

# Paradise Lost

by John Milton

## Book I

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste Brought death into the World, and all our woe, With loss of Eden, till one greater Man Restore us, and regain the blissful seat, Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed In the beginning how the heavens and earth Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed Fast by the oracle of God, I thence Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song, That with no middle flight intends to soar Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer Before all temples th' upright heart and pure, Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss, And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark Illumine, what is low raise and support; That, to the height of this great argument, I may assert Eternal Providence, And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first— for Heaven hides nothing from thy view, Nor the deep tract of Hell— say first what cause Moved our grand parents, in that happy state, Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off From their Creator, and transgress his will For one restraint, lords of the World besides. Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile, Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived The mother of mankind, what time his pride Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring To set himself in glory above his peers, He trusted to have equalled the Most High, If he opposed, and with ambitious aim Against the throne and monarchy of God, Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud, With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky, With hideous ruin and combustion, down To bottomless perdition, there to dwell 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, Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate. At once, as far as Angels ken, he views The dismal situation waste and wild. A dungeon horrible, on all sides round, As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames No light; but rather darkness visible Served only to discover sights of woe, Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace And rest can never

dwelt, hope never comes That comes to all, but torture without end Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed. Such place Eternal Justice has prepared For those rebellious; here their prison ordained In utter darkness, and their portion set, As far removed from God and light of Heaven As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole. Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell! There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire, He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side, One next himself in power, and next in crime, Long after known in Palestine, and named Beelzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy, And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—

"If thou beest he— but O how fallen! how changed From him who, in the happy realms of light Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine Myriads, though bright!— if he whom mutual league, United thoughts and counsels, equal hope And hazard in the glorious enterprise Joined with me once, now misery hath joined In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest From what height fallen: so much the stronger proved He with his thunder; and till then who knew The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those, Nor what the potent Victor in his rage Can else inflict, do I repent, or change, Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind, And high disdain from sense of injured merit, That with the Mightiest raised me to contend, And to the fierce contentions brought along Innumerable force of Spirits armed, That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring, His utmost power with adverse power opposed In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven, And shook his throne. What though the field be lost? All is not lost— the unconquerable will, And study of revenge, immortal hate, And courage never to submit or yield: And what is else not to be overcome? That glory never shall his wrath or might Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace With suppliant knee, and deify his power Who, from the terror of this arm, so late Doubted his empire— that were low indeed; That were an ignominy and shame beneath This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods, And this empyreal substance, cannot fail; Since, through experience of this great event, In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced, We may with more successful hope resolve To wage by force or guile eternal war, Irreconcilable to our grand Foe, Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake th' apostate Angel, though in pain, Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair; And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:—

"O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers That led th' embattled Seraphim to war Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King, And put to proof his high supremacy, Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate, Too well I see and rue the dire event That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat, Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host In horrible destruction laid thus low, As far as Gods and heavenly Essences Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains Invincible, and vigour soon returns, Though all our glory extinct, and happy state Here swallowed up in endless misery. But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now Of force believe almighty,

since no less Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours) Have left us this our spirit and strength entire, Strongly to suffer and support our pains, That we may so suffice his vengeful ire, Or do him mightier service as his thralls By right of war, whate'er his business be, Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire, Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep? What can it 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, 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 Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail, Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid The fiery surge that from the precipice Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder, Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage, Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep. Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe. Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild, The seat of desolation, void of light, Save what the glimmering of these livid flames Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend From off the tossing of these fiery waves; There rest, if any rest can harbour there; And, re-assembling our afflicted powers, Consult how we may henceforth most offend Our enemy, our own loss how repair, How overcome this dire calamity, What reinforcement we may gain from hope, If not, what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate, With head uplift above the wave, and eyes That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides Prone on the flood, extended long and large, Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge As whom the fables name of monstrous size, Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove, Briareos or Typhon, whom the den By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast Leviathan, which God of all his works Created hugest that swim th' ocean-stream. Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam, The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff, Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell, With fixed anchor in his scaly rind, Moors by his side under the lee, while night Invests the sea, and wished morn delays. So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay, Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will And high permission of all-ruling Heaven Left him at large to his own dark designs, That with reiterated crimes he might Heap on himself damnation, while he sought Evil to others, and enraged might see How all his malice served but to bring forth Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn On Man by him seduced, but on himself Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool His mighty stature; on each hand the flames Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and, rolled In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale. Then with expanded wings he steers his flight

Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air, That felt unusual weight; till on dry land He lights— if it were land that ever burned With solid, as the lake with liquid fire, And such appeared in hue as when the force Of subterranean wind transprots a hill Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side Of thundering Etna, whose combustible And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire, Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds, And leave a singed bottom all involved With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate; Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood As gods, and by their own recovered strength, Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime," Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat That we must change for Heaven?— this mournful gloom For that celestial light? Be it so, since he Who now is sovereign can dispose and bid What shall be right: farthest from him is best Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields, Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail, Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell, Receive thy new possessor— one who brings A mind not to be changed by place or time. The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven. What matter where, if I be still the same, And what I should be, all but less than he Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice, To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell: Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. But wherefore let we then our faithful friends, Th' associates and co-partners of our loss, Lie thus astonished on th' oblivious pool, And call them not to share with us their part In this unhappy mansion, or once more With rallied arms to try what may be yet Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake; and him Beelzebub Thus answered:— "Leader of those armies bright Which, but th' Omnipotent, none could have foiled! If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge Of hope in fears and dangers— heard so oft In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults Their surest signal— they will soon resume New courage and revive, though now they lie Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 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, Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe. His spear— to equal which the tallest pine Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast Of some great ammiral, were but a wand— He walked with, to support uneasy steps Over the burning marl, not like those steps On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire. Nathless he so endured, till on the beach Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called His legions— Angel Forms, who lay entranced Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks In Vallombrosa,

where th' Etrurian shades High over-arched embower; or scattered sedge Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew Busiris and his Memphian chivalry, While with perfidious hatred they pursued The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld From the safe shore their floating 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 Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place After the toil of battle to repose Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven? Or in this abject posture have ye sworn To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern Th' advantage, and, descending, tread us down Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf? Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung Upon the wing, as when men went to watch On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread, Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. Nor did they not perceive the evil plight In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel; Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed Innumerable. As when the potent rod Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day, Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind, That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile; So numberless were those bad Angels seen Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell, 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires; Till, as a signal given, th' uplifted spear Of their great Sultan waving to direct Their course, in even balance down they light On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain: A multitude like which the populous North Poured never from her frozen loins to pass Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons Came like a deluge on the South, and spread Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. Forthwith, from every squadron and each band, The heads and leaders thither haste where stood Their great Commander— godlike Shapes, and Forms Excelling human; princely Dignities; And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones, Though on their names in Heavenly records now Be no memorial, blotted out and rased By their rebellion from the Books of Life. Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the earth, Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man, By falsities and lies the greatest part Of mankind they corrupted to forsake God their Creator, and th' invisible Glory of him that made them to transform Oft to the image of a brute, adorned With gay religions full of pomp and gold, And devils to adore for deities: Then were they known to men by various names, And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last, Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch, At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth Came singly where he stood on the bare strand, While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?

The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix Their seats, long after, next the seat of God, Their altars by his altar, gods adored Among the nations round, and durst abide Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed Within his sanctuary itself their shrines, Abominations; and with cursed things His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, And with their darkness durst affront his light. First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears; Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud, Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain, In Argob and in Basan, to the stream Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart Of Solomon he led by fraud to build His temple right against the temple of God On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell. Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons, From Aroar to Nebo and the wild Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon And Horonaim, Seon's real, beyond The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines, And Eleale to th' Asphaltic Pool: Peor his other name, when he enticed Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile, To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe. Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate, Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell. With these came they who, from the bordering flood Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names Of Baalim and Ashtaroth— those male, These feminine. For Spirits, when they please, Can either sex assume, or both; so soft And uncompounded is their essence pure, Not tried or manacled with joint or limb, Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones, Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose, Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure, Can execute their airy purposes, And works of love or enmity fulfil. For those the race of Israel oft forsook Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left His righteous altar, bowing lowly down To bestial gods; for which their heads as low Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear Of despicable foes. With these in troop Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns; To whose bright image nightly by the moon Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs; In Sion also not unsung, where stood Her temple on th' offensive mountain, built By that uxorious king whose heart, though large, Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind, Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured The Syrian damsels to lament his fate In amorous ditties all a summer's day, While smooth Adonis from his native rock Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale Infected Sion's daughters with like heat, Whose wanton passions in the sacred proch Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led, His eye surveyed the dark idolatries Of alienated Judah. Next came one Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off, In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge, Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers: Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man And downward fish; yet had his temple high

Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,  
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds. Him followed Rimmon, whose  
delightful seat Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks Of Abbana and Pharphar,  
lucid streams. He also against the house of God was bold: A leper once he lost,  
and gained a king— Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew God's altar to  
disparage and displace For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn His odious  
offerings, and adore the gods Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared A  
crew who, under names of old renown— Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train— With  
monstrous shapes and sorceries abused Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek Their  
wandering gods disguised in brutish forms Rather than human. Nor did Israel  
scape Th' infection, when their borrowed gold composed The calf in Oreb; and the  
rebel king Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan, Likening his Maker to the  
grazed ox— Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed From Egypt marching,  
equalled with one stroke Both her first-born and all her bleating gods. Belial came  
last; than whom a Spirit more lewd Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love  
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he  
In temples and at altars, when the priest Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled  
With lust and violence the house of God? In courts and palaces he also reigns,  
And in luxurious cities, where the noise Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
And injury and outrage; and, when night Darkens the streets, then wander forth  
the sons Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine. Witness the streets of Sodom,  
and that night In Gibeah, when the hospitable door Exposed a matron, to avoid  
worse rape.

These were the prime in order and in might: The rest were long to tell;  
though far renowned Th' Ionian gods— of Javan's issue held Gods, yet confessed  
later than Heaven and Earth, Their boasted parents;— Titan, Heaven's first-born,  
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized By younger Saturn: he from  
mightier Jove, His own and Rhea's son, like measure found; So Jove usurping  
reigned. These, first in Crete And Ida known, thence on the snowy top Of cold  
Olympus ruled the middle air, Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff, Or in  
Dodona, and through all the bounds Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old Fled  
over Adria to th' Hesperian fields, And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with looks Downcast and damp; yet  
such wherein appeared Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief Not  
in despair, to have found themselves not lost In loss itself; which on his  
countenance cast Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride Soon recollecting,  
with high words, that bore Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised Their  
fainting courage, and dispelled their fears. Then straight commands that, at the  
warlike sound Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared His mighty standard.  
That proud honour claimed Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall: Who forthwith from  
the glittering staff unfurled Th' imperial ensign; which, full high advanced, Shone  
like a meteor streaming to the wind, With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,  
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:  
At which the universal host up-sent A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond

Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night. All in a moment through the gloom were seen Ten thousand banners rise into the air, With orient colours waving: with them rose A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms Appeared, and serried shields in thick array Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood Of flutes and soft recorders— such as raised To height of noblest temper heroes old Arming to battle, and instead of rage Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved With dread of death to flight or foul retreat; Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they, Breathing united force with fixed thought, Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now Advanced in view they stand— a horrid front Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield, Awaiting what command their mighty Chief Had to impose. He through the armed files Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse The whole battalion views— their order due, Their visages and stature as of gods; Their number last he sums. And now his heart Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength, Glories: for never, since created Man, Met such embodied force as, named with these, Could merit more than that small infantry Warred on by cranes— though all the giant brood Of Phlegra with th' heroic race were joined That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds In fable or romance of Uther's son, Begirt with British and Armoric knights; And all who since, baptized or infidel, Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban, Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond, Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore When Charlemain with all his peerage fell By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed Their dread Commander. He, above the rest In shape and gesture proudly eminent, Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost All her original brightness, nor appeared Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen Looks through the horizontal misty air Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon, In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds On half the nations, and with fear of change Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone Above them all th' Archangel: but his face Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast Signs of remorse and passion, to behold The fellows of his crime, the followers rather (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned For ever now to have their lot in pain— Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced Of Heaven, and from eteranl splendours flung For his revolt— yet faithful how they stood, Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines, With singed top their stately growth, though bare, Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend From wing to wing, and half enclose him round With all his peers: attention held them mute. Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn, Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last Words interwove with sighs found out their way:—

"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers Matchless, but with th' Almight!— and that strife Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire, As this place testifies, and this dire change, Hateful to utter. But what power of mind, Forseeing or presaging, from the depth Of knowledge past or present, could have feared How such united force of gods, how such As stood like these, could ever know repulse? For who can yet believe, though after loss, That all these puissant legions, whose exile Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend, Self-raised, and repossess their native seat? For me, be witness all the host of Heaven, If counsels different, or danger shunned By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute, Consent or custom, and his regal state Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed— Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall. Henceforth his might we know, and know our own, So as not either to provoke, or dread New war provoked: our better part remains To work in close design, by fraud or guile, What force effected not; that he no less At length from us may find, who overcomes By force hath overcome but half his foe. Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long Intended to create, and therein plant A generation whom his choice regard Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven. Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps Our first eruption— thither, or elsewhere; For this infernal pit shall never hold Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyss Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired; For who can think submission? War, then, war Open or understood, must be resolved."

He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war, Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire Shone with a glossy scurf— undoubted sign That in his womb was hid metallic ore, The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed, A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed, Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field, Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on— Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts Were always downward bent, admiring more The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold, Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed In vision beatific. By him first Men also, and by his suggestion taught, Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew Opened into the hill a spacious wound, And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best Deserve the precious bane. And here let those Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings, Learn how their greatest monuments of fame And strength, and art, are easily outdone By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour What in an age they, with incessant toil And

hands innumerable, scarce perform. Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,  
That underneath had veins of liquid fire Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude  
With wondrous art founded the massy ore, Severing each kind, and scummed the  
bullion-dross. A third as soon had formed within the ground A various mould, and  
from the boiling cells By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook; As in an  
organ, from one blast of wind, To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.  
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge Rose like an exhalation, with the sound Of  
dulcet symphonies and voices sweet— Built like a temple, where pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid With golden architrave; nor did there want  
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven; The roof was fretted gold. Not  
Babylon Nor great Alcairo such magnificence Equalled in all their glories, to  
enshrine Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria  
strove In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile Stood fixed her stately height, and  
straight the doors, Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide Within, her ample  
spaces o'er the smooth And level pavement: from the arched roof, Pendent by  
subtle magic, many a row Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed With naptha  
and asphaltus, yielded light As from a sky. The hasty multitude Admiring entered;  
and the work some praise, And some the architect. His hand was known In  
Heaven by many a towered structure high, Where sceptred Angels held their  
residence, And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King Exalted to such power, and  
gave to rule, Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright. Nor was his name unheard  
or unadored In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land Men called him Mulciber;  
and how he fell From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove Sheer o'er the  
crystal battlements: from morn To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve, A  
summer's day, and with the setting sun Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,  
On Lemnos, th' Aegaeon isle. Thus they relate, Erring; for he with this rebellious  
rout Fell long before; nor aught aviled him now To have built in Heaven high  
towers; nor did he scape By all his engines, but was headlong sent, With his  
industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the winged Heralds, by command Of sovereign power, with  
awful ceremony And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim A solemn  
council forthwith to be held At Pandemonium, the high capital Of Satan and his  
peers. Their summons called From every band and squared regiment By place or  
choice the worthiest: they anon With hundreds and with thousands trooping came  
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates And porches wide, but chief the  
spacious hall (Though like a covered field, where champions bold Wont ride in  
armed, and at the Soldan's chair Defied the best of Paynim chivalry To mortal  
combat, or career with lance), Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,  
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees In spring-time, when the Sun  
with Taurus rides. Pour forth their populous youth about the hive In clusters; they  
among fresh dews and flowers Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank, The  
suburb of their straw-built citadel, New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer  
Their state-affairs: so thick the airy crowd Swarmed and were straitened; till, the  
signal given, Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed In bigness to surpass

Earth's giant sons, Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room Throng  
numberless— like that pygmean race Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,  
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,  
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth  
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance Intent, with jocund music  
charm his ear; At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds. Thus incorporeal  
Spirits to smallest forms Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,  
Though without number still, amidst the hall Of that infernal court. But far within,  
And in their own dimensions like themselves, The great Seraphic Lords and  
Cherubim In close recess and secret conclave sat, A thousand demi-gods on  
golden seats, Frequent and full. After short silence then, And summons read, the  
great consult began.

## **Book II**

High on a throne of royal state, which far Outshone the wealth or 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  
imagination thus displayed:—

"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!— For, since no deep within  
her gulf can hold Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen, I give not Heaven  
for lost: from this descent Celestial Virtues rising will appear More glorious and  
more dread than from no fall, And trust themselves to fear no second fate!— Me  
though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven, Did first create your leader— next,  
free choice With what besides in council or in fight Hath been achieved of merit—  
yet this loss, Thus far at least recovered, hath much more Established in a safe,  
unenvied throne, Yielded with full consent. The happier state In Heaven, which  
follows dignity, might draw Envy from each inferior; but who here Will envy  
whom the highest place exposes Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim  
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share Of endless pain? Where there is,  
then, no good For which to strive, no strife can grow up there From faction: for  
none sure will claim in Hell Precedence; none whose portion is so small Of  
present pain that with ambitious mind Will covet more! With this advantage, then,  
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord, More than can be in Heaven, we now  
return To claim our just inheritance of old, Surer to prosper than prosperity  
Could have assured us; and by what best way, Whether of open war or covert guile,  
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king, Stood up— the strongest  
and the fiercest Spirit That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair. His trust was  
with th' Eternal to be deemed Equal in strength, and rather than be less Cared not  
to be at all; with that care lost Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse, He

recked not, and these words thereafter spake:—

"My sentence is for open war. Of wiles, More unexpert, I boast not: them let those Contrive who need, or when they need; not now. For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest— Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait The signal to ascend— sit lingering here, Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame, The prison of his ryranny who reigns By our delay? No! let us rather choose, Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way, Turning our tortures into horrid arms Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise Of his almighty engine, he shall hear Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see Black fire and horror shot with equal rage Among his Angels, and his throne itself Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire, His own invented torments. But perhaps The way seems difficult, and steep to scale With upright wing against a higher foe! Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench Of that forgetful lake benumb not still, That in our porper motion we ascend Up to our native seat; descent and fall To us is adverse. Who but felt of late, When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep, With what compulsion and laborious flight We sunk thus low? Th' ascent is easy, then; Th' event is feared! Should we again provoke Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find To our destruction, if there be in Hell Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned In this abhorred deep to utter woe! Where pain of unextinguishable fire Must exercise us without hope of end The vassals of his anger, when the scourge Inexorably, and the torturing hour, Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus, We should be quite abolished, and expire. What fear we then? what doubt we to incense His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged, Will either quite consume us, and reduce To nothing this essential— happier far Than miserable to have eternal being!— Or, if our substance be indeed divine, And cannot cease to be, we are at worst On this side nothing; and by proof we feel Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven, And with perpetual inroads to alarm, Though inaccessible, his fatal throne: Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."

He ended frowning, and his look denounced Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous To less than gods. On th' other side up rose Belial, in act more graceful and humane. A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed For dignity composed, and high exploit. But all was false and hollow; though his tongue Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear The better reason, to perplex and dash Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low— To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear, And with persuasive accent thus began:—

"I should be much for open war, O Peers, As not behind in hate, if what was urged Main reason to persuade immediate war Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast Ominous conjecture on the whole success; When he who most excels in fact of arms, In what he counsels and in what excels Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair And utter dissolution, as the scope Of all his aim, after some

dire revenge. First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled With armed watch, that render all access Impregnable: oft on the boding Deep Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing Scout far and wide into the realm of Night, Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise With blackest insurrection to confound Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy, All incorruptible, would on his throne Sit unpolluted, and th' ethereal mould, Incapable of stain, would soon expel Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire, Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope Is flat despair: we must exasperate Th' Almighty Victor to spend all his rage; And that must end us; that must be our cure— To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose, Though full of pain, this intellectual being, Those thoughts that wander through eternity, To perish rather, swallowed up and lost In the wide womb of uncreated Night, Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows, Let this be good, whether our angry Foe Can give it, or will ever? How he can Is doubtful; that he never will is sure. Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire, Belike through impotence or unaware, To give his enemies their wish, and end Them in his anger whom his anger saves To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?' Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed, Reserved, and destined to eternal woe; Whatever doing, what can we suffer more, What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst— Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms? What when we fled amain, pursued and struck With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse. What if the breath that kindled those grim fires, Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage, And plunge us in the flames; or from above Should intermitted vengeance arm again His red right hand to plague us? What if all Her stores were opened, and this firmament Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire, Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall One day upon our heads; while we perhaps, Designing or exhorting glorious war, Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled, Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey Or racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains, There to converse with everlasting groans, Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved, Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse. War, therefore, open or concealed, alike My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's height All these our motions vain sees and derides, Not more almighty to resist our might Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles. Shall we, then, live thus vile— the race of Heaven Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here Chains and these torments? Better these than worse, By my advice; since fate inevitable Subdues us, and omnipotent decree, The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do, Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust That so ordains. This was at first resolved, If we were wise, against so great a foe Contending, and so doubtful what might fall. I laugh when those who at the spear are bold And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear What yet they know must follow— to endure Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain, The sentence of their Conqueror. This is now Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear, Our Supreme Foe in time may

much remit His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed, Not mind us not offending, satisfied With what is punished; whence these raging fires Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames. Our purer essence then will overcome Their noxious vapour; or, inured, not feel; Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed In temper and in nature, will receive Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain, This horror will grow mild, this darkness light; Besides what hope the never-ending flight Of future days may bring, what chance, what change Worth waiting— since our present lot appears For happy though but ill, for ill not worst, If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb, Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth, Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—

"Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven We war, if war be best, or to regain Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife. The former, vain to hope, argues as vain The latter; for what place can be for us Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord supreme We overpower? Suppose he should relent And publish grace to all, on promise made Of new subjection; with what eyes could we Stand in his presence humble, and receive Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing Forced hallelujahs, while he lordly sits Our envied sovereign, and his altar breathes Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers, Our servile offerings? This must be our task In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome Eternity so spent in worship paid To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue, By force impossible, by leave obtained Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek Our own good from ourselves, and from our own Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess, Free and to none accountable, preferring Hard liberty before the easy yoke Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear Then most conspicuous when great things of small, Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse, We can create, and in what place soe'er Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain Through labour and endurance. This deep world Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire Choose to reside, his glory unobscured, And with the majesty of darkness round Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar. Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell! As he our darkness, cannot we his light Imitate when we please? This desert soil Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold; Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more? Our torments also may, in length of time, Become our elements, these piercing fires As soft as now severe, our temper changed Into their temper; which must needs remove The sensible of pain. All things invite To peaceful counsels, and the settled state Of order, how in safety best we may Compose our present evils, with regard Of what we are and where, dismissing quite All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled Th' assembly as when hollow rocks retain The sound of blustering winds, which all night long Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose

bark by chance Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay After the tempest. Such applause was heard As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased, Advising peace: for such another field They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear Of thunder and the sword of Michael Wrought still within them; and no less desire To found this nether empire, which might rise, By policy and long process of time, In emulation opposite to Heaven. Which when Beelzebub perceived— than whom, Satan except, none higher sat— with grave Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven Deliberation sat, and public care; And princely counsel in his face yet shone, Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look Drew audience and attention still as night Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:—

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven, Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote Inclines— here to continue, and build up here A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream, And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league Banded against his throne, but to remain In strictest bondage, though thus far removed, Under th' inevitable curb, reserved His captive multitude. For he, to be sure, In height or depth, still first and last will reign Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part By our revolt, but over Hell extend His empire, and with iron sceptre rule Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven. What sit we then projecting peace and war? War hath determined us and foiled with loss Irreparable; terms of peace yet none Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given To us enslaved, but custody severe, And stripes and arbitrary punishment Inflicted? and what peace can we return, But, to our power, hostility and hate, Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow, Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice In doing what we most in suffering feel? Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need With dangerous expedition to invade Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege, Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find Some easier enterprise? There is a place (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven Err not)— another World, the happy seat Of some new race, called Man, about this time To be created like to us, though less In power and excellence, but favoured more Of him who rules above; so was his will Pronounced among the Gods, and by an oath That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed. Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn What creatures there inhabit, of what mould Or substance, how endued, and what their power And where their weakness: how attempted best, By force of subtlety. Though Heaven be shut, And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, The utmost border of his kingdom, left To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps, Some advantageous act may be achieved By sudden onset— either with Hell-fire To waste his whole creation, or possess All as our own, and drive, as we were driven, The puny habitants; or, if not drive, Seduce them to our party, that their God May

prove their foe, and with repenting hand Abolish his own works. This would surpass Common revenge, and interrupt his joy In our confusion, and our joy upraise In his disturbance; when his darling sons, 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 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, Nearer our ancient seat— perhaps in view Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms, And opportune excursion, we may chance Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light, Secure, and at the brightening orient beam Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air, To heal the scar of these corrosive fires, Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send In search of this new World? whom shall we find Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss, And through the palpable obscure find out His uncouth way, or spread his airy flight, Upborne with indefatigable wings Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive The happy Isle? What strength, what art, can then Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe, Through the strict senteries and stations thick Of Angels watching round? Here he had need All circumspection: and we now no less Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held His look suspense, awaiting who appeared To second, or oppose, or undertake The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each In other's countenance read his own dismay, Astonished. None among the choice and prime Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found So hardy as to proffer or accept, Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last, Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised Above his fellows, with monarchal pride Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—

"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones! With reason hath deep silence and demur Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light. Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire, Outrageous to devour, immures us round Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant, Barred over us, prohibit all egress. These passed, if any pass, the void profound Of unessential Night receives him next, Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf. If thence he scape, into whatever world, Or unknown region, what remains him less Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape? But I should ill become this throne, O Peers, And this imperial sovereignty, adorned

With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed And judged of public moment in the shape Of difficulty or danger, could deter Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume These royalties, and not refuse to reign, Refusing to accept as great a share Of hazard as of honour, due alike To him who reigns, and so much to him due Of hazard more as he above the rest High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers, Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at home, While here shall be our home, what best may ease The present misery, and render Hell More tolerable; if there be cure or charm To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek Deliverance for us all. This enterprise None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose The Monarch, and prevented all reply; Prudent lest, from his resolution raised, Others among the chief might offer now, Certain to be refused, what erst they feared, And, so refused, might in opinion stand His rivals, winning cheap the high repute Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they Dreaded not more th' adventure than his voice Forbidding; and at once with him they rose. Their rising all at once was as the sound Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend With awful reverence prone, and as a God Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven. Nor failed they to express how much they praised That for the general safety he despised His own: for neither do the Spirits damned Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites, Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief: As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or shower, If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet, Extend his evening beam, the fields revive, The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings. O shame to men! Devil with devil damned Firm concord holds; men only disagree Of creatures rational, though under hope Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace, Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife Among themselves, and levy cruel wars Wasting the earth, each other to destroy: As if (which might induce us to accord) Man had not hellish foes enow besides, That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth In order came the grand infernal Peers: Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed Alone th' antagonist of Heaven, nor less Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme, And god-like imitated state: him round A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms. Then of their session ended they bid cry With trumpet's regal sound the great result: Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy, By herald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss Heard far adn wide, and all the host of Hell With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim. Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised By false presumptuous hope, the ranged Powers Disband; and, wandering, each his several way Pursues, as inclination or sad choice Leads him perplexed,

where he may likeliest find Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain The irksome hours, till his great Chief return. Part on the plain, or in the air sublime, Upon the wing or in swift race contend, As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields; Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form: As when, to warn proud cities, war appears Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush To battle in the clouds; before each van Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears, Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms From either end of heaven the welkin burns. Others, with vast Typhoean rage, more fell, Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:— As when Alcides, from Oechalia crowned With conquest, felt th' envenomed robe, and tore Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines, And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw Into th' Euboic sea. Others, more mild, Retreated in a silent valley, sing With notes angelical to many a harp Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall By doom of battle, and complain that Fate Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance. Their song was partial; but the harmony (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?) Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet (For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense) Others apart sat on a hill retired, In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate— Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, And found no end, in wandering mazes lost. Of good and evil much they argued then, Of happiness and final misery, Passion and apathy, and glory and shame: Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!— Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm Pain for a while or anguish, and excite Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdured breast With stubborn patience as with triple steel. Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, On bold adventure to discover wide That dismal world, if any clime perhaps Might yield them easier habitation, bend Four ways their flying march, along the banks Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge Into the burning lake their baleful streams— Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate; Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep; Cocytus, named of lamentation loud Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton, Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage. Far off from these, a slow and silent stream, Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks Forthwith his former state and being forgets— Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain. Beyond this flood a frozen continent Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice, A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air Burns frore, and cold performs th' effect of fire. Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled, At certain revolutions all the damned Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce, From beds of raging fire to starve in ice Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine Immovable, infixed, and frozen round Periods of time,— thence hurried back to fire. They ferry over this Lethean sound Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment, And wish and struggle, as they pass, to

reach The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe, All in one moment, and so near the brink; But Fate withstands, and, to oppose th' attempt, Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards The ford, and of itself the water flies All taste of living wight, as once it fled The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on In confused march forlorn, th' adventurous bands, With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast, Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale They passed, and many a region dolorous, O'er many a frozen, many a fiery alp, Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death— A universe of death, which God by curse Created evil, for evil only good; Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds, Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things, 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 Up to the fiery concave towering high. As when far off at sea a fleet descried Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood, Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape, Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof, And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass, Three iron, three of adamant rock, Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire, Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat On either side a formidable Shape. The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, But ended foul in many a scaly fold, Voluminous and vast— a serpent armed With mortal sting. About her middle round A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep, If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb, And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore; Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called In secret, riding through the air she comes, Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape— If shape it might be called that shape had none Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb; Or substance might be called that shadow seemed, For each seemed either— black it stood as Night, Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell, And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head The likeness of a kingly crown had on. Satan was now at hand, and from his seat The monster moving onward came as fast With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode. Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admired— Admired, not feared (God and his Son except, Created thing naught valued he nor shunned), And with disdainful look thus first began:—

"Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape, That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance Thy miscreated front athwart my way To yonder gates? Through

them I mean to pass, That be assured, without leave asked of thee. Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof, Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven."

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:— "Art thou that traitor Angel? art thou he, Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons, Conjured against the Highest— for which both thou And they, outcast from God, are here condemned To waste eternal days in woe and pain? And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn, Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more, Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment, False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings, Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart Strange horror seize thee, and pang unfelt before."

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape, So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold, More dreadful and deform. On th' other side, Incensed with indignation, Satan stood Unterrified, and like a comet burned, That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands No second stroke intend; and such a frown Each cast at th' other as when two black clouds, With heaven's artillery fraught, came rattling on Over the Caspian,— then stand front to front Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow To join their dark encounter in mid-air. So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood; For never but once more was wither like To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung, Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key, Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

"O father, what intends thy hand," she cried, "Against thy only son? What fury, O son, Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom? For him who sits above, and laughs the while At thee, ordained his drudge to execute Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids— His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!"

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest Forbore: then these to her Satan returned:—

"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange Thou interposest, that my sudden hand, Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds What it intends, till first I know of thee What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why, In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son. I know thee not, nor ever saw till now Sight more detestable than him and thee."

T' whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:— "Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem Now in thine eye so foul?— once deemed so fair In Heaven, when at th' assembly, and in sight Of all the Seraphim with thee combined In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King, All on a sudden miserable pain Surprised thee, dim thine eyes and dizzy swum In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide, Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright, Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed, Out of thy head

I sprung. Amazement seized All th' host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign Portentous held me; but, familiar grown, I pleased, and with attractive graces won The most averse— thee chiefly, who, full oft Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing, Becam'st enamoured; and such joy thou took'st With me in secret that my womb conceived A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose, And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe Clear victory; to our part loss and rout Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell, Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down Into this Deep; and in the general fall I also: at which time this powerful key Into my hands was given, with charge to keep These gates for ever shut, which none can pass Without my opening. Pensive here I sat Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb, Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown, Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. At last this odious offspring whom thou seest, Thine own begotten, breaking violent way, Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew Transformed: but he my inbred enemy Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart, Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out Death! Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed From all her caves, and back resounded Death! I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems, Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far, Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed, And, in embraces forcible and foul Engendering with me, of that rape begot These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry Surround me, as thou saw'st— hourly conceived And hourly born, with sorrow infinite To me; for, when they list, into the womb That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round, That rest or intermission none I find. Before mine eyes in opposition sits Grim Death, my son and foe, who set them on, And me, his parent, would full soon devour For want of other prey, but that he knows His end with mine involved, and knows that I Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane, Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced. But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope To be invulnerable in those bright arms, Through tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint, Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:—

"Dear daughter— since thou claim'st me for thy sire, And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of— know, I come no enemy, but to set free From out this dark and dismal house of pain Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed, Fell with us from on high. From them I go This uncouth errand sole, and one for all Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread Th' unfounded Deep, and through the void immense To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold Should be— and, by concurring signs, ere now Created vast and round— a place of bliss In the purlieus of Heaven; and therein placed A race of upstart creatures, to supply Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed, Lest

Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude, Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught Than this more secret, now designed, I haste To know; and, this once known, shall soon return, And bring ye to the place where thou and Death Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."

He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:—

"The key of this infernal Pit, by due And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King, I keep, by him forbidden to unlock These adamantine gates; against all force Death ready stands to interpose his dart, Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might. But what owe I to his commands above, Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down Into this gloom of Tartarus profound, To sit in hateful office here confined, Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly born— Here in perpetual agony and pain, With terrors and with clamours compassed round Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed? Thou art my father, thou my author, thou My being gav'st me; whom should I obey But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon To that new world of light and bliss, among The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key, Sad instrument of all our woe, she took; And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train, Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew, Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns Th' intricate wards, and every bolt and bar Of massy iron or solid rock with ease Unfastens. On a sudden open fly, With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood, That with extended wings a bannered host, Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through With horse and chariots ranked in loose array; So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame. Before their eyes in sudden view appear The secrets of the hoary Deep— a dark Illimitable ocean, without bound, Without dimension; where length, breadth, and height, And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise Of endless wars, and by confusion stand. For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce, Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring Their embryon atoms: they around the flag Of each his faction, in their several clans, Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow, Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil, Levied to side with warring winds, and poise Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits, And by decision more embroils the fray By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter, Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss, The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave, Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor

fire, But all these in their pregnant causes mixed Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight, Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain His dark materials to create more worlds— Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while, Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed With noises loud and ruinous (to compare Great things with small) than when Bellona storms With all her battering engines, bent to rase Some capital city; or less than if this frame Of Heaven were falling, and these elements In mutiny had from her axle torn The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans He spread for flight, and, in the surging smoke Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league, As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets A vast vacuity. All unawares, Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance, The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud, Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him As many miles aloft. That fury stayed— Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea, Nor good dry land— nigh foundered, on he fares, Treading the crude consistence, half on foot, Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail. As when a gryphon through the wilderness With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale, Pursues the 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, And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. At length a universal hubbub wild Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused, Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthroned Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things, The consort of his reign; and by them stood Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name Of Demogorgon; Rumour next, and Chance, And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled, And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:— "Ye Powers And Spirtis of this nethermost Abyss, Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy With purpose to explore or to disturb The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint Wandering this darksome desert, as my way Lies through your spacious empire up to light, Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek, What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place, From your dominion won, th' Ethereal King Possesses lately, thither to arrive I travel this profound. Direct my course: Directed, no mean recompense it brings To your behoof, if I that region lost, All usurpation thence expelled, reduce To her original darkness and your sway (Which is my present journey), and once more Erect the standard there of ancient Night. Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge!"

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old, With faltering speech and visage incomposed, Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art— \*\*\* That mighty

leading Angel, who of late Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown. I saw and heard; for such a numerous host Fled not in silence through the frighted Deep, With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates Poured out by millions her victorious bands, Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here Keep residence; if all I can will serve That little which is left so to defend, Encroached on still through our intestine broils Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell, Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath; Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell! If that way be your walk, you have not far; So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed; Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan stayed not to reply, But, glad that now his sea should find a shore, With fresh alacrity and force renewed Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire, Into the wild expanse, and through the shock Of fighting elements, on all sides round Environed, wins his way; harder beset And more endangered than when Argo passed Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks, Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steered. So he with difficulty and labour hard Moved on, with difficulty and labour he; But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell, Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain, Following his track (such was the will of Heaven) Paved after him a broad and beaten way Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length, From Hell continued, reaching th' utmost orb Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse With easy intercourse pass to and fro To tempt or punish mortals, except whom God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire, As from her outmost works, a broken foe, With tumult less and with less hostile din; That Satan with less toil, and now with ease, Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light, And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn; Or in the emptier waste, resembling air, Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold Far off th' empyreal Heaven, extended wide In circuit, undetermined square or round, With opal towers and battlements adorned Of living sapphire, once his native seat; And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain, This pendent World, in bigness as a star Of smallest magnitude close by the moon. Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge, Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

### **Book III**

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven firstborn, Or of the Eternal coeternal beam May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light, And never but in unapproached light Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee Bright effluence of bright essence increate. Or hear"st thou rather pure ethereal stream, Whose

fountain who shall tell? before the sun, Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest The rising world of waters dark and deep, Won from the void and formless infinite. Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing, Escap'd the Stygian pool, though long detain'd In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight Through utter and through middle darkness borne, With other notes than to the Orphean lyre I sung of Chaos and eternal Night; Taught by the heavenly Muse to venture down The dark descent, and up to re-ascend, Though hard and rare: Thee I revisit safe, And feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn; So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs, Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt, Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill, Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath, That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow, Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget So were I equall'd with them in renown, Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace; Blind Thamyras, and blind Maeonides, And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old: Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year Seasons return; but not to me returns Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn, Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose, Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine; But cloud instead, and ever-during dark Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair Presented with a universal blank Of nature's works to me expung'd and ras'd, And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. So much the rather thou, celestial Light, Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell Of things invisible to mortal sight. Now had the Almighty Father from above, From the pure empyrean where he sits High thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye His own works and their works at once to view: About him all the Sanctities of Heaven Stood thick as stars, and from his sight receiv'd Beatitude past utterance; on his right The radiant image of his glory sat, His only son; on earth he first beheld Our two first parents, yet the only two Of mankind in the happy garden plac'd Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love, Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love, In blissful solitude; he then survey'd Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night In the dun air sublime, and ready now To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet, On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd Firm land imbosom'd, without firmament, Uncertain which, in ocean or in air. Him God beholding from his prospect high, Wherein past, present, future, he beholds, Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake. Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds Prescrib'd no bars of Hell, nor all the chains Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems On desperate revenge, that shall redound Upon his own rebellious head. And now, Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light, Directly towards the new created world, And man there

plac'd, with purpose to assay If him by force he can destroy, or, worse, By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert; For man will hearken to his glozing lies, And easily transgress the sole command, Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall He and his faithless progeny: Whose fault? Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of me All he could have; I made him just and right, Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. Such I created all the ethereal Powers And Spirits, both them who stood, and them who fail'd; Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. Not free, what proof could they have given sincere Of true allegiance, constant faith or love, Where only what they needs must do appear'd, Not what they would? what praise could they receive? What pleasure I from such obedience paid, When will and reason (reason also is choice) Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd, Made passive both, had serv'd necessity, Not me? they therefore, as to right belong'd, So were created, nor can justly accuse Their Maker, or their making, or their fate, As if predestination over-rul'd Their will dispos'd by absolute decree Or high foreknowledge they themselves decreed Their own revolt, not I; if I foreknew, Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, Which had no less proved certain unforeknown. So without least impulse or shadow of fate, Or aught by me immutably foreseen, They trespass, authors to themselves in all Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so I form'd them free: and free they must remain, Till they enthrall themselves; I else must change Their nature, and revoke the high decree Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain'd Their freedom: they themselves ordain'd their fall. The first sort by their own suggestion fell, Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls, deceiv'd By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace, The other none: In mercy and justice both, Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel; But Mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine. Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect Sense of new joy ineffable diffus'd. Beyond compare the Son of God was seen Most glorious; in him all his Father shone Substantially express'd; and in his face Divine compassion visibly appear'd, Love without end, and without measure grace, Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake. O Father, gracious was that word which clos'd Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace; , that Man should find grace; For which both Heaven and earth shall high extol Thy praises, with the innumerable sound Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest. For should Man finally be lost, should Man, Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest son, Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd With his own folly? that be from thee far, That far be from thee, Father, who art judge Of all things made, and judgest only right. Or shall the Adversary thus obtain His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfill His malice, and thy goodness bring to nought, Or proud return, though to his heavier doom, Yet with revenge accomplish'd, and to Hell Draw after him the whole race of mankind, By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself Abolish thy creation, and unmake For him, what for thy glory thou hast made? So should thy goodness and thy greatness both Be question'd and blasphem'd without defence. To whom the great Creator thus replied. O son, in whom my soul hath chief delight, Son of my bosom, Son who

art alone. My word, my wisdom, and effectual might, All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all As my eternal purpose hath decreed; Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will; Yet not of will in him, but grace in me Freely vouchsaf'd; once more I will renew His lapsed powers, though forfeit; and enthrall'd By sin to foul exorbitant desires; Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand On even ground against his mortal foe; By me upheld, that he may know how frail His fallen condition is, and to me owe All his deliverance, and to none but me. Some I have chosen of peculiar grace, Elect above the rest; so is my will: The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd Their sinful state, and to appease betimes The incensed Deity, while offer'd grace Invites; for I will clear their senses dark, What may suffice, and soften stony hearts To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. To prayer, repentance, and obedience due, Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent, Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut. And I will place within them as a guide, My umpire Conscience; whom if they will hear, Light after light, well us'd, they shall attain, And to the end, persisting, safe arrive. This my long sufferance, and my day of grace, They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste; But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more, That they may stumble on, and deeper fall; And none but such from mercy I exclude. But yet all is not done; Man disobeying, Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins Against the high supremacy of Heaven, Affecting God-head, and, so losing all, To expiate his treason hath nought left, But to destruction sacred and devote, He, with his whole posterity, must die, Die he or justice must; unless for him Some other able, and as willing, pay The rigid satisfaction, death for death. Say, heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love? Which of you will be mortal, to redeem Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save? Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear? And silence was in Heaven: \$ on Man's behalf He ask'd, but all the heavenly quire stood mute, Patron or intercessour none appear'd, Much less that durst upon his own head draw The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set. And now without redemption all mankind Must have been lost, adjudg'd to Death and Hell By doom severe, had not the Son of God, In whom the fulness dwells of love divine, His dearest mediation thus renew'd. Father, thy word is past, Man shall find grace; And shall grace not find means, that finds her way, The speediest of thy winged messengers, To visit all thy creatures, and to all Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought? Happy for Man, so coming; he her aid Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost; Atonement for himself, or offering meet, Indebted and undone, hath none to bring; Behold me then: me for him, life for life I offer: on me let thine anger fall; Account me Man; I for his sake will leave Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee Freely put off, and for him lastly die Well pleased; on me let Death wreak all his rage. Under his gloomy power I shall not long Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess Life in myself for ever; by thee I live; Though now to Death I yield, and am his due, All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid, \$ thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul For ever with corruption there to dwell; But I shall rise victorious, and subdue My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil. Death his death's wound shall then

receive, and stoop Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed; I through the ample  
air in triumph high Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show The powers of  
darkness bound. Thou, at the sight Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and  
smile, While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes; Death last, and with his 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 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 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.

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Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem, Their nature also to thy  
nature join; And be thyself Man among men on Earth, Made flesh, when time  
shall be, of virgin seed, By wondrous birth; be thou in Adam's room The head of  
all mankind, though Adam's son. As in him perish all men, so in thee, As from a  
second root, shall be restored As many as are restored, without thee none. His  
crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit, Imputed, shall absolve them who  
renounce Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds, And live in thee  
transplanted, and from thee Receive new life. So Man, as is most just, Shall  
satisfy for Man, be judged and die, And dying rise, and rising with him raise His  
brethren, ransomed with his own dear life. So heavenly love shall outdo hellish  
hate, Giving to death, and dying to redeem, So dearly to redeem what hellish hate  
So easily destroyed, and still destroys In those who, when they may, accept not  
grace. Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume Man's nature, lessen or degrade  
thine own. Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss Equal to God, and  
equally enjoying God-like fruition, quitted all, to save A world from utter loss, and  
hast been found By merit more than birthright Son of God, Found worthiest to be  
so by being good, Far more than great or high; because in thee Love hath  
abounded more than glory abounds; Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt With  
thee thy manhood also to this throne: Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign  
Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man, Anointed universal King; all

power I give thee; reign for ever, and assume Thy merits; under thee, as head supreme, Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce: All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell. When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven, Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaim Thy dread tribunal; forthwith from all winds, The living, and forthwith the cited dead Of all past ages, to the general doom Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep. Then, all thy saints assembled, thou shalt judge Bad Men and Angels; they, arraigned, shall sink Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full, Thenceforth shall be for ever shut. Mean while The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell, And, after all their tribulations long, See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds, With joy and peace triumphing, and fair truth. Then thou thy regal scepter shalt lay by, For regal scepter then no more shall need, God shall be all in all. But, all ye Gods, Adore him, who to compass all this dies; Adore the Son, and honour him as me. No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all The multitude of Angels, with a shout Loud as from numbers without number, sweet As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung With jubilee, and loud Hosannas filled The eternal regions: Lowly reverent Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground With solemn adoration down they cast Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold; Immortal amarant, a flower which once In Paradise, fast by the tree of life, Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows, And flowers aloft shading the fount of life, And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream; With these that never fade the Spirits elect Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams; Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone, Impurpled with celestial roses smiled. Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took, Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet Of charming symphony they introduce Their sacred song, and waken raptures high; No voice exempt, no voice but well could join Melodious part, such concord is in Heaven. Thee, Father, first they sung Omnipotent, Immutable, Immortal, Infinite, Eternal King; the Author of all being, Fountain of light, thyself invisible Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st Throned inaccessible, but when thou shadest The full blaze of thy beams, and, through a cloud Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine, Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes. Thee next they sang of all creation first, Begotten Son, Divine Similitude, In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud Made visible, the Almighty Father shines, Whom else no creature can behold; on thee Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides, Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests. He Heaven of Heavens and all the Powers therein By thee created; and by thee threw down The aspiring Dominations: Thou that day Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare, Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks Thou drovest of warring Angels disarrayed.

Back from pursuit thy Powers with loud acclaim Thee only extolled, Son of thy  
Father's might, To execute fierce vengeance on his foes, Not so on Man: Him  
through their malice fallen, Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom So  
strictly, but much more to pity incline: No sooner did thy dear and only Son  
Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man So strictly, but much more to pity  
inclined, He to appease thy wrath, and end the strife Of mercy and justice in thy  
face discerned, Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat Second to thee, offered  
himself to die For Man's offence. O unexampled love, Love no where to be found  
less than Divine! Hail, Son of God, Saviour of Men! Thy name Shall be the  
copious matter of my song Henceforth, and never shall my heart thy praise Forget,  
nor from thy Father's praise disjoin. Thus they in Heaven, above the starry sphere,  
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent. Mean while upon the firm opacous  
globe Of this round world, whose first convex divides The luminous inferiour  
orbs, enclosed From Chaos, and the inroad of Darkness old, Satan alighted walks:  
A globe far off It seemed, now seems a boundless continent Dark, waste, and wild,  
under the frown of Night Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms Of Chaos  
blustering round, inclement sky; Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,  
Though distant far, some small reflection gains Of glimmering air less vexed with  
tempest loud: Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field. As when a vultur  
on Imaus bred, Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds, Dislodging from a  
region scarce of prey To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids, On hills where  
flocks are fed, flies toward the springs Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;  
But in his way lights on the barren plains Of Sericana, where Chinese drive  
With sails and wind their cany waggons light: So, on this windy sea of land, the Fiend  
Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey; Alone, for other creature in this  
place, Living or lifeless, to be found was none; None yet, but store hereafter from  
the earth Up hither like aerial vapours flew Of all things transitory and vain, when  
sin With vanity had filled the works of men: Both all things vain, and all who in  
vain things Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame, Or happiness in this or  
the other life; All who have their reward on earth, the fruits Of painful superstition  
and blind zeal, Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find Fit retribution,  
empty as their deeds; All the unaccomplished works of Nature's hand, Abortive,  
monstrous, or unkindly mixed, Dissolved on earth, fleet hither, and in vain, Till  
final dissolution, wander here; Not in the neighbouring moon as some have  
dreamed; Those argent fields more likely habitants, Translated Saints, or middle  
Spirits hold Betwixt the angelical and human kind. Hither of ill-joined sons and  
daughters born First from the ancient world those giants came With many a vain  
exploit, though then renowned: The builders next of Babel on the plain Of  
Sennaar, and still with vain design, New Babels, had they wherewithal, would  
build: Others came single; he, who, to be deemed A God, leaped fondly into Aetna  
flames, Empedocles; and he, who, to enjoy Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,  
Cleombrotus; and many more too long, Embryos, and idiots, eremites, and friars  
White, black, and gray, with all their trumpery. Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so  
far to seek In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heaven; And they, who to be sure

of Paradise, Dying, put on the weeds of Dominick, Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised; They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed, And that 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 Long after; now unpeopled, and untrod. All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed, And long he wandered, till at last a gleam Of dawning light turned thither-ward in haste His travelled steps: far distant he descries Ascending by degrees magnificent Up to the wall of Heaven a structure high; At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared The work as of a kingly palace-gate, With frontispiece of diamond and gold Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems The portal shone, inimitable on earth By model, or by shading pencil, drawn. These stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw Angels ascending and descending, bands Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled To Padan-Aram, in the field of Luz Dreaming by night under the open sky And waking cried, This is the gate of Heaven. Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon Who after came from earth, failing arrived Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds. The stairs were then let down, whether to dare The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss: Direct against which opened from beneath, Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise, A passage down to the Earth, a passage wide, Wider by far than that of after-times Over mount Sion, and, though that were large, Over the Promised Land to God so dear; By which, to visit oft those happy tribes, On high behests his angels to and fro Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood, To Beersaba, where the Holy Land Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore; So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave. Satan from hence, now on the lower stair, That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate, Looks down with wonder at the sudden view Of all this world at once. As when a scout, Through dark and desert ways with peril gone All might, first cast by break of cheerful dawn Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill, Which to his eye discovers unaware The goodly prospect of some foreign land First seen, or some renowned metropolis With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned, Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams: Such wonder seised, though after Heaven seen, The Spirit malign, but much more envy seised, At sight of all this world beheld so fair. Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood So high above the circling canopy Of night's extended shade,) from eastern point Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears Andromeda far off Atlantick seas Beyond the horizon; then from pole to

pole He views in breadth, and without longer pause Down right into the world's first region throws His flight precipitant, and winds with ease Through the pure marble air his oblique way Amongst innumerable stars, that shone Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other worlds; Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles, Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old, Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales, Thrice happy isles; but who dwelt happy there He staid not to inquire: Above them all The golden sun, in splendour likest Heaven, Allured his eye; thither his course he bends Through the calm firmament, (but up or down, By center, or eccentric, hard to tell, Or longitude,) where the great luminary Aloof the vulgar constellations thick, That from his lordly eye keep distance due, Dispenses light from far; they, as they move Their starry dance in numbers that compute Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp Turn swift their various motions, or are turned By his magnetick beam, that gently warms The universe, and to each inward part With gentle penetration, though unseen, Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep; So wonderously was set his station bright. There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb Through his glazed optick tube yet never saw. The place he found beyond expression bright, Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone; Not all parts like, but all alike informed With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire; If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear; If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite, Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone In Aaron's breast-plate, and a stone besides Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen, That stone, or like to that which here below Philosophers in vain so long have sought, In vain, though by their powerful art they bind Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound In various shapes old Proteus from the sea, Drained through a limbeck to his native form. What wonder then if fields and regions here Breathe forth Elixir pure, and rivers run Potable gold, when with one virtuous touch The arch-chemick sun, so far from us remote, Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed, Here in the dark so many precious things Of colour glorious, and effect so rare? Here matter new to gaze the Devil met Undazzled; far and wide his eye commands; For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade, But all sun-shine, as when his beams at noon Culminate from the equator, as they now Shot upward still direct, whence no way round Shadow from body opaque can fall; and the air, No where so clear, sharpened his visual ray To objects distant far, whereby he soon Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand, The same whom John saw also in the sun: His back was turned, but not his brightness hid; Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar Circled his head, nor less his locks behind Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings Lay waving round; on some great charge employed He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep. Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope To find who might direct his wandering flight To Paradise, the happy seat of Man, His journey's end and our beginning woe. But first he casts to change his proper shape, Which else might work him danger or delay: And now a stripling Cherub he appears, Not of the prime, yet such as in his face Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb Suitable grace diffused, so well he feigned: Under a coronet his flowing hair In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore Of many a

coloured plume, sprinkled with gold; His habit fit for speed succinct, and held  
Before his decent steps a silver wand. He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,  
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned, Admonished by his ear, and straight  
was known The Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the seven Who in God's presence,  
nearest to his throne, Stand ready at command, and are his eyes That run through  
all the Heavens, or down to the Earth Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,  
O'er sea and land: him Satan thus accosts. Uriel, for thou of those seven Spirits  
that stand In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright, The first art wont his  
great authentick will Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring, Where all his  
sons thy embassy attend; And here art likeliest by supreme decree Like honour to  
obtain, and as his eye To visit oft this new creation round; Unspeakable desire to  
see, and know All these his wonderous works, but chiefly Man, His chief delight  
and favour, him for whom All these his works so wonderous he ordained, Hath  
brought me from the quires of Cherubim Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph,  
tell In which of all these shining orbs hath Man 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, Created this new  
happy race of Men To serve him better: Wise are all his ways. So spake the false  
dissembler unperceived; For neither Man nor Angel can discern Hypocrisy, the  
only evil that walks Invisible, except to God alone, By his permissive will,  
through Heaven and Earth: And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps At  
wisdom's gate, and to simplicity Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill  
Where no ill seems: Which now for once beguiled Uriel, though regent of the sun,  
and held The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven; Who to the fraudulent  
impostor foul, In his uprightness, answer thus returned. Fair Angel, thy desire,  
which tends to know The works of God, thereby to glorify The great Work-  
master, leads to no excess That reaches blame, but rather merits praise The more it  
seems excess, that led thee hither From thy empyreal mansion thus alone, To  
witness with thine eyes what some perhaps, Contented with report, hear only in  
Heaven: For wonderful indeed are all his works, Pleasant to know, and worthiest  
to be all Had in remembrance always with delight; But what created mind can  
comprehend Their number, or the wisdom infinite That brought them forth, but  
hid their causes deep? I saw when at his word the formless mass, This world's  
material mould, came to a heap: Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar Stood  
ruled, stood vast infinitude confined; Till at his second bidding Darkness fled,  
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung: Swift to their several quarters hasted  
then The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire; And this ethereal quintessence  
of Heaven Flew upward, spirited with various forms, That rolled orbicular, and  
turned to stars Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move; Each had his place  
appointed, each his course; The rest in circuit walls this universe. Look downward  
on that globe, whose hither side With light from hence, though but reflected,

shines; That place is Earth, the seat of Man; that light His day, which else, as the other hemisphere, Night would invade; but there the neighbouring moon So call that opposite fair star) her aid Timely interposes, and her monthly round Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heaven, With borrowed light her countenance triform Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth, And in her pale dominion checks the night. That spot, to which I point, is Paradise, Adam's abode; those lofty shades, his bower. Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires. Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low, As to superiour Spirits is wont in Heaven, Where honour due and reverence none neglects, Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath, Down from the ecliptick, sped with hoped success, Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel; Nor staid, till on Niphates' top he lights.

## **Book IV**

O, for that warning voice, which he, who saw The Apocalypse, heard cry in Heaven aloud, Then when the Dragon, put to second rout, Came furious down to be revenged on men, Woe to the inhabitants on earth! that now, While time was, our first parents had been warned The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped, Haply so 'scaped his mortal snare: For now Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down, The tempter ere the accuser of mankind, To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell: Yet, not rejoicing in his speed, though bold Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast, Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth Now rolling boils in his tumultuous breast, And like a devilish engine back recoils Upon himself; horror and doubt distract His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir The Hell within him; for within him Hell He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell One step, no more than from himself, can fly By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair, That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory Of what he was, what is, and what must be Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue. Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad; Sometimes towards Heaven, and the full-blazing sun, Which now sat high in his meridian tower: Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began. O thou, that, with surpassing glory crowned, Lookest from thy sole dominion like the God Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars Hide their diminished heads; to thee I call, But with no friendly voice, and add thy name, Of Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams, That bring to my remembrance from what state I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere; Till pride and worse ambition threw me down Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King: Ah, wherefore! he deserved no such return From me, whom he created what I was In that bright eminence, and with his good Upbraided none; nor was his service hard. What could be less than to afford him praise, The easiest recompence, and pay him thanks, How due! yet all his good proved ill in me, And wrought but malice; lifted up so high I sdeined subjection, and thought one step higher Would set me highest, and in a moment quit The debt immense of

endless gratitude, So burdensome still paying, still to owe, Forgetful what from him I still received, And understood not that a grateful mind By owing owes not, but still pays, at once Indebted and discharged; what burden then O, had his powerful destiny ordained Me some inferiour Angel, I had stood Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised Ambition! Yet why not some other Power As great might have aspired, and me, though mean, Drawn to his part; but other Powers as great Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within Or from without, to all temptations armed. Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand? Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse, But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all? Be then his love accursed, since love or hate, To me alike, it deals eternal woe. Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will Chose freely what it now so justly rues. Me miserable! which way shall I fly Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell; And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep Still threatening to devour me opens wide, To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven. O, then, at last relent: Is there no place Left for repentance, none for pardon left? None left but by submission; and that word Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced With other promises and other vaunts Than to submit, boasting I could subdue The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know How dearly I abide that boast so vain, Under what torments inwardly I groan, While they adore me on the throne of Hell. With diadem and scepter high advanced, The lower still I fall, only supreme In misery: Such joy ambition finds. But say I could repent, and could obtain, By act of grace, my former state; how soon Would highth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant Vows made in pain, as violent and void. For never can true reconciliation grow, Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep: Which would but lead me to a worse relapse And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear Short intermission bought with double smart. This knows my Punisher; therefore as far From granting he, as I from begging, peace; All hope excluded thus, behold, in stead Mankind created, and for him this world. So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear; Farewell, remorse! all good to me is lost; Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold, By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign; As Man ere long, and this new world, shall know. Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair; Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld. For heavenly minds from such distempers foul Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware, Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm, Artificer of fraud; and was the first That practised falsehood under saintly show, Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge: Yet not enough had practised to deceive Uriel once warned; whose eye pursued him down The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount Saw him disfigured, more than could befall Spirit of happy sort; his gestures fierce He marked and mad demeanour, then alone, As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen. So on he fares, and to the border comes Of Eden, where delicious Paradise, Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green, As with a rural mound, the champaign head Of a steep

wilderness, whose hairy sides Access denied; and overhead upgrew Insuperable height of loftiest shade, Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm, A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend, Shade above shade, a woody theatre Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung;

00081429 Which to our general sire gave prospect large Into his nether empire neighbouring round. And higher than that wall a circling row Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit, Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue, Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed: On which the sun more glad impressed his beams Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow, When God hath showered the earth; so lovely seemed That landskip: And of pure now purer air Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires Vernal delight and joy, able to drive All sadness but despair: Now gentle gales, Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole Those balmy spoils. As when to them who fail Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past Mozambick, off at sea north-east winds blow Sabeian odours from the spicy shore Of Araby the blest; with such delay Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles: So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend, Who came their bane; though with them better pleased Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound. Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow; But further way found none, so thick entwined, As one continued brake, the undergrowth Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed All path of man or beast that passed that way. One gate there only was, and that looked east On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw, Due entrance he disdained; and, in contempt, At one flight bound high over-leaped all bound Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf, Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey, Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve In hurdled cotes amid the field secure, Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold: Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors, Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault, In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles: So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold; So since into his church lewd hirelings climb. Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life, The middle tree and highest there that grew, Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life Thereby regained, but sat devising death To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought Of that life-giving plant, but only used For prospect, what well used had been the pledge Of immortality. So little knows Any, but God alone, to value

right The good before him, but perverts best things To worst abuse, or to their meanest use. Beneath him with new wonder now he views, To all delight of human sense exposed, In narrow room, Nature's whole wealth, yea more, A Heaven on Earth: For blissful Paradise Of God the garden was, by him in the east Of Eden planted; Eden stretched her line From Auran eastward to the royal towers Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings, Of where the sons of Eden long before Dwelt in Telassar: In this pleasant soil His far more pleasant garden God ordained; Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste; And all amid them stood the tree of life, High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit Of vegetable gold; and next to life, Our death, the tree of knowledge, grew fast by, Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill. Southward through Eden went a river large, Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown That mountain as his garden-mould high raised Upon the rapid current, which, through veins Of porous earth with kindly thirst up-drawn, Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill Watered the garden; thence united fell Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood, Which from his darksome passage now appears, And now, divided into four main streams, Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm And country, whereof here needs no account; But rather to tell how, if Art could tell, How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks, Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold, With mazy error under pendant shades Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain, Both where the morning sun first warmly smote The open field, and where the unpierced shade Imbrowned the noontide bowers: Thus was this place A happy rural seat of various view; Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm, Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind, Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true, If true, here only, and of delicious taste: Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks Grazing the tender herb, were interposed, Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap Of some irriguous valley spread her store, Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose: Another side, umbrageous grotts and caves Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps Luxuriant; mean while murmuring waters fall Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake, That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams. The birds their quire apply; airs, vernal airs, Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune The trembling leaves, while universal Pan, Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance, Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers, Herself a fairer flower by gloomy Dis Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspired Castalian spring, might with this Paradise Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham, Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove, Hid Amalthea, and her florid son Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye; Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard, Mount Amara, though this by some

supposed True Paradise under the Ethiop line By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock, A whole day's journey high, but wide remote From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind Of living creatures, new to sight, and strange Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall, Godlike erect, with native honour clad In naked majesty seemed lords of all: And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine The image of their glorious Maker shone, Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure, (Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,) Whence true authority in men; though both Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; For contemplation he and valour formed; For softness she and sweet attractive grace; He for God only, she for God in him: His fair large front and eye sublime declared Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks Round from his parted forelock manly hung Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad: She, as a veil, down to the slender waist Her unadorned golden tresses wore Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied Subjection, but required with gentle sway, And by her yielded, by him best received, Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay. Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed; Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame Of nature's works, honour dishonourable, Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure, And banished from man's life his happiest life, Simplicity and spotless innocence! So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight Of God or Angel; for they thought no ill: So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair, That ever since in love's embraces met; Adam the goodliest man of men since born His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve. Under a tuft of shade that on a green Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side They sat them down; and, after no more toil Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell, Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers: The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind, Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream; Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as befits Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league, Alone as they. About them frisking played All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase In wood or wilderness, forest or den; Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards, Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant, To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed His kithetmroboscis; close the serpent sly, Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine His braided train, and of his fatal guile Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass Couched, and now filled with pasture gazing sat, Or bedward ruminating; for the sun, Declined, was hasting now with prone career To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose: When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood, Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad. O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold! Into our room of bliss thus high advanced Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps, Not Spirits, yet to heavenly Spirits bright Little inferiour; whom my

thoughts pursue With wonder, and could love, so lively shines In them divine  
resemblance, and such grace The hand that formed them on their shape hath  
poured. Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh Your change approaches, when  
all these delights Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe; More woe, the more your  
taste is now of joy; Happy, but for so happy ill secured Long to continue, and this  
high seat your Heaven Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe As now is  
entered; yet no purposed foe To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn, Though I  
unpitted: League with you I seek, And mutual amity, so strait, so close, That I  
with you must dwell, or you with me Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not  
please, Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such Accept your Maker's work; he  
gave it me, Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold, To entertain you two, her  
widest gates, And send forth all her kings; there will be room, Not like these  
narrow limits, to receive Your numerous offspring; if no better place, Thank him  
who puts me loth to this revenge On you who wrong me not for him who  
wronged. And should I at your harmless innocence Melt, as I do, yet publick  
reason just, Honour and empire with revenge enlarged, By conquering this new  
world, compels me now To do what else, though damned, I should abhor. So  
spake the Fiend, and with necessity, The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.  
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree Down he alights among the sportful  
herd Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one, Now other, as their shape  
served best his end Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied, To mark what of their  
state he more might learn, By word or action marked. About them round A lion  
now he stalks with fiery glare; Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied In some  
purlieu two gentle fawns at play, Straight couches close, then, rising, changes oft  
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground, Whence rushing, he might  
surest seize them both, Griped in each paw: when, Adam first of men To first of  
women Eve thus moving speech, Turned him, all ear to hear new utterance flow.  
Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys, Dearer thyself than all; needs must the  
Power That made us, and for us this ample world, Be infinitely good, and of his  
good As liberal and free as infinite; That raised us from the dust, and placed us  
here In all this happiness, who at his hand Have nothing merited, nor can perform  
Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires From us no other service than to  
keep This one, this easy charge, of all the trees In Paradise that bear delicious fruit  
So various, not to taste that only tree Of knowledge, planted by the tree of life; So  
near grows death to life, whate'er death is, Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well  
thou knowest God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree, The only sign of our  
obedience left, Among so many signs of power and rule Conferred upon us, and  
dominion given Over all other creatures that possess Earth, air, and sea. Then let  
us not think hard One easy prohibition, who enjoy Free leave so large to all things  
else, and choice Unlimited of manifold delights: But let us ever praise him, and  
extol His bounty, following our delightful task, To prune these growing plants,  
and tend these flowers, Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet. To  
whom thus Eve replied. O thou for whom And from whom I was formed, flesh of  
thy flesh, And without whom am to no end, my guide And head! what thou hast

said is just and right. For we to him indeed all praises owe, And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy So far the happier lot, enjoying thee Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou Like consort to thyself canst no where find. That day I oft remember, when from sleep I first awaked, and found myself reposed Under a shade on flowers, much wondering where And what I was, whence thither brought, and how. Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound Of waters issued from a cave, and spread Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved Pure as the expanse of Heaven; I thither went With unexperienced thought, and laid me down On the green bank, to look into the clear Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky. As I bent down to look, just opposite A shape within the watery gleam appeared, Bending to look on me: I started back, It started back; but pleased I soon returned, Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks Of sympathy and love: There I had fixed Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire, Had not a voice thus warned me; 'What thou seest, 'What there thou seest, fair Creature, is thyself; 'With thee it came and goes: but follow me, 'And I will bring thee where no shadow stays 'Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he 'Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy 'Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear 'Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called 'Mother of human race.' What could I do, But follow straight, invisibly thus led? Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall, Under a platane; yet methought less fair, Less winning soft, less amiably mild, Than that smooth watery image: Back I turned; Thou following cryedst aloud, 'Return, fair Eve; 'Whom flyest thou? whom thou flyest, of him thou art, 'His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent 'Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart, 'Substantial life, to have thee by my side 'Henceforth an individual solace dear; 'Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim 'My other half:' With that thy gentle hand Seised mine: I yielded; and from that time see How beauty is excelled by manly grace, And wisdom, which alone is truly fair. So spake our general mother, and with eyes Of conjugal attraction unreprieved, And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned On our first father; half her swelling breast Naked met his, under the flowing gold Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight Both of her beauty, and submissive charms, Smiled with superiour love, as Jupiter On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds That shed Mayflowers; and pressed her matron lip With kisses pure: Aside the Devil turned For envy; yet with jealous leer malign Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained. Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two, Imparadised in one another's arms, The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust, Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire, Among our other torments not the least, Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines. Yet let me not forget what I have gained From their own mouths: All is not theirs, it seems; One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called, Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord Envy them that? Can it be sin to know? Can it be death? And do they only stand By ignorance? Is that their happy state, The proof of their obedience and their faith? O fair foundation laid whereon to build Their ruin! hence I will excite their minds With more desire to know, and to reject Envious commands, invented with design

To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt Equal with Gods: aspiring to be such, They taste and die: What likelier can ensue But first with narrow search I must walk round This garden, and no corner leave unspied; A chance but chance may lead where I may meet Some wandering Spirit of Heaven by fountain side, Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw What further would be learned. Live while ye may, Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return, Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed! So saying, his proud step he scornful turned, But with sly circumspection, and began Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale, his roam Mean while in utmost longitude, where Heaven With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun Slowly descended, and with right aspect Against the eastern gate of Paradise Levelled his evening rays: It was a rock Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds, Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent Accessible from earth, one entrance high; The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung Still as it rose, impossible to climb. Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat, Chief of the angelick guards, awaiting night; About him exercised heroick games The unarmed youth of Heaven, but nigh at hand Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears, Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold. Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even On a sun-beam, swift as a shooting star In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired Impress the air, and shows the mariner From what point of his compass to beware Impetuous winds: He thus began in haste. Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given Charge and strict watch, that to this happy place No evil thing approach or enter in. This day at highth of noon came to my sphere A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know More of the Almighty's works, and chiefly Man, God's latest image: I described his way Bent all on speed, and marked his aery gait; But in the mount that lies from Eden north, Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured: Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade Lost sight of him: One of the banished crew, I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise New troubles; him thy care must be to find. To whom the winged warrior thus returned. Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight, Amid the sun's bright circle where thou sitst, See far and wide: In at this gate none pass The vigilance here placed, but such as come Well known from Heaven; and since meridian hour No creature thence: If Spirit of other sort, So minded, have o'er-leaped these earthly bounds On purpose, hard thou knowest it to exclude Spiritual substance with corporeal bar. But if within the circuit of these walks, In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom Thou tellest, by morrow dawning I shall know. So promised he; and Uriel to his charge Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised Bore him slope downward to the sun now fallen Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb, Incredible how swift, had thither rolled Diurnal, or this less volubil earth, By shorter flight to the east, had left him there Arraying with reflected purple and gold The clouds that on his western throne attend. Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray Had in her sober livery all things clad; Silence accompanied; for beast and bird, They to their grassy couch, these to their nests Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale; She all night long her amorous descant sung; Silence was pleased: Now glowed the firmament With

living sapphires: Hesperus, that led The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length Apparent queen unveiled her peerless light,  
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw. When Adam thus to Eve. Fair Consort,  
the hour Of night, and all things now retired to rest, Mind us of like repose; since  
God hath set Labour and rest, as day and night, to men Successive; and the timely  
dew of sleep, Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines Our eye-lids:  
Other creatures all day long Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest; Man hath  
his daily work of body or mind Appointed, which declares his dignity, And the  
regard of Heaven on all his ways; While other animals unactive range, And of  
their doings God takes no account. To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east  
With first approach of light, we must be risen, And at our pleasant labour, to  
reform Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green, Our walk at noon, with branches  
overgrown, That mock our scant manuring, and require More hands than ours to  
lop their wanton growth: Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums, That lie  
bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth, Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;  
Mean while, as Nature wills, night bids us rest. To whom thus Eve, with perfect  
beauty adorned My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst Unargued I obey: So  
God ordains; God is thy law, thou mine: To know no more Is woman's happiest  
knowledge, and her praise. With thee conversing I forget all time; All seasons, and  
their change, all please alike. Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet, With  
charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun, When first on this delightful land he  
spreads His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower, Glistening with dew;  
fragrant the fertile earth After soft showers; and sweet the coming on Of grateful  
Evening mild; then silent Night, With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
And these the gems of 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, Glistening with dew; nor fragrance after showers; Nor  
grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night, With this her solemn bird, nor walk by  
moon, Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet. But wherefore all night long  
shine these? for whom This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes? To  
whom our general ancestor replied. Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,  
These have their course to finish round the earth, By morrow evening, and from  
land to land In order, though to nations yet unborn, Ministring light prepared, they  
set and rise; Lest total Darkness should by night regain Her old possession, and  
extinguish life In Nature and all things; which these soft fires Not only enlighten,  
but with kindly heat Of various influence foment and warm, Temper or nourish, or  
in part shed down Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow On earth, made hereby  
apter to receive Perfection from the sun's more potent ray. These then, though  
unbeheld in deep of night, Shine not in vain; nor think, though men were none,  
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise: Millions of spiritual  
creatures walk the earth Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep: All  
these with ceaseless praise his works behold Both day and night: How often from  
the steep Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard Celestial voices to the midnight  
air, Sole, or responsive each to others note, Singing their great Creator? oft in

bands While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk, With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds In full harmonick number joined, their songs Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven. Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed On to their blissful bower: it was a place Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed All things to Man's delightful use; the roof Of thickest covert was inwoven shade Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub, Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower, Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin, Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought Mosaick; underfoot the violet, Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone Of costliest emblem: Other creature here, Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none, Such was their awe of Man. In shadier bower More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned, Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess, With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs, Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed; And heavenly quires the hymenaeon sung, What day the genial Angel to our sire Brought her in naked beauty more adorned, More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods Endowed with all their gifts, and O! too like In sad event, when to the unwiser son Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged On him who had stole Jove's authentick fire. Thus, at their shady lodge arrived, both stood, Both turned, and under open sky adored The God that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven, Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe, And starry pole: Thou also madest the night, Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day, Which we, in our appointed work employed, Have finished, happy in our mutual help And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss Ordained by thee; and this delicious place For us too large, where thy abundance wants Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground. But thou hast promised from us two a race To fill the earth, who shall with us extol Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake, And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep. This said unanimous, and other rites Observing none, but adoration pure Which God likes best, into their inmost bower Handed they went; and, eased the putting off These troublesome disguises which we wear, Straight side by side were laid; nor turned, I ween, Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites Mysterious of connubial love refused: Whatever hypocrites austere talk Of purity, and place, and innocence, Defaming as impure what God declares Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all. Our Maker bids encrease; who bids abstain But our Destroyer, foe to God and Man? Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source Of human offspring, sole propriety In Paradise of all things common else! By thee adulterous Lust was driven from men Among the bestial herds to range; by thee Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure, Relations dear, and all the charities Of father, son, and brother, first were known. Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame, Or think thee unbefitting holiest place, Perpetual fountain of domestick sweets, Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced, Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used. Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings, Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile

Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared, Casual fruition; nor in court-amours,  
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball, Or serenate, which the starved  
lover sings To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. These, lulled by  
nightingales, embracing slept, And on their naked limbs the flowery roof  
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on, Blest pair; and O!yet  
happiest, if ye seek No happier state, and know to know no more. Now had night  
measured with her shadowy cone Half way up hill this vast sublunar vault, And  
from their ivory port the Cherubim, Forth issuing at the accustomed hour, stood  
armed To their night watches in warlike parade; When Gabriel to his next in  
power thus spake. Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south With strictest  
watch; these other wheel the north; Our circuit meets full west. As flame they  
part, Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear. From these, two strong and  
subtle Spirits he called That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge. Ithuriel  
and Zephon, with winged speed Search through this garden, leave unsearched no  
nook; But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge, Now laid perhaps asleep,  
secure of harm. This evening from the sun's decline arrived, Who tells of some  
infernal Spirit seen Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped The bars  
of Hell, on errand bad no doubt: Such, where ye find, seise fast, and hither bring.  
So saying, on he led his radiant files, Dazzling the moon; these to the bower direct  
In search of whom they sought: Him there they found Squat like a toad, close at  
the ear of Eve, Assaying by his devilish art to reach The organs of her fancy, and  
with them forge Illusions, as he list, phantasms and dreams; Or if, inspiring  
venom, he might taint The animal spirits, that from pure blood arise Like gentle  
breaths from rivers pure, thence raise At least distempered, discontented thoughts,  
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires, Blown up with high conceits  
ingendering pride. Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear Touched lightly; for no  
falshood can endure Touch of celestial temper, but returns Of force to its own  
likeness: Up he starts Discovered and surprised. As when a spark Lights on a  
heap of nitrous powder, laid Fit for the tun some magazine to store Against a  
rumoured war, the smutty grain, With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air; So  
started up in his own shape the Fiend. Back stept those two fair Angels, half  
amazed So sudden to behold the grisly king; Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost  
him soon. Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell Comest thou, escaped thy  
prison? and, transformed, Why sat'st thou like an enemy in wait, Here watching at  
the head of these that sleep? Know ye not then said Satan, filled with scorn, Know  
ye not me? ye knew me once no mate For you, there sitting where ye durst not  
soar: Not to know me argues yourselves unknown, The lowest of your throng; or,  
if ye know, Why ask ye, and superfluous begin Your message, like to end as much  
in vain? To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn. Think not, revolted  
Spirit, thy shape the same, Or undiminished brightness to be known, As when thou  
stoodest in Heaven upright and pure; That glory then, when thou no more wast  
good, Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now Thy sin and place of doom  
obscure and foul. But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account To him who sent  
us, whose charge is to keep This place inviolable, and these from harm. So spake

the Cherub; and his grave rebuke, Severe in youthful beauty, added grace  
Invincible: Abashed the Devil stood, And felt how awful goodness is, and saw  
Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw, and pined His loss; but chiefly to find here  
observed His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed Undaunted. If I must contend,  
said he, Best with the best, the sender, not the sent, Or all at once; more glory will  
be won, Or less be lost. Thy fear, said Zephon bold, Will save us trial what the  
least can do Single against thee wicked, and thence weak. The Fiend replied not,  
overcome with rage; But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on, Champing  
his iron curb: To strive or fly He held it vain; awe from above had quelled His  
heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh The western point, where those  
half-rounding guards Just met, and closing stood in squadron joined, A waiting  
next command. To whom their Chief, Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud. O  
friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet Hasting this way, and now by glimpse  
discern Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade; And with them comes a third of  
regal port, But faded splendour wan; who by his gait And fierce demeanour seems  
the Prince of Hell, Not likely to part hence without contest; Stand firm, for in his  
look defiance lours. He scarce had ended, when those two approached, And brief  
related whom they brought, where found, How busied, in what form and posture  
couched. To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spake. Why hast thou, Satan,  
broke the bounds prescribed To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge Of  
others, who approve not to transgress By thy example, but have power and right  
To question thy bold entrance on this place; Employed, it seems, to violate sleep,  
and those Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss! To whom thus Satan  
with contemptuous brow. Gabriel? thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise, And  
such I held thee; but this question asked Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves  
his pain! Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell, Though thither  
doomed! Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt And boldly venture to whatever place  
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change Torment with ease, and  
soonest recompense Dole with delight, which in this place I sought; To thee no  
reason, who knowest only good, But evil hast not tried: and wilt object His will  
who bounds us! Let him surer bar His iron gates, if he intends our stay In that  
dark durance: Thus much what was asked. The rest is true, they found me where  
they say; But that implies not violence or harm. Thus he in scorn. The warlike  
Angel moved, Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied. O loss of one in Heaven to  
judge of wise Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew, And now returns him from  
his prison 'scaped, Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise Or not, who ask  
what boldness brought him hither Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed;  
So wise he judges it to fly from pain However, and to 'scape his punishment! So  
judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath, Which thou incurrst by flying, meet  
thy flight Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell, Which taught thee yet  
no better, that no pain Can equal anger infinite provoked. But wherefore thou  
alone? wherefore with thee Came not all hell broke loose? or thou than they Less  
hardy to endure? Courageous Chief! The first in flight from pain! hadst thou  
alleged To thy deserted host this cause of flight, Thou surely hadst not come sole

fugitive. To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern. Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain, Insulting Angel! well thou knowest I stood Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid The blasting vollied thunder made all speed, And seconded thy else not dreaded spear. But still thy words at random, as before, Argue thy inexperience what behoves From hard assays and ill successes past A faithful leader, not to hazard all Through ways of danger by himself untried: I, therefore, I alone first undertook To wing the desolate abyss, and spy This new created world, whereof in Hell Fame is not silent, here in hope to find Better abode, and my afflicted Powers To settle here on earth, or in mid air; Though for possession put to try once more What thou and thy gay legions dare against; Whose easier business were to serve their Lord High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne, And practised distances to cringe, not fight, To whom the warrior 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? Army of Fiends, fit body to fit head. Was this your discipline and faith engaged, Your military obedience, to dissolve Allegiance to the acknowledged Power supreme? And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem Patron of liberty, who more than thou Once fawned, and cringed, and servily adored Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope To dispossess him, and thyself to reign? But mark what I arreed thee now, Avant; Fly neither whence thou fledst! If from this hour Within these hallowed limits thou appear, Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chained, And seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred. So threatened he; but Satan to no threats Gave heed, but waxing more in rage replied. Then when I am thy captive talk of chains, Proud 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 Their phalanx, and began to hem him round With ported spears, as thick as when a field Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind Sways them; the careful plowman doubting stands, Left on the threshing floor his hopeless sheaves Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed, Collecting all his might, dilated stood, Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved: His stature reached the sky, and on his crest Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp What seemed both spear and shield: Now dreadful deeds Might have ensued, nor only Paradise In this commotion, but the starry cope Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements At least had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn With violence of this conflict, had not soon The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray, Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign, Wherein all things created first he weighed, The pendulous round earth with balanced air In counterpoise, now ponders all events, Battles and realms: In these he put two weights, The sequel each of parting and of fight: The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam, Which

Gabriel spying, thus bespake the Fiend. Satan, I know thy strength, and thou knowest mine; Neither our own, but given: What folly then To boast what arms can do? since thine no more Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now To trample thee as mire: For proof look up, And read thy lot in yon celestial sign; Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak, If thou resist. The Fiend looked up, and knew His mounted scale aloft: Nor more;but fled Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

## Book V

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl, When Adam waked, so customed; for his sleep Was aery-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, 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 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, 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, '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; 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, '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, '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, '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 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 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 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires Into her private cell, when nature rests. Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes To imitate her; but, misjoining shapes, Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams; Ill matching words and deeds long past or late. Some such resemblances, methinks, I find Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream, But with addition strange; yet be not sad. Evil into the mind of God or Man May come and go, so 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, 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, 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, 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, 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. 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,  
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, 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. 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, Breathe soft or loud; and, wave your tops, ye Pines,  
With every plant, in sign of worship wave. Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye  
flow, Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise. Join voices, all ye living  
Souls: Ye Birds, That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend, Bear on your wings and  
in your notes his praise. Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk The earth, and  
stately tread, or lowly creep; Witness if I be silent, morn or 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, 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 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 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, 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, unforwarned. 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 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: 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. 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 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 Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh, And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm; A wilderness of sweets; for Nature here Wanted 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 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 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 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 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 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 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, Dazzles the croud, and sets them all agape. 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 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, As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven, To visit thee; lead on then where thy bower O'er shades; 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 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 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, 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 Intellectual substances require, As doth your rational; and both contain Within them every lower faculty Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste, 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. 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 We brush mellifluous dews, 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 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 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, 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 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, 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, To  
intellectual; give both life and sense, Fancy and understanding; whence the soul  
Reason receives, and reason is her being, Discursive, or intuitive; discourse Is  
oftest yours, the latter most is ours, Differing but in degree, of kind the same.  
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good If I refuse not, but convert, as you  
To proper substance. Time may come, when Men With Angels may participate,  
and find No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare; And from these corporal  
nutriments perhaps Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit, Improved by tract of  
time, and, winged, ascend Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice, Here or in 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. 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, 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. 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 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: 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 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. 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 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 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, 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 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; 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. 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; 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, 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 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 roseat dewes 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, 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 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 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 In us who serve, new counsels to debate What doubtful may ensue: More in this place To utter is not safe. Assemble thou Of all those myriads which we lead the chief; Tell them, that by command, ere yet dim night Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste, And all who under me their banners wave, Homeward, with flying march, where we possess The quarters of the north; there to prepare Fit entertainment to receive our King, The great Messiah, and his new commands, Who speedily through all the hierarchies 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, 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 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. 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 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 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 Innumerable as the stars of  
night, Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun Impearls on every leaf and  
every flower. Regions they passed, the mighty regencies Of Seraphim, and  
Potentates, and Thrones, In their triple degrees; regions to which All thy  
dominion, Adam, is no more Than what this garden is to all the earth, And all the  
sea, from one entire globose Stretched into longitude; which having passed, At  
length into the limits of the north They came; and Satan to his royal seat High on a  
hill, far blazing, as a mount Raised on a mount, with pyramids and 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, 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; 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!  
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 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 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! 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, 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 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 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, 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! 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 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 Beseeking 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, Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause Through the infinite host; nor less for that The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold. O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed, Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall Determined, and thy hapless crew involved In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread Both of thy crime and punishment: Henceforth No more be troubled how to quit the yoke Of God's Messiah; those indulgent laws Will not be now vouchsafed; other decrees Against thee are gone forth without recall; That golden scepter, which thou 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 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.

## **Book VI**

All night the dreadless 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 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 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 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, 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, 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 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 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, Tenfold the length of this terrene: At last, Far in the horizon to the north appeared From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched In battailous aspect, and nearer view Bristled with upright beams innumerable Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields Various, with boastful argument portrayed, The banded Powers of Satan hasting on With furious expedition; for they weened That self-same day, by fight or by surprise, To win the mount of God, and on his throne To set the Envier of his state, the proud Aspirer; but their thoughts proved fond and vain In the mid way: Though strange to us it seemed At first, that Angel should with Angel war, And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet So oft in festivals of joy and love Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire, Hymning the Eternal Father: But the shout Of battle now began, and rushing sound Of onset ended soon each milder thought. High in the midst, exalted as a God, 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 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 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 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 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  
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  
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, (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. 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, 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. 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 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 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 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, 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 That argued fear; each on himself relied, As only in his arm the moment lay Of victory: Deeds of eternal fame Were done, but infinite; for wide was spread That war and various; sometimes on firm ground A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing, Tormented all the air; all air seemed then Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale The battle hung; till Satan, who that day Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms No equal, ranging through the dire attack Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled Squadrons at once; with huge two-handed sway Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down Wide-wasting; such destruction to withstand He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield, A vast circumference. At his approach The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil Surceased, and glad, as hoping here to end Intestine war in 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 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, 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 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, 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. Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood In horrour: 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, 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 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 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, 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: 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?kikes 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, 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. 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, 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. 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, 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 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, 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; 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; 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, 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. 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 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. 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 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 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. 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 With devilish machination, might devise Like instrument to plague the sons of men For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent. Forthwith from council to the work they flew; None arguing stood; innumerable hands Were ready; in a moment up they turned Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath The originals of nature in their crude Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art, Concocted and 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, 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, 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 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 warned he them, aware themselves, and soon In order, quit of all impediment; Instant without disturb they took alarm, And onward moved 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 appeared Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud. Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold; That all may see who hate us, how we seek Peace and composure, and with open breast Stand ready to receive them, if they like Our overture; and turn not back perverse: But that I doubt; however witness, 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! So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce Had ended; when to right and left the front Divided, and to either flank retired: Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange, A triple mounted row of pillars laid On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed, Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir, With branches lopt, in wood or mountain felled,) Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths With hideous orifice gaped on us wide, Portending hollow truce: At each behind A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed Stood waving 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, 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 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 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 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, 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 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 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 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. 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 seemed a civil game To this uproar; horrid  
confusion heaped Upon confusion rose: And now all Heaven 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.  
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; 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. 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 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 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, 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 Thy terrors, 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, 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 By four Cherubick shapes; four faces each Had wonderful; 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, 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 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 imbodied all in one. Before him Power Divine his way prepared; 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? 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, disdainning flight, 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 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. 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 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, 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 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. 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 terrours, and with furies, to the bounds And crystal wall of Heaven; which, opening wide, Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed Into the wasteful deep: The monstrous sight Struck them with horror backward, but far worse Urged them behind: Headlong themselves they threw Down from the verge of 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. 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 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, 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; 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, 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 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. 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 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: 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, 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 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, 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 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 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 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, 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, 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; 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 (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 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 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, 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

Infinite, nor vacuous the space. Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire, And put not forth my goodness, which is free To act or not, Necessity and Chance Approach not me, and what I will is Fate. So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect. Immediate are the acts of God, more swift Than time or motion, but to human ears Cannot without process of speech be told, So told as earthly notion can receive. Great triumph and rejoicing was in 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 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 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 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, 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 Omnipotent 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 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, 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 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; 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, 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 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, embryon immature involved, 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,  
Satiated 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 Into the clouds; their tops  
ascend the sky: So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low Down sunk a hollow  
bottom broad and deep, Capacious bed of waters: Thither they Hasted with glad  
precipitance, uprolled, As drops on dust conglobing from the dry: Part rise in  
crystal wall, or ridge direct, For haste; such flight the great command impressed  
On the swift floods: As armies at the call Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast  
heard) Troop to their standard; so the 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 ooze deep channels  
wore; Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry, All but within those banks, where  
rivers now Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train. The dry land, Earth; and  
the great receptacle Of congregated waters, he called Seas: And saw that it was  
good; and said, Let 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, 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  
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 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 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, 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 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 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 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. 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. 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 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. 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, 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: 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 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, 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 His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds, And rampant shakes his  
brinded mane; the ounce, The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole Rising, the  
crumbled earth above them threw In hillocks: The swift stag from under ground  
Bore up his branching head: Scarce from his mould Behemoth biggest born of  
earth upheaved His vastness: Fleeced the flocks and bleating rose, As plants:  
Ambiguous between sea and land The river-horse, and scaly crocodile. At once  
came forth whatever creeps the ground, Insect or worm: those waved their limber  
fans For wings, and smallest lineaments exact In all the liveries decked of  
summer's pride With spots of gold and purple, azure and green: These, as a line,  
their long dimension drew, Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all  
Minims of nature; some of serpent-kind, Wonderous in length and corpulence,  
involved Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept The parsimonious  
emmet, provident Of future; in small room large heart enclosed; Pattern of just

equality perhaps Hereafter, joined in her popular tribes Of 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, 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, 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 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, 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 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,  
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. 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 heardst,) The heavens and all the constellations rung,  
The planets in their station listening stood, While the bright pomp ascended  
jubilant. Open, ye everlasting gates! they sung, Open, ye 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, Forerunning night; when at the holy mount Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure, The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down With his great Father; for he also went Invisible, yet 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, All sounds on fret by string or golden wire, Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice Choral or unison: of incense clouds, Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount. Creation and the six days acts they sung: Great are thy works, Jehovah! infinite Thy power! what thought can measure thee, or tongue Relate thee! Greater now in thy return Than from the giant Angels: Thee that day Thy thunders magnified; but to create Is greater than created to destroy. Who can impair thee, Mighty King, or bound Thy empire! Easily the proud attempt Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain, Thou hast repelled; while impiously they thought Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks To lessen thee, against his purpose serves To manifest the more thy might: his evil Thou usest, and from thence 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, 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. 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 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 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, 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. 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. 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 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. 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 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: 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; 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; 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, 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, 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? 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, Sent from her through the wide  
transpicuous 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; 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, desart and desolate,  
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far  
Down to this habitable, which returns Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.  
But whether thus these things, or whether not; But whether the sun, predominant  
in 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! 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. 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 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: 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 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 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: 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; 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, 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. 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. 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; 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, 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 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 droused sense, untroubled, though I thought I then was passing to my former state Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve: When suddenly stood at my head a dream, Whose inward apparition gently moved My fancy to believe I yet had being, And lived: One came, methought, of shape divine, And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise, 'First Man, of men innumerable ordained 'First Father! called by thee, I come thy guide 'To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.' So saying, by the hand he took me raised, And over fields and waters, as in air Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up A woody mountain; whose high top was plain, A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees Planted, with walks, and bowers; that what I saw Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree, Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found Before mine eyes all real, as the dream Had lively shadowed: Here had new begun My wandering, had not he, who was my guide Up hither, from among the trees appeared, Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe, In adoration at his feet I fell 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 '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 'Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced The rigid interdiction, which resounds Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed. 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth 'To thee and to thy race I give; as lords 'Possess it, and all things that therein live, 'Or live in sea, or air; beast, fish, and fowl. 'In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold 'After their kinds; I bring them to receive 'From thee their names, and pay thee fealty 'With low subjection; understand the same 'Of fish within their 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. 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 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. 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, 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 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 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape; Worse then can man with beast, and least of all. Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased. A nice and subtle happiness, I see, Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice Of thy associates, Adam! and wilt taste No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary. What 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? He ceased; I lowly answered. 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: 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  
secresy although alone, Best with thyself accompanied, seekest not Social  
communication; yet, so pleased, Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt  
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, 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: 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 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, And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound, But suddenly with  
flesh filled up and healed: The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands; Under  
his forming hands a creature grew, Man-like, but different sex; so lovely fair, That  
what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now Mean, or in her summed up, in her  
contained And in her looks; which from that time infused Sweetness into my  
heart, unfelt before, And into all things from her air inspired The spirit of love and  
amorous delight. She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked To find her, or for  
ever to deplore Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure: When out of hope, behold  
her, not far off, Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned With what all Earth or  
Heaven could bestow To make her amiable: On she came, Led by her heavenly  
Maker, though unseen, 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 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, 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 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 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 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. 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, 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. 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. 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, 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. 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. 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. Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled, Who meet with various objects, from the sense Variously representing; yet, still free, Approve the best, and follow what I approve. To love, thou 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 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. 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 Would not admit: thine, and of all thy sons, The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware! I in thy persevering shall rejoice, And all the Blest: Stand fast; to stand or fall Free in thine own arbitrement it lies. Perfect within, no outward aid require; And all temptation to transgress repel. So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus Followed with benediction. Since to part, Go, 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, 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 talk! 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:

00482129 If answerable style I can obtain 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 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 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 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 From compassing the earth; cautious of  
day, Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried His entrance, and forewarned the  
Cherubim That kept their watch; thence full of anguish 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, 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, West from Orontes to the  
ocean barred At Darien ; thence to the land where flows Ganges and Indus: Thus  
the orb he roamed With narrow search; and with inspection deep Considered every  
creature, which of all Most opportune might serve his wiles; and found The  
Serpent subtlest beast of all the field. Him after long debate, irresolute Of thoughts  
revolved, his final sentence chose Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom To  
enter, and his dark suggestions hide From sharpest sight: for, in the wily snake  
Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark, As from his wit and native  
subtlety Proceeding; which, in other beasts observed, Doubt might beget of  
diabolick power Active within, beyond the sense of brute. Thus he resolved, but  
first from inward grief 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 concentrating all their precious beams 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 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 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: 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, 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! 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 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, 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 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. 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 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 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 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, 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 Of  
looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow, To brute denied, and are of love the  
food; Love, not the lowest end of human life. For not to irksome toil, but to  
delight, He made us, and delight to reason joined. These paths and bowers doubt  
not but our joint hands Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide As we need  
walk, till younger hands ere long Assist us; But, if much converse perhaps Thee  
satiates, 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 Despairing, seeks to work us  
woe and shame By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand Watches, no doubt,  
with greedy hope to find His wish and best advantage, us asunder; Hopeless to  
circumvent us joined, where each To other speedy aid might lend at need:  
Whether his first design be to withdraw Our fealty from God, or to disturb  
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;  
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side That gave thee being, still shades thee,  
and protects. The wife, where danger or 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. 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. 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.  
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. Nor thou his  
malice and false guile contemn; Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce  
Angels; nor think superfluous other's aid. I, from the influence of thy looks,  
receive Access in every virtue; in thy sight More wise, more watchful, stronger, if  
need were Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on, Shame to be

overcome or over-reached, Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite. 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. 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. 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: 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, That I should mind thee oft; and mind thou me. Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve; Since Reason not impossibly may meet Some specious object by the foe suborned, And fall into deception unaware, Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned. Seek not temptation then, which to avoid Were better, and most likely if from me Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought. 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! 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 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, 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. 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; 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. 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 About her glowed, oft stooping to support Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold, Hung drooping unsustained; them she upstays Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while Herself, though fairest unsupported flower, From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh. Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm; Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen, Among thick-woven arborets, and 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. 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 teded grass, or kine, Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound; If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass, What pleasing seemed, for her now pleases more; She most, and in her look sums all delight: Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve Thus early, thus alone: Her 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 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. Thoughts, whither have ye led me! with what sweet Compulsion thus transported, to forget What hither brought us! hate, not love; nor hope Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste Of pleasure; but all pleasure to destroy, Save what is in destroying; other joy

To me is lost. Then, let me not let pass Occasion which now smiles; behold alone  
The woman, opportune to all attempts, Her husband, for I view far round, not  
nigh, Whose higher intellectual more I shun, And strength, of courage haughty,  
and of limb 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, 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; 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 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 To such disport  
before her through the field, From every beast; more duteous at her call, Than at  
Circean call the herd disguised. He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood, But as  
in gaze admiring: oft he bowed His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,  
Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod. His gentle dumb expression  
turned at length The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad Of her attention gained,  
with serpent-tongue 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 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired. Fairest resemblance of thy Maker  
fair, Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine By gift, and thy celestial beauty  
adore With ravishment beheld! there best beheld, Where universally admired; but  
here In this enclosure wild, these beasts among, Beholders rude, and shallow to  
discern Half what in thee is fair, one man except, Who sees thee? and what is one?  
who should be seen A Goddess among Gods, adored and served By Angels  
numberless, thy daily train. So glozed the Tempter, and his proem tuned: Into the  
heart of Eve his words made way, Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,  
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake. What may this mean? language of man  
pronounced By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed? The first, at least, of  
these I thought denied To beasts; whom God, on their creation-day, Created mute  
to all articulate sound: The latter I demur; for in their looks Much reason, and in  
their actions, oft appears. Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field I knew, but

not with human voice endued; Redouble then this miracle, and say, How 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: 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 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. About the mossy trunk I wound me soon; For, high from ground, the branches would require Thy utmost reach or Adam's: Round the tree All other beasts that saw, with like desire Longing and envying stood, but could not reach. Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill I spared not; for, such pleasure till that hour, At feed or fountain, never had I found. Sated at length, ere long I might perceive Strange alteration in me, to degree Of reason in my inward powers; and speech Wanted not long; though to this shape retained. Thenceforth to speculations high or deep I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind Considered all things visible in Heaven, Or Earth, or Middle; all things fair and good: 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. Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved: But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far? For many are the trees of God that grow In Paradise, and various, yet unknown To us; in such abundance lies our choice, As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched, Still hanging incorruptible, till men Grow up to their provision, and more hands Help to disburden Nature of her birth. To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad. Empress, the way is ready, and not long; Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat, Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past Of blowing myrrh and balm: if thou accept My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon Lead then, said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy 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. So glistened 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. But of this tree we may not taste nor touch; God so commanded, and left that command Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live Law to ourselves; our reason is our law. To whom the Tempter guilefully replied. Indeed! hath God then said that of the fruit Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat, Yet Lords declared of all in earth or air? To whom thus Eve, yet sinless. Of 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 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 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. 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 For such a petty trespass? and not praise Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain Of death denounced, whatever thing death be, Deterred not from achieving what might lead To happier life, knowledge of good and evil; Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil Be real, why not known, since easier shunned? God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just; Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed: Your fear itself of death removes the fear. Why then was this forbid? Why, but to awe; Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant, His worshippers? He knows that in the day Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear, Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then 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, 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? 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? 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 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth: Mean while the hour of noon drew on, and wak'd An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell So savoury of that fruit, which with desire, Incluable 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; Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay Gave elocution to the mute, and taught The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise: Thy praise he also, who forbids thy use, Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil; Forbids us then to taste! but his forbidding Commends thee more, while it infers the good By thee communicated, and our want: For good unknown sure is not had; or, had And yet unknown, is as not had at all. In plain then, what forbids he but to know, Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise? Such prohibitions bind not. But, if death Bind us with after-bands, what profits then Our inward freedom? In the day we eat Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die! How dies the Serpent? he hath eaten and lives, And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, Irrational till then. For us alone Was death invented? or to us denied This intellectual food, for beasts reserved? For beasts it seems: yet that one beast which first Hath 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, Of God or death, of law or penalty? Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine, Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste, Of virtue to make wise: What hinders then To reach, and feed at once both body and mind? So saying, her rash hand in evil hour Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she eat! Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat, Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe, That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk The guilty Serpent; and well might; for Eve, Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else Regarded; such delight till then, as seem'd, In fruit she never tasted, whether true Or fancied so, through expectation high Of knowledge; not was Godhead from her thought. Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint, And knew not eating death: Satiated at length, And hightened as with wine, jocund and boon, Thus to herself she pleasingly began. O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees In Paradise! of operation blest To sapience, hitherto obscured, infam'd. And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end Created; but henceforth my early care, Not without song, each morning, and due praise, Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease Of thy full branches offer'd free to all; Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know; Though others 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. 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. 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 scintillating 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. 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 Of knowledge he must pass; there he her met, Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled, New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused. To him she hasted; in her face excuse Came prologue, and apology too prompt; Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed. Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay? Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived Thy presence; agony of love till now Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought, The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear: This tree is not, as we are told, a tree Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown Opening the way, but of divine effect To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste; And hath been tasted such: The serpent wise, Or not restrained as we, or not obeying, Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become, Not dead, as we are 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, And growing up to Godhead; which for thee Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise. For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss; Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon. Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot May join us, equal joy, as equal love; Lest, thou not tasting, different degree Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit. Thus Eve with 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 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!  
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 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee Would never from my heart:  
no, no! I feel The link of Nature draw me: flesh of flesh, Bone of my bone thou art,  
and from thy state Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe. So having said, as one  
from sad dismay Recomforted, and after thoughts disturbed Submitting to what  
seemed remediless, Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned. Bold deed  
thou hast presumed, 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  
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. 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  
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; My own in thee,  
for what thou art is mine; Our state cannot be severed; we are one, One flesh; to  
lose thee were to lose myself. So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied. O glorious  
trial of exceeding love, Illustrious evidence, example high! Engaging me to  
emulate; but, short Of thy perfection, how shall I attain, Adam, from whose dear  
side I boast me sprung, And gladly of our union hear thee speak, One heart, one  
soul in both; whereof good proof This day affords, declaring thee resolved, Rather  
than death, or aught than death more dread, Shall separate us, linked in love so  
dear, To undergo with me one guilt, one crime, If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;  
Whose virtue for of good still good proceeds, Direct, or by occasion, hath

presented This happy trial of thy love, which else So eminently never had been known? Were it I thought death menaced would ensue This my attempt, I would sustain alone The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact Pernicious to thy peace; chiefly assured Remarkably so late of thy so true, So faithful, love unequalled: but I feel Far otherwise the event; not death, but life Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys, Taste so divine, that what of sweet before Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh. On my experience, Adam, freely taste, And fear of death deliver to the winds. So saying, she embraced him, and for joy Tenderly wept; much won, that he his love Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur Divine displeasure for her sake, or death. In recompence for such compliance bad Such recompence best merits from the bough She gave him of that fair enticing fruit With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat, Against his better knowledge; not deceived, But fondly overcome with female charm. Earth trembled from her entrails, as again In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan; Sky loured; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops Wept at completing of the mortal sin Original: while Adam took no thought, Eating his fill; nor Eve to iterate Her former trespass feared, the more to 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, 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, And palate call judicious; I the praise Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed. Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained From this delightful fruit, nor known till now True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be In things to us forbidden, it might be wished, For this one tree had been forbidden ten. But come, so well refreshed, now let us play, As meet is, after such delicious fare; For never did thy beauty, since the day I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned With all perfections, so inflame my sense With 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. 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, 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; 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, 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, 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 In solitude live savage; in some glade Obscured, where  
highest woods, impenetrable To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad And  
brown as evening: Cover me, ye Pines! Ye Cedars, with innumerable boughs  
Hide me, where I may never see them more!— But let us now, as in bad plight,  
devise What best may for the present serve to hide The parts of each from other,  
that seem most To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen; Some tree, whose  
broad smooth leaves together sewed, And girded on our loins, may cover round  
Those middle parts; that this 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 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 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 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, 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 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 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? 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 Immutable, when thou wert lost, not I; Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss, Yet willingly chose rather death with thee? And am I now upbraided as the cause Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe, It seems, in thy restraint: What could I more I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold The danger, and the lurking enemy That lay in wait; beyond this, had been force; And force upon free will hath here no place. But confidence then bore thee on; secure Either to meet no danger, or to find Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps I also erred, in overmuch admiring What seemed in thee so perfect, that I thought No evil durst attempt thee; but I rue The error now, which is become my crime, And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall 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 spiteful 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 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, 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 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, 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 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. 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. 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, 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. 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 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, 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, 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. 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. 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. 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, 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. 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 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. 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 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. 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 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. 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; 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 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. 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, 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 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. 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: Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid. So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell Of mortal change on earth. As when a flock Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote, Against the day of battle, to a field, Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured With scent of living carcasses designed For death, the following day, in bloody fight: So scented the grim Feature, and upturned His nostril wide into the murky air; Sagacious of his quarry from so far. Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark, Flew diverse; and with power (their power was great) Hovering upon the waters, what they met Solid or slimy, as in raging sea Tost up and down, together crouded drove, From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell; As when two polar winds, blowing adverse Upon the Cronian sea, together drive Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way Beyond Petsora eastward, to the rich 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; 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, 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 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. 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, 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, 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 stupendious bridge his joy encreas'd. 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 divin'd, My heart, which by a secret harmony Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet, That thou on earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks Now also evidence, but straight I felt, Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt, That I must after thee, with this thy son; Such fatal consequence unites us three! Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds, Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure Detain from following thy illustrious track. Thou hast achieved our liberty, confin'd Within Hell-gates till now; thou us impow'rd 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 adjudg'd; from this new world Retiring, by his own doom alienated; 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 answer'd 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, 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 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 My hold of this new kingdom all depends, Through Sin to Death expos'd 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 look'd wan, And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse Then suffered. The other way Satan went down The causey to Hell-gate: On either side Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed, And with rebounding surge the bars assailed, That scorn'd his indignation: Through the gate, Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd, And all about found desolate; for those, Appointed to sit there, had left their charge, Flown to the upper world; the rest were all Far to the inland retired, about the walls Of Pandemonium; city and proud seat Of Lucifer, so by allusion call'd 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 emperour 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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; 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 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 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, 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 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 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 hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws, With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell Into the same illusion, not as Man Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they plagued And worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss, Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed; Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo, This annual humbling certain numbered days, To dash their pride, and joy, for Man seduced. However, some tradition they dispersed Among the Heathen, of their purchase got, And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide- Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule Of high Olympus; thence by Saturn 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 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, 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 The sithe 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, 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 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 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 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, 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 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 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, Equal in days and nights, except to those Beyond the polar circles; to them day Had unbenighted shone, while the low sun, To recompense his distance, in their sight Had rounded still the horizon, and not known Or east or west; which had forbid the snow From cold Estotiland, and south as far Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit The sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned His course intended; else, how had the world Inhabited, though sinless, more than now, Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat? These changes in the Heavens, though slow, produced Like change on sea and land; sidereal 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; 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, 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. 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 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; 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 Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right And equal to reduce me to my dust; Desirous to resign and render back All I

received; unable to perform Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold The good I sought not. To the loss of that, Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet Mortality my sentence, and be earth Insensible! How glad would lay me down As in my mother's lap! There I should rest, And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse To me, and to my offspring, would torment me With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die; Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of Man Which God inspired, cannot together perish With this corporeal clod; then, in the grave, Or in some other dismal place, who knows But I shall die a living death? O thought Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath Of life that sinned; what dies but what had life And sin? The body properly had neither, All of me then shall die: let this appease The doubt, since human reach no further knows. For though the Lord of all be infinite, Is his wrath also? Be it, Man is not so, But mortal doomed. How can he exercise Wrath without end on Man, whom death must end? Can he make deathless death? That were to make Strange contradiction, which to God himself Impossible is held; as argument Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out, For anger's sake, finite to infinite, In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour, Satisfied never? That were to extend His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law; By which all causes else, according still To the reception of their matter, act; Not to 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 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 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; 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! Thus Adam to himself lamented loud, Through the still night; not now, as ere Man fell, Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air Accompanied; with damps, and dreadful gloom; Which to his evil conscience represented All things with double

terror: On the ground Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground; and oft Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused Of tardy execution, since denounced The day of his offence. Why comes not Death, Said he, with one thrice-acceptable stroke To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word, Justice Divine not hasten to be just? But Death comes not at call; Justice Divine 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, 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 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, 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; Or find some other way to generate Mankind? This mischief had not been befallen, And more that shall befall; innumerable Disturbances on earth through female snares, And strait conjunction with this sex: for either He never shall find out fit mate, but such As some misfortune brings him, or mistake; Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld By parents; or his happiest choice too late Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound To a fell adversary, his hate or shame: Which infinite calamity shall cause To human life, and household peace confound. He added not, and from her turned; but Eve, Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing And tresses all disordered, at his feet Fell humble; and, embracing them, besought His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint. Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness 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, 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; 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, 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 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 In offices of love, how we may lighten Each other's burden, in our share of woe; Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see, Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil; A long day's dying, to augment our pain; And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived. To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied. Adam, by sad experiment I know How little weight my words with thee can find, Found so erroneous; thence by just event Found so unfortunate: Nevertheless, Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart Living or dying, from thee I will not hide What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen, Tending to some relief of our extremes, Or end; though sharp and sad, yet tolerable, As in our evils, and of easier choice. If care of our descent perplex us most, Which must be born to certain woe, 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 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; And with desire to languish without hope, Before the present object languishing With like desire; which would be misery And torment less than none of what we dread; Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free From what we fear for both, let us make short, — Let us seek Death; — or, he not found, supply With our own hands his office on ourselves: Why stand we longer shivering under fears, That show no end but death, and have the power, Of many ways to die the shortest choosing, Destruction with destruction to destroy? — She ended here, or vehement despair Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts Had entertained, as dyed her cheeks with pale. But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed, To better hopes his more attentive mind Labouring had raised; and thus to Eve replied. Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems To argue in thee something more sublime And excellent, than what

thy mind contemns; But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes That excellence thought in thee; and implies, Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret For loss of life and pleasure overloved. Or if thou covet death, as utmost end Of misery, so thinking to evade The penalty pronounced; doubt not but God Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire, than so To be forestalled; much more I fear lest death, So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain We are by doom to pay; rather, such acts Of contumacy will provoke the Highest To make death in us live: Then let us seek Some safer resolution, which methinks I have in view, calling to mind with heed Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise The Serpent's head; piteous amends! unless Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe, Satan; who, in the serpent, hath contrived Against us this deceit: To crush his head Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost By death brought on ourselves, or childless days Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe Shal 'scape his punishment ordained, and we Instead shall double ours upon our heads. No more be mentioned then of violence Against ourselves; and wilful barrenness, That cuts us off from hope; and 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 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 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 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, He will instruct us praying, and of grace Beseeching him; so as we need not fear To pass commodiously this life, sustained By him with many comforts, till we end In dust, our final rest and native home. What better can we do, than, to the place Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall Before him reverent; and there confess Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek

## Book XI

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 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. Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood Praying; for from the mercy-seat above Preventing 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 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 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 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 Before thee reconciled, at least his days Numbered, though sad; till death, his doom, (which I To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse,) To better life shall yield him: where with me All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss; Made one with me, as I with thee am one. To whom the Father, without cloud, serene. All thy request for Man, accepted Son, Obtain; all thy request was my decree: But, longer in that Paradise to dwell, The law I gave to Nature him forbids: Those pure immortal elements, that know, No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul, Eject him, tainted now; and purge him off, As a distemper, gross, to air as gross, And mortal food; as may dispose him best For dissolution wrought by sin, that first Distempered all things, and of incorrupt Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts Created him endowed; with happiness, And immortality: that fondly lost, This other served but to eternize woe; Till I provided death: so death becomes His final remedy; and, after life, Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined By faith and faithful

works, to second life, Waked in the renovation of the just, Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed. 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 When God descended, and perhaps once more To sound at general doom. The angelick blast Filled all the regions: from their blissful 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. 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, 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 warriours, lest the Fiend, Or in behalf of Man, or to invade Vacant possession, some new trouble raise: Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God Without remorse drive out the sinful pair; From hallowed ground 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. 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 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 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; 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 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, 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: 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, 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, 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, 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 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. 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, 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 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 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 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; 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. 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 ;t even, which I bred up with tender hand 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. Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart, Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine: Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes Thy husband; whom to follow thou art bound; Where he abides, think there thy native soil. Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned, To Michael thus his humble words addressed. Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem Prince above princes! gently hast thou told Thy message, which might else in telling wound, And in performing end us; what besides Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair, Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring, Departure from this happy place, our sweet Recess, and only consolation left Familiar to our eyes! all places else 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: 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: 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 theron 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 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 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, 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 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; As once thou slep'tst, 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, 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. 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 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; On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway The world: in spirit perhaps he also saw Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume, And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat Of Atabalipa; and yet unspoiled Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed, Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue The visual nerve, for he had much to see; And from the well of life three drops instilled. So deep the power of these ingredients pierced, 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. 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; 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 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. 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 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 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 What misery the inabstinence of Eve Shall bring on Men. Immediately a place Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark; A lazarus-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, 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 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 Obtruded 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, 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; While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules To loathsome sickness; worthily, since they God's image did not reverence in themselves. I yield it just, said Adam, and submit. But is there yet no other way, besides These painful passages, how we may come To death, and mix with our connatural dust? There is, said Michael, if thou well observe The rule of Not too much; by temperance taught, In what thou 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, Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forego, To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth, Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign A melancholy damp of cold and dry To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume The balm of life. To whom our ancestor. Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong Life much; bent rather, how I may be quit, Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge; Which I must keep till my appointed day Of 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 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 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 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 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 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 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. 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 appetence, to sing, to dance, To dress, and troll the tongue, and  
roll the eye: To these that sober race of men, whose lives Religious titled them the  
sons of God, Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame Ignobly, to the trains and  
to the smiles Of these fair atheists; and now swim in joy, Erelong to swim at large;  
and laugh, for which The world erelong a world of tears must weep. To whom  
thus Adam, of short joy bereft. O pity and shame, that they, who to live well  
Entered so fair, should turn aside to tread Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint!

But still I see the 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. 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; 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, 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 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 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; 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 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 beheldest  
The only righteous in a world perverse, And therefore hated, therefore so beset  
With foes, for daring single to be just, And utter odious truth, that God would  
come To judge them with his Saints; him the Most High 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. He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed; The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar; All now was turned to jollity and game, To luxury and riot, feast and dance; Marrying or prostituting, as befel, Rape or adultery, where passing fair Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils. At length a reverend sire among them came, And of their doings great dislike declared, And testified against their ways; he oft Frequented their assemblies, whereso met, Triumphs or festivals; and to them preached Conversion and repentance, as to souls In prison, under 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; Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and highth; Smear'd 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 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 cieling 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 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 imbarcked. How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold The end of all thy offspring, end so sad, Depopulation! Thee another flood, Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned, And sunk thee as thy sons; till, gently reared By 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 The burden of many ages, on me light At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth Abortive, to torment me ere their being, With thought that they must be. Let no man seek Henceforth to be foretold, what shall befall Him or his children; evil he may be sure, Which neither his foreknowing can prevent; And he the future evil shall no less In apprehension than in substance feel, Grievous to bear: but that care now is past, Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped Famine and anguish will at last consume, 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, 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, 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 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, The grand-child, with twelve sons increased, departs From Canaan, to a land hereafter called Egypt, divided by the river Nile; See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths Into the sea: To sojourn in that land He comes, invited by a younger son In time of dearth; a son, whose worthy deeds Raise him to be the second in that realm Of Pharaoh: There he dies, and leaves his race Growing into a nation, and now grown Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests Or violence, he of their wicked ways Shall them admonish; and before them set The paths of righteousness, how much more safe And full of peace; denouncing wrath to come 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 household, from amidst A world devote to universal wrack. No sooner he, with them of man and beast Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged, And sheltered round; but all the cataracts Of 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, 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, 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 sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut. The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground, Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed. And now the tops of hills, as rocks, appear; With 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 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. 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 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 appeared? 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? 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.

## **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 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 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 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  
sovranty; And from rebellion shall derive his name, Though of rebellion others he  
accuse. He with a crew, whom like ambition joins With him or under him to  
tyrannize, Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find The plain, wherein a  
black bituminous gurge Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell: Of brick,  
and of that stuff, they cast to build A city and 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. 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: 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. O execrable son! so to aspire  
Above his brethren; to himself assuming Authority usurped, from God not given:  
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl, Dominion absolute; that right we hold By  
his donation; but man over men He made not lord; such title to himself Reserving,  
human left from human free. But this usurper his encroachment proud Stays not  
on Man; to God his tower intends Siege and defiance: Wretched man! what food  
Will he convey up thither, to sustain Himself and his rash army; where thin air  
Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross, And famish him of breath, if not of  
bread? To whom thus Michael. Justly thou abhorrest That son, who on the quiet  
state of men Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue Rational liberty; yet know  
withal, Since thy original lapse, true liberty Is lost, which always with right reason  
dwells Twinned, and from her hath no 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, 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 Of him who built the ark; who, for the shame Done to his father, heard this  
heavy curse, Servant of servants, on his vicious race. Thus will this latter, as the  
former world, Still tend from bad to worse; till God at last, Wearied with their  
iniquities, withdraw His presence from among them, and avert His holy eyes;  
resolving from thenceforth To leave them to their own polluted ways; And one  
peculiar nation to select From all the rest, of whom to be invoked, A nation from

one faithful man to spring: Him on this side Euphrates yet residing, Bred up in idol-worship: O, that men (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown, While yet the patriarch lived, who 'scaped the flood, As to forsake the living God, and fall To worship their own work in wood and stone For Gods! Yet him God the Most High vouchsafes To call by vision, from his father's house, His kindred, and false Gods, into a land Which he will show him; and from him will raise A mighty nation; and upon him 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 Chaldaea, passing now the ford 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 Desart south; (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed;) From Hermon east to the great western Sea; Mount Hermon, yonder sea; each place behold In prospect, as I point them; on the shore Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted stream, Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills. This ponder, that all nations of the earth Shall in his seed be blessed: By that seed Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest, Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call, A son, and of his son a grand-child, leaves; Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown: The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs From Canaan to a land hereafter called Egypt, divided by the river Nile See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths Into the sea. To sojourn in that land He comes, invited by a younger son In time of dearth, a son whose worthy deeds Raise him to be the second in that realm Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race Growing into a nation, and now grown Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves Inhospitably, and kills their infant males: Till by two brethren (these two brethren call Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim His people from enthrallment, 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 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, Palpable darkness, and blot out three days; Last, with one midnight stroke, all the first-born Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds The river-dragon tamed at length submits To let his sojourners depart, and oft Humbles his stubborn heart;

but still, as ice More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea Swallows him with his host; but them lets pass, As on dry land, between two crystal walls; Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand Divided, till his rescued gain their shore: Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend, Though present in his Angel; who shall go Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire; By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire; To guide them in their journey, and remove Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues: All night he will pursue; but his approach Darkness defends between till morning watch; Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud, God looking forth will trouble all his host, And craze their chariot-wheels: when by command Moses once more his potent rod extends Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys; On their embattled ranks the waves return, And overwhelm their war: The race elect Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance Through the wild Desert, not the readiest way; Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed, 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: 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 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 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 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, '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 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? 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 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; 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 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 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. 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, 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. 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; 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. 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. 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 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, 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 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, 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 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 shouldest 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; And fix far deeper in his head their stings Than temporal death shall bruise the victor's heel, Or theirs whom he redeems; a death, like sleep, A gentle wafting to immortal life. Nor after resurrection shall he stay Longer on earth, than certain times to appear To his disciples, men who in his life Still followed him; to them

shall leave in charge To teach all nations what of him they learned And his salvation; them who shall believe Baptizing in the profluent stream, the sign Of washing them from guilt of sin to life Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall, For death, like that which the Redeemer died. All nations they shall teach; for, from that day, Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world; So in his seed all nations shall be blest. Then to the 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, 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, Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied. O Goodness infinite, Goodness immense! That all this good of evil shall produce, And evil turn to good; more wonderful Than that which by creation first brought forth Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand, Whether I should repent me now of sin By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring; To God more glory, more good-will to Men From God, and over wrath grace shall abound. But say, if our Deliverer up to 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 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, 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, Their doctrine and their story written left, They die; but in their room, as they forewarn, Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves, Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven To their own vile advantages shall turn Of lucre and ambition; and the truth With superstitions and traditions taint, Left only in those written records pure, Though not but by the Spirit understood. Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names, Places, and titles, and with these to join Secular power; though feigning still to act By spiritual, to themselves appropriating The Spirit of God, promised

alike and given To all 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 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 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; 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. How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest, Measured this transient world, the race of time, Till time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss, Eternity, whose end no eye can reach. Greatly-instructed I shall hence depart; Greatly in peace of thought; and have my fill Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain; Beyond which was my folly to aspire. Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best, And love with fear the only God; to walk As in his presence; ever to observe His providence; and on him sole depend, Merciful over all his works, with good Still overcoming evil, and by small Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise By simply meek: that suffering for truth's sake Is fortitude to highest victory, And, to the faithful, death the gate of life; Taught this by his example, whom I now Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. To whom thus also 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, 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 Of speculation; for the hour precise Exacts our parting hence; and see! the guards, By me encamped on yonder hill, expect Their motion; at whose front a flaming sword, In signal of remove, waves fiercely round: We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve; Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed Portending good, and all her spirits composed To meek submission: thou, at season fit, Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard; Chiefly what may concern her faith to know, The great deliverance by her seed to come (For by the Woman's seed) on all mankind:

That ye may live, which will be many days, Both in one faith unanimous, though sad, With cause, for evils past; yet much more cheered With meditation on the happy end. He ended, and they both descend the hill; Descended, Adam to the bower, where Eve 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 Wearing I fell asleep: But now lead on; In me is no delay; with thee to go, Is to stay here; without thee here to stay, Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me Art all things under Heaven, all places thou, Who for my wilful crime art banished hence. This further consolation yet secure I carry hence; though all by me is lost, Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed, By me the Promised Seed shall all restore. So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard Well pleased, but answered not: For now, too nigh The Arch-Angel stood; and, from the other hill To their fixed station, all in bright array The Cherubim descended; on the ground Gliding meteorous, as 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, 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 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. [The End].