 And mortal food; as may dispose him best  
 For dissolution wrought by sin, that first  
 Distempered all things, and of incorrupt 60  
 Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts  
 Created him endowed; with happiness,  
 And immortality: that fondly lost,  
 This other served but to eternize woe;  
 Till I provided death: so death becomes  
 His final remedy; and, after life,  
 Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined  
 By faith and faithful works, to second life,  
 Waked in the renovation of the just,  
 Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed. 70

But let us call to synod all the Blest,  
 Through Heaven's wide bounds: from them I will not hide

My judgements; how with mankind I proceed,  
 As how with peccant Angels late they saw,  
 And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.

He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
 To the bright minister that watched; he blew  
 His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps 80  
 When God descended, and perhaps once more  
 To sound at general doom. The angelick blast  
 Filled all the regions: from their blisful bowers  
 Of amarantine shade, fountain or spring,  
 By the waters of life, where'er they sat  
 In fellowships of joy, the sons of light  
 Hasted, resorting to the summons high;  
 And took their seats; till from his throne supreme  
 The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will.

90

O Sons, like one of us Man is become  
 To know both good and evil, since his taste  
 Of that defended fruit; but let him boast  
 His knowledge of good lost, and evil got;  
 Happier! had it sufficed him to have known  
 Good by itself, and evil not at all.

He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,  
 My motions in him; longer than they move,  
 His heart I know, how variable and vain, 100  
 Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand  
 Reach also of the tree of life, and eat,  
 And live for ever, dream at least to live  
 For ever, to remove him I decree,  
 And send him from the garden forth to till  
 The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.

Michael, this my behest have thou in charge;  
 Take to thee from among the Cherubim  
 Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend, 110  
 Or in behalf of Man, or to invade  
 Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:  
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God  
 Without remorse drive out the sinful pair;  
 From hallowed ground the unholy; and denounce  
 To them, and to their progeny, from thence

Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint  
 At the sad sentence rigorously urged,  
 (For I behold them softened, and with tears  
 Bewailing their excess,) all terrour hide. 120

If patiently thy bidding they obey,  
 Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal  
 To Adam what shall come in future days,  
 As I shall thee enlighten; intermix  
 My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed;  
 So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:  
 And on the east side of the garden place,  
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,  
 Cherubick watch; and of a sword the flame 130  
 Wide-waving; all approach far off to fright,  
 And guard all passage to the tree of life:  
 Lest Paradise a receptacle prove  
 To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey;  
 With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude.

He ceased; and the arch-angelick Power prepared  
 For swift descent; with him the cohort bright  
 Of watchful Cherubim: four faces each  
 Had, like a double Janus; all their shape 140  
 Spangled with eyes more numerous than those  
 Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drowse,  
 Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed  
 Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Mean while,  
 To re-salute the world with sacred light,  
 Leucothea waked; and with fresh dews imbalmed  
 The earth; when Adam and first matron Eve  
 Had ended now their orisons, and found  
 Strength added from above; new hope to spring  
 Out of despair; joy, but with fear yet linked; 150  
 Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed.

Eve, easily my faith admit, that all  
 The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;  
 But, that from us aught should ascend to Heaven  
 So prevalent as to concern the mind  
 Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,  
 Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer  
 Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne

Even to the seat of God. For since I sought 160  
 By prayer the offended Deity to appease;  
 Kneeled, and before him humbled all my heart;  
 Methought I saw him placable and mild,  
 Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew  
 That I was heard with favour; peace returned  
 Home to my breast, and to my memory  
 His promise, that thy seed shall bruise our foe;  
 Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now  
 Assures me that the bitterness of death  
 Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee, 170  
 Eve rightly called, mother of all mankind,  
 Mother of all things living, since by thee  
 Man is to live; and all things live for Man.  
 To whom thus Eve with sad demeanour meek.  
 Ill-worthy I such title should belong  
 To me transgressour; who, for thee ordained  
 A help, became thy snare; to me reproach  
 Rather belongs, distrust, and all dispraise: 180  
 But infinite in pardon was my Judge,  
 That I, who first brought death on all, am graced  
 The source of life; next favourable thou,  
 Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf'st,  
 Far other name deserving. But the field  
 To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,  
 Though after sleepless night; for see! the morn,  
 All unconcerned with our unrest, begins  
 Her rosy progress smiling: let us forth;  
 I never from thy side henceforth to stray, 190  
 Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoined  
 Laborious, till day droop; while here we dwell,  
 What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?  
 Here let us live, though in fallen state, content.  
 So spake, so wished much humbled Eve; but Fate  
 Subscribed not: Nature first gave signs, impressed  
 On bird, beast, air; air suddenly eclipsed,  
 After short blush of morn; nigh in her sight  
 The bird of Jove, stooped from his aery tour, 200  
 Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;  
 Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,

First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,  
 Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;  
 Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.

Adam observed, and with his eye the chase  
 Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake.

O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh, 210

Which Heaven, by these mute signs in Nature, shows  
 Forerunners of his purpose; or to warn

Us, haply too secure, of our discharge  
 From penalty, because from death released

Some days: how long, and what till then our life,  
 Who knows? or more than this, that we are dust,  
 And thither must return, and be no more?

Why else this double object in our sight

Of flight pursued in the air, and o'er the ground,

One way the self-same hour? why in the east 220

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

More orient in yon western cloud, that draws

O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,

And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?

He erred not; for by this the heavenly bands

Down from a sky of jasper lighted now

In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;

A glorious apparition, had not doubt

And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.

230

Not that more glorious, when the Angels met

Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw

The field pavilioned with his guardians bright;

Nor that, which on the flaming mount appeared

In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,

Against the Syrian king, who to surprise

One man, assassin-like, had levied war,

War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch

In their bright stand there left his Powers, to seize

Possession of the garden; he alone, 240

To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,

Not unperceived of Adam; who to Eve,

While the great visitant approached, thus spake.

Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps

Of us will soon determine, or impose  
 New laws to be observed; for I descry,  
 From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,  
 One of the heavenly host; and, by his gait,  
 None of the meanest; some great Potentate 250  
 Or of the Thrones above; such majesty  
 Invests him coming! yet not terrible,  
 That I should fear; nor sociably mild,  
 As Raphael, that I should much confide;  
 But solemn and sublime; whom not to offend,  
 With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.

He ended: and the Arch-Angel soon drew nigh,  
 Not in his shape celestial, but as man 260  
 Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms  
 A military vest of purple flowed,  
 Livelier than Meliboean, or the grain  
 Of Sarra, worn by kings and heroes old  
 In time of truce; Iris had dipt the woof;  
 His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime  
 In manhood where youth ended; by his side,  
 As in a glistering zodiack, hung the sword,  
 Satan's dire dread; and in his hand the spear.

Adam bowed low; he, kingly, from his state 270  
 Inclined not, but his coming thus declared.

Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs:  
 Sufficient that thy prayers are heard; and Death,  
 Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,  
 Defeated of his seisure many days  
 Given thee of grace; wherein thou mayest repent,  
 And one bad act with many deeds well done  
 Mayest cover: Well may then thy Lord, appeased,  
 Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim; 280  
 But longer in this Paradise to dwell  
 Permits not: to remove thee I am come,  
 And send thee from the garden forth to till  
 The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.

He added not; for Adam at the news  
 Heart-struck with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,  
 That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen



Yet all had heard, with audible lament  
 Discovered soon the place of her retire. 290

O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!  
 Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave  
 Thee, native soil! these happy walks and shades,  
 Fit haunt of Gods? where I had hope to spend,  
 Quiet though sad, the respite of that day  
 That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,  
 That never will in other climate grow,  
 My early visitation, and my last  
 At even, which I bred up with tender hand 300  
 From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,  
 Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank  
 Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?  
 Thee lastly, nuptial bower! by me adorned  
 With what to sight or smell was sweet! from thee  
 How shall I part, and whither wander down  
 Into a lower world; to this obscure  
 And wild, how shall we breathe in other air  
 Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?  
 Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild. 310

Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign  
 What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,  
 Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine:  
 Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes  
 Thy husband; whom to follow thou art bound;  
 Where he abides, think there thy native soil.

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp  
 Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned, 320  
 To Michael thus his humble words addressed.

Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named  
 Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem  
 Prince above princes! gently hast thou told  
 Thy message, which might else in telling wound,  
 And in performing end us; what besides  
 Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,  
 Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,  
 Departure from this happy place, our sweet 330  
 Recess, and only consolation left

Familiar to our eyes! all places else  
 Inhospitable appear, and desolate;  
 Nor knowing us, nor known: And, if by prayer  
 Incessant I could hope to change the will  
 Of Him who all things can, I would not cease  
 To weary him with my assiduous cries:  
 But prayer against his absolute decree  
 No more avails than breath against the wind,  
 Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth: 340  
 Therefore to his great bidding I submit.

This most afflicts me, that, departing hence,  
 As from his face I shall be hid, deprived  
 His blessed countenance: Here I could frequent  
 With worship place by place where he vouchsafed  
 Presence Divine; and to my sons relate,  
 On this mount he appeared; under this tree  
 Stood visible; among these pines his voice  
 I heard; here with him at this fountain talked: 350

So many grateful altars I would rear  
 Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone  
 Of lustre from the brook, in memory,  
 Or monument to ages; and thereon  
 Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers:  
 In yonder nether world where shall I seek  
 His bright appearances, or foot-step trace?  
 For though I fled him angry, yet recalled  
 To life prolonged and promised race, I now  
 Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts 360  
 Of glory; and far off his steps adore.

To whom thus Michael with regard benign.  
 Adam, thou knowest Heaven his, and all the Earth;  
 Not this rock only; his Omnipresence fills  
 Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,  
 Fomented by his virtual power and warmed:  
 All the earth he gave thee to possess and rule,  
 No despicable gift; surmise not then 370  
 His presence to these narrow bounds confined  
 Of Paradise, or Eden: this had been  
 Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread  
 All generations; and had hither come

From all the ends of the earth, to celebrate  
And reverence thee, their great progenitor.

But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down  
To dwell on even ground now with thy sons:  
Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain, 380  
God is, as here; and will be found alike  
Present; and of his presence many a sign  
Still following thee, still compassing thee round  
With goodness and paternal love, his face  
Express, and of his steps the track divine.

Which that thou mayest believe, and be confirmed  
Ere thou from hence depart; know, I am sent  
To show thee what shall come in future days 390  
To thee, and to thy offspring: good with bad  
Expect to hear; supernal grace contending  
With sinfulness of men; thereby to learn  
True patience, and to temper joy with fear  
And pious sorrow; equally inured  
By moderation either state to bear,  
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead  
Safest thy life, and best prepared endure  
Thy mortal passage when it comes.—Ascend  
This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)  
Here sleep below; while thou to foresight wakest; 400  
As once thou sleptst, while she to life was formed.

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied.

Ascend, I follow thee, safe Guide, the path  
Thou leadest me; and to the hand of Heaven submit,  
However chastening; to the evil turn  
My obvious breast; arming to overcome  
By suffering, and earn rest from labour won, 410  
If so I may attain.—So both ascend  
In the visions of God. It was a hill,  
Of Paradise the highest; from whose top  
The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,  
Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.

Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,  
Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set  
Our second Adam, in the wilderness;

To show him all Earth's kingdoms, and their glory. 420

His eye might there command wherever stood  
 City of old or modern fame, the seat  
 Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls  
 Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,  
 And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,  
 To Paquin of Sinaean kings; and thence  
 To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul,  
 Down to the golden Chersonese; or where  
 The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since  
 In Hispahan; or where the Russian Ksar 430  
 In Mosco; or the Sultan in Bizance,  
 Turchestan-born; nor could his eye not ken  
 The empire of Negus to his utmost port  
 Ercoco, and the less maritim kings  
 Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,  
 And Sofala, thought Ophir, to the realm  
 Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;  
 Or thence from Niger flood to Atlas mount  
 The kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,  
 Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen; 440  
 On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway  
 The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw  
 Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,  
 And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat  
 Of Atabalipa; and yet unspoiled  
 Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons  
 Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights  
 Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,  
 Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight  
 Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue 450  
 The visual nerve, for he had much to see;  
 And from the well of life three drops instilled.

So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,  
 Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,  
 That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,  
 Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced;  
 But him the gentle Angel by the hand  
 Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled.

460

Adam, now ope thine eyes; and first behold  
 The effects, which thy original crime hath wrought  
 In some to spring from thee; who never touched  
 The excepted tree; nor with the snake conspired;  
 Nor sinned thy sin; yet from that sin derive  
 Corruption, to bring forth more violent deeds.

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,  
 Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves  
 New reaped; the other part sheep-walks and folds; 470  
 I' the midst an altar as the land-mark stood,

Rustick, of grassy sord; thither anon  
 A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought  
 First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,  
 Unculled, as came to hand; a shepherd next,  
 More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,  
 Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid  
 The inwards and their fat, with incense strowed,  
 On the cleft wood, and all due rights performed:

His offering soon propitious fire from Heaven 480  
 Consumed with nimble glance, and grateful steam;  
 The other's not, for his was not sincere;  
 Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,  
 Smote him into the midriff with a stone  
 That beat out life; he fell; and, deadly pale,  
 Groaned out his soul with gushing blood effused.

Much at that sight was Adam in his heart  
 Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried. 490

O Teacher, some great mischief hath befallen  
 To that meek man, who well had sacrificed;  
 Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?  
 To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied.

These two are brethren, Adam, and to come  
 Out of thy loins; the unjust the just hath slain,  
 For envy that his brother's offering found  
 From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact 500  
 Will be avenged; and the other's faith, approved,  
 Lose no reward; though here thou see him die,  
 Rolling in dust and gore. To which our sire.

Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!  
 But have I now seen Death? Is this the way  
 I must return to native dust? O sight  
 Of terrour, foul and ugly to behold,  
 Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!  
 To whom thus Michael. Death thou hast seen  
 In his first shape on Man; but many shapes 510  
 Of Death, and many are the ways that lead  
 To his grim cave, all dismal; yet to sense  
 More terrible at the entrance, than within.

Some, as thou sawest, by violent stroke shall die;  
 By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more  
 In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall bring  
 Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew  
 Before thee shall appear; that thou mayest know 520  
 What misery the inabstinence of Eve  
 Shall bring on Men. Immediately a place  
 Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;  
 A lazar-house it seemed; wherein were laid  
 Numbers of all diseased; all maladies  
 Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms  
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,  
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,  
 Intestine stone and ulcer, colick-pangs,  
 Demoniack phrenzy, moaping melancholy,  
 And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy, 530  
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,  
 Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair  
 Tended the sick busiest from couch to couch;  
 And over them triumphant Death his dart  
 Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked  
 With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.

Sight so deform what heart of rock could long 540  
 Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,  
 Though not of woman born; compassion quelled  
 His best of man, and gave him up to tears  
 A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess;  
 And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed.

O miserable mankind, to what fall  
 Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!  
 Better end here unborn. Why is life given  
 To be thus wrested from us? rather, why 550  
 Otruded on us thus? who, if we knew  
 What we receive, would either no accept  
 Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down;  
 Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus  
 The image of God in Man, created once  
 So goodly and erect, though faulty since,  
 To such unsightly sufferings be debased  
 Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,  
 Retaining still divine similitude  
 In part, from such deformities be free, 560  
 And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?  
 Their Maker's image, answered Michael, then  
 Forsook them, when themselves they vilified  
 To serve ungoverned Appetite; and took  
 His image whom they served, a brutish vice,  
 Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.  
 Therefore so abject is their punishment,  
 Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own;  
 Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced; 570  
 While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules  
 To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they  
 God's image did not reverence in themselves.  
 I yield it just, said Adam, and submit.  
 But is there yet no other way, besides  
 These painful passages, how we may come  
 To death, and mix with our connatural dust?  
 There is, said Michael, if thou well observe 580  
 The rule of Not too much; by temperance taught,  
 In what thou eatest and drinkest; seeking from thence  
 Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,  
 Till many years over thy head return:  
 So mayest thou live; till, like ripe fruit, thou drop  
 Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease  
 Gathered, nor harshly plucked; for death mature:  
 This is Old Age; but then, thou must outlive  
 Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty; which will change

To withered, weak, and gray; thy senses then, 590  
 Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,  
 To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,  
 Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign  
 A melancholy damp of cold and dry  
 To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume  
 The balm of life. To whom our ancestor.

Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong  
 Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit,  
 Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge; 600  
 Which I must keep till my appointed day  
 Of rendering up, and patiently attend  
 My dissolution. Michael replied.

Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest  
 Live well; how long, or short, permit to Heaven:  
 And now prepare thee for another sight.

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon  
 Were tents of various hue; by some, were herds 610  
 Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound  
 Of instruments, that made melodious chime,  
 Was heard, of harp and organ; and, who moved  
 Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch,  
 Instinct through all proportions, low and high,  
 Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.

In other part stood one who, at the forge  
 Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass  
 Had melted, (whether found where casual fire 620  
 Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,  
 Down to the veins of earth; thence gliding hot  
 To some cave's mouth; or whether washed by stream  
 From underground;) the liquid ore he drained  
 Into fit moulds prepared; from which he formed  
 First his own tools; then, what might else be wrought  
 Fusil or graven in metal. After these,  
 But on the hither side, a different sort  
 From the high neighbouring hills, which was their seat,  
 Down to the plain descended; by their guise 630  
 Just men they seemed, and all their study bent  
 To worship God aright, and know his works



Not hid; nor those things last, which might preserve  
 Freedom and peace to Men; they on the plain  
 Long had not walked, when from the tents, behold!  
 A bevy of fair women, richly gay  
 In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung  
 Soft amorous ditties, and in dance came on:  
 The men, though grave, eyed them; and let their eyes  
 Rove without rein; till, in the amorous net 640  
 Fast caught, they liked; and each his liking chose;  
 And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,  
 Love's harbinger, appeared; then, all in heat  
 They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke  
 Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:  
 With feast and musick all the tents resound.

Such happy interview, and fair event  
 Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,  
 And charming symphonies, attached the heart 650  
 Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,  
 The bent of nature; which he thus expressed.

True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest;  
 Much better seems this vision, and more hope  
 Of peaceful days portends, than those two past;  
 Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;  
 Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends.

To whom thus Michael. Judge not what is best 660  
 By pleasure, though to nature seeming meet;  
 Created, as thou art, to nobler end  
 Holy and pure, conformity divine.

Those tents thou sawest so pleasant, were the tents  
 Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race  
 Who slew his brother; studious they appear  
 Of arts that polish life, inventers rare;  
 Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit  
 Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none. 670

Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;  
 For that fair female troop thou sawest, that seemed  
 Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,  
 Yet empty of all good wherein consists  
 Woman's domestick honour and chief praise;

Bred only and completed to the taste  
 Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,  
 To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye: 680  
 To these that sober race of men, whose lives  
 Religious titled them the sons of God,  
 Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame  
 Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles  
 Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy,  
 Erelong to swim at large; and laugh, for which  
 The world erelong a world of tears must weep.  
 To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft.  
 O pity and shame, that they, who to live well 690  
 Entered so fair, should turn aside to tread  
 Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint!  
 But still I see the tenour of Man's woe  
 Holds on the same, from Woman to begin.  
 From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,  
 Said the Angel, who should better hold his place  
 By wisdom, and superiour gifts received.  
 But now prepare thee for another scene. 700  
 He looked, and saw wide territory spread  
 Before him, towns, and rural works between;  
 Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,  
 Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,  
 Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise;  
 Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,  
 Single or in array of battle ranged  
 Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood; 710  
 One way a band select from forage drives  
 A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,  
 From a fat meadow ground; or fleecy flock,  
 Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,  
 Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,  
 But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray;  
 With cruel tournament the squadrons join;  
 Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies  
 With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field,  
 Deserted: Others to a city strong  
 Lay siege, encamped; by battery, scale, and mine, 720

Assaulting; others from the wall defend  
 With dart and javelin, stones, and sulphurous fire;  
 On each hand slaughter, and gigantick deeds.

In other part the sceptered heralds call  
 To council, in the city-gates; anon  
 Gray-headed men and grave, with warriours mixed,  
 Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon,  
 In factious opposition; till at last,  
 Of middle age one rising, eminent 730  
 In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,  
 Of justice, or religion, truth, and peace,  
 And judgement from above: him old and young  
 Exploded, and had seized with violent hands,  
 Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence  
 Unseen amid the throng: so violence  
 Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,  
 Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.

Adam was all in tears, and to his guide 740  
 Lamenting turned full sad; O! what are these,  
 Death's ministers, not men? who thus deal death  
 Inhumanly to men, and multiply  
 Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew  
 His brother: for of whom such massacre  
 Make they, but of their brethren; men of men  
 But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven  
 Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?  
 To whom thus Michael. These are the product  
 Of those ill-mated marriages thou sawest; 750  
 Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves  
 Abhor to join; and, by imprudence mixed,  
 Produce prodigious births of body or mind.

Such were these giants, men of high renown;  
 For in those days might only shall be admired,  
 And valour and heroick virtue called;  
 To overcome in battle, and subdue  
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
 Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch 760  
 Of human glory; and for glory done  
 Of triumph, to be styled great conquerours  
 Patrons of mankind, Gods, and sons of Gods;

Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.

Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;  
And what most merits fame, in silence hid.

But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheldst  
The only righteous in a world perverse, 770  
And therefore hated, therefore so beset  
With foes, for daring single to be just,  
And utter odious truth, that God would come  
To judge them with his Saints; him the Most High  
Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds  
Did, as thou sawest, receive, to walk with God  
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,  
Exempt from death; to show thee what reward  
Awaits the good; the rest what punishment;  
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold. 780

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed;  
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;  
All now was turned to jollity and game,  
To luxury and riot, feast and dance;  
Marrying or prostituting, as befel,  
Rape or adultery, where passing fair  
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.

At length a reverend sire among them came, 790  
And of their doings great dislike declared,  
And testified against their ways; he oft  
Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,  
Triumphs or festivals; and to them preached  
Conversion and repentance, as to souls  
In prison, under judgements imminent:  
But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceased  
Contending, and removed his tents far off;  
Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,  
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk; 800  
Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth;  
Smeared round with pitch; and in the side a door  
Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,  
For man and beast: when lo, a wonder strange!  
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,  
Came sevens, and pairs; and entered in as taught

Their order: last the sire and his three sons,  
 With their four wives; and God made fast the door.  
 Mean while the south-wind rose, and, with black wings 810  
 Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove  
 From under Heaven; the hills to their supply  
 Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,  
 Sent up amain; and now the thickened sky  
 Like a dark ceiling stood; down rushed the rain  
 Impetuous; and continued, till the earth  
 No more was seen: the floating vessel swum  
 Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow  
 Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else  
 Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp 820  
 Deep under water rolled; sea covered sea,  
 Sea without shore; and in their palaces,  
 Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped  
 And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,  
 All left, in one small bottom swum embarked.  
 How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold  
 The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,  
 Depopulation! Thee another flood,  
 Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned, 830  
 And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared  
 By the Angel, on thy feet thou stoodest at last,  
 Though comfortless; as when a father mourns  
 His children, all in view destroyed at once;  
 And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint.  
 O visions ill foreseen! Better had I  
 Lived ignorant of future! so had borne  
 My part of evil only, each day's lot  
 Enough to bear; those now, that were dispensed 840  
 The burden of many ages, on me light  
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth  
 Abortive, to torment me ere their being,  
 With thought that they must be. Let no man seek  
 Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall  
 Him or his children; evil he may be sure,  
 Which neither his foreknowing can prevent;  
 And he the future evil shall no less  
 In apprehension than in substance feel,

Grievous to bear: but that care now is past, 850  
 Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped  
 Famine and anguish will at last consume,  
 Wandering that watery desart: I had hope,  
 When violence was ceased, and war on earth,  
 All would have then gone well; peace would have crowned  
 With length of happy days the race of Man;  
 But I was far deceived; for now I see  
 Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.

How comes it thus? unfold, celestial Guide, 860  
 And whether here the race of Man will end.

To whom thus Michael. Those, whom last thou sawest  
 In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they  
 First seen in acts of prowess eminent  
 And great exploits, but of true virtue void;  
 Who, having spilt much blood, and done much wast  
 Subduing nations, and achieved thereby  
 Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey;  
 Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth, 870  
 Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride  
 Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.

The conquered also, and enslaved by war,  
 Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose  
 And fear of God; from whom their piety feigned  
 In sharp contest of battle found no aid  
 Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,  
 Thenceforth shall practice how to live secure,  
 Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords 880

Shall leave them to enjoy; for the earth shall bear  
 More than enough, that temperance may be tried:  
 So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved;  
 Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;  
 One man except, the only son of light  
 In a dark age, against example good,  
 Against allurements, custom, and a world  
 Offended: fearless of reproach and scorn,  
 Or violence, he of their wicked ways  
 Shall them admonish; and before them set 890  
 The paths of righteousness, how much more safe  
 And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come

On their impenitence; and shall return  
 Of them derided, but of God observed  
 The one just man alive; by his command  
 Shall build a wonderous ark, as thou beheldst,  
 To save himself, and houshold, from amidst  
 A world devote to universal wrack.

No sooner he, with them of man and beast 900  
 Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged,  
 And sheltered round; but all the cataracts  
 Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour  
 Rain, day and night; all fountains of the deep,  
 Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp  
 Beyond all bounds; till inundation rise  
 Above the highest hills: Then shall this mount  
 Of Paradise by might of waves be moved  
 Out of his place, pushed by the horned flood,  
 With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift, 910  
 Down the great river to the opening gulf,  
 And there take root an island salt and bare,  
 The haunt of seals, and orcs, and sea-mews' clang:  
 To teach thee that God attributes to place  
 No sanctity, if none be thither brought  
 By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.

And now, what further shall ensue, behold.

He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood, 920  
 Which now abated; for the clouds were fled,  
 Driven by a keen north-wind, that, blowing dry,  
 Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed;  
 And the clear sun on his wide watery glass  
 Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,  
 As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink  
 From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole  
 With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopt  
 His sluces, as the Heaven his windows shut.

930  
 The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,  
 Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.

And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear;  
 With clamour thence the rapid currents drive,

Towards the retreating sea, their furious tide.

Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,  
 And after him, the surer messenger,  
 A dove sent forth once and again to spy 940  
 Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:

The second time returning, in his bill  
 An olive-leaf he brings, pacifick sign:  
 Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark  
 The ancient sire descends, with all his train;  
 Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,  
 Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds  
 A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow  
 Conspicuous with three lifted colours gay,  
 Betokening peace from God, and covenant new. 950

Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,  
 Greatly rejoiced; and thus his joy broke forth.

O thou, who future things canst represent  
 As present, heavenly Instructor! I revive  
 At this last sight; assured that Man shall live,  
 With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.

Far less I now lament for one whole world 960  
 Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice  
 For one man found so perfect, and so just,  
 That God vouchsafes to raise another world  
 From him, and all his anger to forget.

But say, what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven  
 Distended, as the brow of God appeased?  
 Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind  
 The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,  
 Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth? 970  
 To whom the Arch-Angel. Dextrously thou aimest;  
 So willingly doth God remit his ire,  
 Though late repenting him of Man depraved;  
 Grieved at his heart, when looking down he saw  
 The whole earth filled with violence, and all flesh  
 Corrupting each their way; yet, those removed,  
 Such grace shall one just man find in his sight,  
 That he relents, not to blot out mankind;  
 And makes a covenant never to destroy



The earth again by flood; nor let the sea  
Surpass his bounds; nor rain to drown the world,  
With man therein or beast; but, when he brings  
Over the earth a cloud, will therein set  
His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look,  
And call to mind his covenant: Day and night,  
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,  
Shall hold their course; till fire purge all things new,  
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell.

980

## BOOK XII

As one who in his journey bates at noon,  
Though bent on speed; so here the Arch-Angel paused  
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,  
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;  
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes.

Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and end;  
And Man, as from a second stock, proceed.

Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive 10  
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine  
Must needs impair and weary human sense:  
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;  
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.

This second source of Men, while yet but few,  
And while the dread of judgement past remains  
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,  
With some regard to what is just and right 20  
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace;  
Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,  
Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock,  
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,  
With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast,  
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed; and dwell  
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,  
Under paternal rule: till one shall rise  
Of proud ambitious heart; who, not content  
With fair equality, fraternal state,  
Will arrogate dominion undeserved 30  
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 sovrantry;  
 And from rebellion shall derive his name,  
 Though of rebellion others he accuse.

40

He with a crew, whom like ambition joins  
 With him or under him to tyrannize,  
 Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find  
 The plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge  
 Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell:  
 Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build  
 A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven;  
 And get themselves a name; lest, far dispersed  
 In foreign lands, their memory be lost;  
 Regardless whether good or evil fame.

50

But God, who oft descends to visit men  
 Unseen, and through their habitations walks  
 To mark their doings, them beholding soon,  
 Comes down to see their city, ere the tower  
 Obstruct Heaven-towers, and in derision sets  
 Upon their tongues a various spirit, to rase  
 Quite out their native language; and, instead,  
 To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:

60

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 displeas'd.

70

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 80  
 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 abhorrest  
 That son, who on the quiet state of men  
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue  
 Rational liberty; yet know withal, 90  
 Since thy original lapse, true liberty  
 Is lost, which always with right reason dwells  
 Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being:  
 Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,  
 Immediately inordinate desires,

And upstart passions, catch the government  
 From reason; and to servitude reduce  
 Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits  
 Within himself unworthy powers to reign  
 Over free reason, God, in judgement just, 100  
 Subjects him from without to violent lords;  
 Who oft as undeservedly enthrall  
 His outward freedom: Tyranny must be;  
 Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.

Yet sometimes nations will decline so low  
 From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,  
 But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,  
 Deprives them of their outward liberty;  
 Their inward lost: Witness the irreverent son 110  
 Of him who built the ark; who, for the shame  
 Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,  
 Servant of servants, on his vicious race.

Thus will this latter, as the former world,  
 Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last,  
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw

His presence from among them, and avert  
 His holy eyes; resolving from thenceforth  
 To leave them to their own polluted ways; 120  
 And one peculiar nation to select  
 From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,  
 A nation from one faithful man to spring:  
 Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,  
 Bred up in idol-worship: O, that men  
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,  
 While yet the patriarch lived, who 'scaped the flood,  
 As to forsake the living God, and fall  
 To worship their own work in wood and stone  
 For Gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes 130  
 To call by vision, from his father's house,  
 His kindred, and false Gods, into a land  
 Which he will show him; and from him will raise  
 A mighty nation; and upon him 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 canst not, with what faith  
 He leaves his Gods, his friends, and native soil,  
 Ur of Chaldaeae, passing now the ford 140  
 To Haran; after him 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 Sechem, and the neighbouring plain  
 Of Moreh; there by promise he receives  
 Gift to his progeny of all that land,  
 From Hameth northward to the Desert south; 150  
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed;)  
 From Hermon east to the great western Sea;  
 Mount Hermon, yonder sea; each place behold  
 In prospect, as I point them; on the shore  
 Mount Carmel; here, the double-founded stream,  
 Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons  
 Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.

This ponder, that all nations of the earth

Shall in his seed be blessed: By that seed 160  
 Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise  
 The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon  
 Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,  
 Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,  
 A son, and of his son a grand-child, leaves;  
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown:  
 The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs  
 From Canaan to a land hereafter called  
 Egypt, divided by the river Nile  
 See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths 170  
 Into the sea. To sojourn in that land  
 He comes, invited by a younger son  
 In time of dearth, a son whose worthy deeds  
 Raise him to be the second in that realm  
 Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race  
 Growing into a nation, and now grown  
 Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks  
 To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests  
 Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves  
 Inhospitably, and kills their infant males: 180  
 Till by two brethren (these two brethren call  
 Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim  
 His people from enthralment, they return,  
 With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.

But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies  
 To know their God, or message to regard,  
 Must be compelled by signs and judgements dire;  
 To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;  
 Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill 190  
 With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;  
 His cattle must of rot and murren die;  
 Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,  
 And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,  
 Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptians sky,  
 And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;  
 What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,  
 A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down  
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;  
 Darkness must overshadow all his bounds, 200

Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;  
 Last, with one midnight stroke, all the first-born  
 Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds  
 The river-dragon tamed at length submits  
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft  
 Humbles his stubborn heart; but still, as ice  
 More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage  
 Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea  
 Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass,  
 As on dry land, between two crystal walls; 210  
 Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand  
 Divided, till his rescued gain their shore:  
 Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,  
 Though present in his Angel; who shall go  
 Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire;  
 By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire;  
 To guide them in their journey, and remove  
 Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:  
 All night he will pursue; but his approach  
 Darkness defends between till morning watch; 220  
 Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,  
 God looking forth will trouble all his host,  
 And craze their chariot-wheels: when by command  
 Moses once more his potent rod extends  
 Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;  
 On their embattled ranks the waves return,  
 And overwhelm their war: The race elect  
 Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance  
 Through the wild Desert, not the readiest way;  
 Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed, 230  
 War terrify them inexpert, and fear  
 Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather  
 Inglorious life with servitude; for life  
 To noble and ignoble is more sweet  
 Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.

This also shall they gain by their delay  
 In the wide wilderness; there they shall found  
 Their government, and their great senate choose  
 Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained: 240  
 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  
 Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God  
 To mortal ear is dreadful: They beseech 250  
 That Moses might report to them his will,  
 And terrour 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 foretel,  
 And all the Prophets in their age the times  
 Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites  
 Established, such delight hath God in Men  
 Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes 260  
 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 mercy-seat of gold, between the wings  
 Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn  
 Seven lamps as in a zodiack representing  
 The heavenly fires; over the tent a cloud 270  
 Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night;  
 Save when they journey, and at length they come,  
 Conducted by his Angel, to the land  
 Promised to Abraham and his seed:—The rest  
 Were long to tell; how many battles fought  
 How many kings destroyed; and kingdoms won;  
 Or how the sun shall in mid Heaven stand still  
 A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,  
 Man's voice commanding, "Sun, in Gibeon stand,  
 And thou moon in the vale of Aialon, 280  
 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,  
Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things  
Thou hast revealed; those chiefly, which concern  
Just Abraham and his seed: now first I find  
Mine eyes true-opening, and my heart much eased;  
Erewhile perplexed with thoughts, what would become 290  
Of me and all mankind: But now I see  
His day, in whom all nations shall be blest;  
Favour 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? 300  
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  
Their natural pravity, by stirring up  
Sin against law to fight: that when they see  
Law can discover sin, but not remove,  
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,  
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude  
Some blood more precious must be paid for Man;  
Just for unjust; that, in such righteousness 310  
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 mortal 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 shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit; 320  
From imposition of strict laws to free  
Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear  
To filial; works of law to works of faith.

And therefore shall not Moses, though of God  
 Highly 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 330  
 Through the world's wilderness long-wandered Man  
 Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.

Mean while they, in their earthly Canaan placed,  
 Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins  
 National interrupt their publick peace,  
 Provoking God to raise them enemies;  
 From whom as oft he saves them penitent  
 By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom  
 The second, both for piety renowned 340  
 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's seed to thee foretold,  
 Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust  
 All nations; and to kings foretold, of kings  
 The last; for of his reign shall be no end. 350

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 scroll;  
 Whose foul idolatries, and other faults  
 Heaped to the popular sum, will so incense  
 God, as to leave them, and expose their land, 360  
 Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,  
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey  
 To that proud city, whose high walls thou sawest  
 Left in confusion; Babylon thence called.  
 There in captivity he lets them dwell  
 The space of seventy years; then brings them back,

Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn  
To David, stablished as the days of Heaven. 370

Returned from Babylon by leave of kings  
Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God  
They first re-edify; and for a while  
In mean estate live moderate; till, grown  
In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;  
But first among the priests dissention springs,  
Men who attend the altar, and should most  
Endeavour peace: their strife pollution brings  
Upon the temple itself: at last they seize  
The scepter, and regard not David's sons; 380

Then lose it to a stranger, that the true  
Anointed King Messiah might be born  
Barred of his right; yet at his birth a star,  
Unseen before in Heaven, proclaims him come;  
And guides the eastern sages, who inquire  
His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold:  
His place of birth a solemn Angel tells  
To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;  
They gladly thither haste, and by a quire  
Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung. 390

A virgin is his mother, but his sire  
The power of the Most High: He shall ascend  
The throne hereditary, and bound his reign  
With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens.

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy  
Surcharged, as had like grief been dewed in tears,  
Without the vent of words; which these he breathed. 400

O prophet of glad tidings, finisher  
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand  
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain;  
Why our great Expectation should be called  
The seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, hail,  
High in the love of 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 pain: Say where and when 410  
 Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's heel.  
 To whom thus Michael. Dream not of their fight,  
 As of a duel, or the local wounds  
 Of head or heel: Not therefore joins the Son  
 Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil  
 Thy enemy; nor so is overcome  
 Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,  
 Disabled, not to give thee thy death's wound:  
 Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure, 420  
 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 penalty of death, and suffering death;  
 The penalty to thy transgression due,  
 And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:  
 So only can high Justice rest appaid.  
 The law of God exact he shall fulfil 430  
 Both by obedience and by love, though love  
 Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment  
 He shall endure, by coming in the flesh  
 To a reproachful life, and cursed death;  
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe  
 In his redemption; and that his obedience,  
 Imputed, becomes theirs by faith; his merits  
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works.  
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed, 440  
 Seised on by force, judged, and to death condemned  
 A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross  
 By his own nation; slain for bringing life:  
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies,  
 The law that is against thee, and the sins  
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,  
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust  
 In this his satisfaction; so he dies,  
 But soon revives; Death over him no power  
 Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light 450  
 Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise  
 Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,

Thy ransom paid, which Man from death redeems,  
 His death for Man, as many as offered life  
 Neglect not, and the benefit embrace  
 By faith not void of works: This God-like act  
 Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,  
 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; 460  
 And fix far deeper in his head their stings  
 Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel,  
 Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep,  
 A gentle wafting to immortal life.

Nor after resurrection shall he stay  
 Longer on earth, than certain times to appear  
 To his disciples, men who in his life  
 Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge 470  
 To teach all nations what of him they learned  
 And his salvation; them who shall believe  
 Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign  
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to life  
 Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,  
 For death, like that which the Redeemer died.

All nations they shall teach; for, from that day,  
 Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins  
 Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons  
 Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world; 480  
 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 God's right hand, exalted high  
 Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come, 490  
 When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,  
 With glory and power to judge both quick and dead;  
 To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward  
 His faithful, and receive them into bliss,  
 Whether in Heaven or Earth; for then the Earth

Shall all be Paradise, far happier place  
 Than this of Eden, and far happier days.  
 So spake the Arch-Angel Michael; then paused,  
 As at the world's great period; and our sire, 500  
 Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied.  
 O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense!  
 That all this good of evil shall produce,  
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
 Than that which by creation first brought forth  
 Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,  
 Whether I should repent me now of sin  
 By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice  
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring; 510  
 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 re-ascend, what will betide the few  
 His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,  
 The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide  
 His people, who defend? Will they not deal  
 Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?  
 Be sure they will, said the Angel; but from Heaven 520  
 He to his own a Comforter will send,  
 The promise of the Father, who shall dwell  
 His Spirit within them; and the law of faith,  
 Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,  
 To guide them in all truth; and also arm  
 With spiritual armour, able to resist  
 Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts;  
 What man can do against them, not afraid,  
 Though to the death; against such cruelties  
 With inward consolations recompensed, 530  
 And oft supported so as shall amaze  
 Their proudest persecutors: For the Spirit,  
 Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends  
 To evangelize the nations, then on all  
 Baptized, shall them with wonderous 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, 540  
 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.

550

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 believers; and, from that pretence,  
 Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force  
 On every conscience; laws which none shall find  
 Left them inrolled, or what the Spirit within 560  
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then  
 But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind  
 His consort Liberty? what, but unbuild  
 His living temples, built by faith to stand,  
 Their own faith, not another's? for, on earth,  
 Who against faith and conscience can be heard  
 Infallible? yet many will presume:  
 Whence heavy persecution shall arise  
 On all, who in the worship persevere  
 Of spirit and truth; the rest, far greater part,  
 Will deem in outward rites and specious forms 570  
 Religion satisfied; Truth shall retire  
 Bestuck 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's Seed; obscurely then foretold,  
 Now ampler known thy Saviour and thy Lord; 580  
 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 replied. 590  
 How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,  
 Measured this transient world, the race of time,  
 Till time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss,  
 Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.

Greatly-instructed I shall hence depart;  
 Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill  
 Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;  
 Beyond which was my folly to aspire. 600

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,  
 And love with fear the only God; to walk  
 As in his presence; ever to observe  
 His providence; and on him sole depend,  
 Merciful over all his works, with good  
 Still overcoming evil, and by small  
 Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak  
 Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise  
 By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake 610  
 Is fortitude to highest victory,  
 And, to the faithful, death the gate of life;  
 Taught this by his example, whom I now  
 Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

To whom thus also the Angel last replied.

This having learned, thou hast attained the sum  
 Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars  
 Thou knewest by name, and all the ethereal powers,  
 All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works, 620  
 Or works of God in Heaven, air, earth, or sea,



And all the riches of this world enjoyedst,  
 And all the rule, one empire; only add  
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,  
 Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,  
 By name to come called charity, the soul  
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth  
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess  
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.—  
 Let us descend now therefore from this top 630  
 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; 640  
 Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,  
 The great deliverance by her seed to come  
 (For by the Woman's seed) on all mankind:  
 That ye may live, which will be many days,  
 Both in one faith unanimous, though sad,  
 With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheered  
 With meditation on the happy end.

He ended, and they both descend the hill;  
 Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve 650  
 Lay sleeping, ran before; but found her waked;  
 And thus with words not sad she him received.

Whence thou returnest, and whither wentest, I know;  
 For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise,  
 Which he hath sent propitious, some great good  
 Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress  
 Wearied I fell asleep: But now lead on;  
 In me is no delay; with thee to go,  
 Is to stay here; without thee here to stay, 660  
 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 favour I unworthy am vouchsafed,  
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore.

So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard 670  
Well pleased, but answered not: For now, too nigh  
The Arch-Angel stood; and, from the other hill  
To their fixed station, all in bright array  
The Cherubim descended; on the ground  
Gliding meteorous, as evening-mist  
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,  
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel  
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,  
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,  
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat, 680  
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,  
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat  
In either hand the hastening Angel caught  
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate  
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast  
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,  
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate 690  
With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms:  
Some natural tears they dropt, 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 wandering steps and slow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.