

John Milton



Paradise Lost



A Crud Factory e-book

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, 5
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues 15
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, 20
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, 25
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?

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🌿 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.

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🌿 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,

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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. 60
 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 65
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all, but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
 Such place Eternal Justice has prepared 70
 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! 75
 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 80
 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 85
 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 90
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 95
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 100
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? 105
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 110
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 115
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,

And this empyreal substance, cannot fail; BOOK I
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve 120
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, 125
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 130
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, 135
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, 140
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) 145
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,	BOOK I
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,	150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,	
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?	
What can it then avail though yet we feel	
Strength undiminished, or eternal being	
To undergo eternal punishment?"	155
 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,	160
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;	165
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	170
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,	175
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now	

To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep. BOOK I
 Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn
 Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild, 180
 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; 185
 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, 190
 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, 195
 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 200
 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, 205
 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 210
 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 215
 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. 220

 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 225
 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 230
 Of subterranean wind transports a hill
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
 Of thundering Etna, whose combustible
 And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
 Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds, 235
 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, 240
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 245
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, 250
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. 255
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: 260
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, 265
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?" 270

☞ 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 275
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
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height!"

☞ He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, 285
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, 290
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 admiral, were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps 295
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

BOOK I

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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!" 330

🌿 They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
 Nor did they not perceive the evil plight 335
 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 340
 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, 345
 '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: 350
 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. 355
 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, 360
 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, 365
 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 370
 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. 375

🌿 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? 380

🌿 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 385
 Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned

Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed BOOK I
 Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
 Abominations; and with cursed things
 His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390
 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 395
 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 400
 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. 405
 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 realm, beyond
 The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines, 410
 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 415
 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,

BOOK I

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Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers:
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king—
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared

BOOK I

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BOOK I

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 480
 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, 485
 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 490
 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 495
 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 500
 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. 505
 🌿 These were the prime in order and in might:

The rest were long to tell; though far renowned BOOK I
 Th' Ionian gods—of Javan's issue held
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
 Their boasted parents;—Titan, Heaven's first-born, 510
 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 515
 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, 520
 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 525
 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. 530
 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 535
 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: 540
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, 545
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 550
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; 555
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, 560
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, 565
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; 570
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 575
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, 580
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 585
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, 590
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 595
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,

In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain—
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:—
 "O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with th' Almighty!—and that strife
Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,

BOOK I

600

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625

Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse? 630
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, 635
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 640
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 645
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 650
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 655
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;
 660 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
 665 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
 670 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
 675 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
 680 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,
 685 Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands

Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth	BOOK I
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew	
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,	
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire	690
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	695
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,	700
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	705
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	710
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	715
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 720
 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 725
 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 730
 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 735
 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 740
 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, 745
 On Lemnos, th' Aegaeon isle. Thus they relate,

Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent, 750
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 755
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 760
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 765
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 770
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 775
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 780
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 785
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, 790
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, 795
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

BOOK II




High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings Barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised 5
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed:— 10

“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!—
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear 15
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader—next, free choice
With what besides in council or in fight 20
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw 25
Envy from each inferior; but who here

Will envy whom the highest place exposes
 Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
 Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
 Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good 30
 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
 From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
 Precedence; none whose portion is so small
 Of present pain that with ambitious mind
 Will covet more! With this advantage, then, 35
 To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
 More than can be in Heaven, we now return
 To claim our just inheritance of old,
 Surer to prosper than prosperity
 Could have assured us; and by what best way, 40
 Whether of open war or covert guile,
 We now debate. Who can advise may speak."
 🌿 He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
 Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
 That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair. 45
 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:— 50
 🌿 "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 55
 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 tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose, 60
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 65
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 70
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend 75
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 80
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 85
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 90
 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, 95
 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 100
 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.” 105

 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 110
 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— 115
 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

120

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

125

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

130

Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep

Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing

Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,

Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way

By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise

135

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

140

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—

145

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,
 150 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,
 155 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,
 160 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
 165 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,
 170 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
 175 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, 180
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, 185
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 190
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 195
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 200
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 205
What yet they know must follow—to endure

Exile, or igominy, or bonds, or pain,
 The sentence of their Conqueror. This is now
 Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
 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

210

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235

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
240 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,
245 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
250 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
255 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 so'er
260 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,
265 And with the majesty of darkness round

Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar, Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!	BOOK II
As he our darkness, cannot we his light Imitate when we please? This desert soil	270
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	275
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	280
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	285
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay After the tempest. Such applause was heard	290
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,	295

By policy and long process of time, BOOK II
 In emulation opposite to Heaven.
 Which when Beelzebub perceived—than whom,
 Satan except, none higher sat—with grave 300
 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 305
 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, 310
 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, 315
 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 320
 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 325
 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 330
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, 335
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? 340
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 345
(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 350
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 355
Or substance, how endued, and what their power


And where their weakness: how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, 360
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 365
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 370
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— 375
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, 380
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 385
His glory to augment. The bold design


Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
“Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390
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, 395
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, 400
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, 405
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 410
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 415
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, 420
 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, 425
 Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
 Above his fellows, with monarchical pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—
 "O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones! 430
 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 435
 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 440
 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, 445
 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 450
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 455
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 460
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 465
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, 470
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. 475
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 480
 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. 485

 Thus 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 490
 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. 495
 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 500
 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! 505

 The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth

BOOK II

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, 510
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: 515
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy,
By herald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim. 520
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 525
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; 530
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 535
Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,

BOOK II

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 540
 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 545
 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 550
 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 555
 (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, 560
 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!— 565
 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, 570
 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 575
 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, 580
 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— 585
 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 590
 Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
 A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
 Betwixt Damietta and Mount Casius old,
 Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
 Burns frore, and cold performs th' effect of fire. 595
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,

At certain revolutions all the damned BOOK II
 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 600
 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, 605
 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, 610
 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, 615
 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, 620
 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, 625
 Obominable, inutterable, and worse

Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

BOOK II

☞ Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell

630

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.

635

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,

640

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,

645

Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable Shape.

The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,

650


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,

655

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 660
 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 665
 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, 670
 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 675
 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:— 680
 🌿 “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. 685
 Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,

Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.”

BOOK II

 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 690

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? 695

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, 700

Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue

Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart

Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”

 So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,

So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold, 705

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 710

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 715

Over the Caspian,—then stand front to front

BOOK II

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; 720
 For never but once more was either like
 To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
 Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
 Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
 Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key, 725
 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? 730
 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 735
 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 740
 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." 745
 🌿 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 750
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, 755
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 760
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 765
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 770
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 775
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. 780
 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 785
 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, 790
 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 795
 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 800
 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 805
 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.

BOOK II

But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun

810

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

815

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

820

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,

825

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

830

Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now

Created vast and round—a place of bliss

In the purlieu of Heaven; and therein placed

A race of upstart creatures, to supply

Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,

835

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

BOOK II

840

845

850

855

860

865

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.” 870
 🌿 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 875
 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, 880
 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, 885
 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 890
 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 895
 Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise

Of endless wars, and by confusion stand. BOOK II
 For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
 Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
 Their embryon atoms: they around the flag 900
 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 905
 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, 910
 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 915
 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 920
 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 925
 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 930
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, 935
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, 940
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 Arimasbian, who by stealth 945
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. 950
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 955
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 960
 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, 965
 And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

🌿 T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:—"Ye Powers
 And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970
 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, 975
 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: 980
 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 985
 Erect the standard there of ancient Night.

Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge!"

BOOK II

✿ Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
 With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
 Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art— 990
 That mighty leading Angel, who of late
 Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
 I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
 Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, 995
 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, 1000
 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 1005
 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, 1010
 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 1015
 Environed, wins his way; harder beset

And more endangered than when Argo passed BOOK II
 Through Bosporus betwixt the jutting rocks,
 Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
 Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steered. 1020
 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) 1025
 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 1030
 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 1035
 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; 1040
 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, 1045
 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 II

1050

1055

BOOK III



☞ Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven firstborn,

Or of the Eternal coeternal beam

May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,

And never but in unapproached light

Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee

5

Bright effluence of bright essence increate.

Or hearest 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

10

The rising world of waters dark and deep,

Won from the void and formless infinite.

Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,

Escaped the Stygian pool, though long detained

In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight

15

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,

20

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 quenched their orbs,

Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more

25



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, 30
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
 So were I equalled with them in renown,
 Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace;
 Blind Thamyris, and blind Maeonides, 35
 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 40
 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 45
 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 expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. 50
 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. 55
 🌿 Now had the Almighty Father from above,

From the pure empyrean where he sits
 High throned above all highth, bent down his eye
 His own works and their works at once to view:
 About him all the Sanctities of Heaven 60
 Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his glory sat,
 His only son; on earth he first beheld
 Our two first parents, yet the only two 65
 Of mankind in the happy garden placed
 Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
 Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,
 In blissful solitude; he then surveyed
 Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there 70
 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 seemed
 Firm land imbosomed, without firmament, 75
 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 80
 Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds
 Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
 Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
 Wide interrupt, can hold; so bent he seems
 On desperate revenge, that shall redound 85
 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 placed, with purpose to assay 90
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 95
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 100
And Spirits, both them who stood, and them who failed;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared, 105
Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity, 110
Not me? they therefore, as to right belonged,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
As if predestination over-ruled
Their will disposed by absolute decree 115
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, 120
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge, and what they choose; for so
 I formed them free: and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves; I else must change 125
 Their nature, and revoke the high decree
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
 Their freedom: they themselves ordained their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-depraved: Man falls, deceived 130
 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 filled 135
 All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect
 Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
 Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
 Substantially expressed; and in his face 140
 Divine compassion visibly appeared,
 Love without end, and without measure grace,
 Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake.
 🌿 “O Father, gracious was that word which closed 145
 Thy sovran command, that Man should find grace;
 For which both Heaven and earth shall high extol

Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
 Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
 Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
 For should Man finally be lost, should Man, 150
 Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
 Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
 With his own folly? that be from thee far,
 That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
 Of all things made, and judgest only right. 155
 Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
 His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfill
 His malice, and thy goodness bring to nought,
 Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
 Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell 160
 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 165
 Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.”

🌿 To whom the great Creator thus replied.
 “O son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might, 170
 All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
 As my eternal purpose hath decreed;
 Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will;
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
 Freely vouchsafed; once more I will renew 175
 His lapsed powers, though forfeit; and enthralled

By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe;
By me upheld, that he may know how frail 180
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 warned 185
Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
The incensed Deity, while offered grace
Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. 190
To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endeavoured 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, 195
Light after light, well used, they shall attain,
And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.
This my long sufferance, and my day of grace,
They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more, 200
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, 205
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
 210 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?
 215 Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"
 He asked, but all the heavenly quire stood mute,
 And silence was in Heaven: on Man's behalf
 Patron or intercessor none appeared,
 220 Much less that durst upon his own head draw
 The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
 And now without redemption all mankind
 Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell
 By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
 In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
 225 His dearest mediation thus renewed.

 "Father, thy word is past, Man shall find grace;
 And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
 The speediest of thy winged messengers,
 To visit all thy creatures, and to all
 230 Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
 Happy for Man, so coming; he her aid
 Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost;
 Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
 Indebted and undone, hath none to bring;
 235 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 240
 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, 245
 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 250
 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 255
 The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
 Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes;
 Death last, and with his carcass glut the grave;
 Then, with the multitude of my redeemed, 260
 Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
 Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
 Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
 And reconcilment: wrath shall be no more
 Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire." 265
 🌿 His words here ended; but his meek aspect

BOOK III


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 270
 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 275
 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. 280
 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 285
 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, 290
 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, 295
 And dying rise, and rising with him raise

His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life. BOOK III
So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So dearly to redeem what hellish hate 300
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 305
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, 310
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 315
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, Princedom, Powers, Dominions, I reduce: 320
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 325
Thy dread tribunal; forthwith from all winds,

BOOK III

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 330
 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, 335
 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, 340
 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 345
 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 350
 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 355
 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 360
 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, 365
 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 370
 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 375
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shade'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and, through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, 380
 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 385
 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 390
 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 395
 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, 400
 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, 405
 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, 410
 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. 415
 🌿 Thus they in Heaven, above the starry sphere,

With vanity had filled the works of men: BOOK III
 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; 450
 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, 455
 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, 460
 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: 465
 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, 470
 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. 475
 Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek

In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heaven;	BOOK III
And they, who to be sure of Paradise,	
Dying, put on the weeds of Dominick,	
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised;	480
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	485
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	490
And fluttered into rags; then reliques, beads,	
Indulgences, dispensations, 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	495
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown	
Long after; now unpeopled, and untrud.	
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	500
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,	505
With frontispiece of diamond and gold	


Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems	BOOK III
The portal shone, inimitable on earth	
By model, or by shading pencil, drawn.	
These stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw	510
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, <i>This is the gate of Heaven.</i>	515
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	520
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:	525
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,	530
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,	535
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, 540
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night; at last by break of cheerful dawn 545
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, 550
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 555
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade,) from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole 560
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 565
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 570
 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, 575
 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 580
 Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
 Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
 By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
 The universe, and to each inward part
 With gentle penetration, though unseen, 585
 Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep;
 So wondrously was set his station bright.
 There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
 Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb
 Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw. 590
 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; 595
 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, 600
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. 605
What wonder then if fields and regions here
Breathe forth Elixir pure, and rivers run
Potable gold, when with one virtuous touch
The arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,
Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed, 610
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, 615
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 620
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 625
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 630
 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: 635
 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 640
 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, 645
 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 650
 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, 655
 The first art wont his great authentic will


Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,	BOOK III
Where all his sons thy embassy attend;	
And here art likeliest by supreme decree	
Like honour to obtain, and as his eye	660
To visit oft this new creation round;	
Unſpeakable desire to see, and know	
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly Man,	
His chief delight and favour, him for whom	
All these his works so wondrous he ordained,	665
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;	670
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,	675
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.”	680
 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:	685
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 690
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 695
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, 700
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 705
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 710
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; 715
And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven

BOOK III

Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
 That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
 Numberless, as thou see'st, and how they move;
 Each had his place appointed, each his course; 720
 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, 725
 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 730
 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." 735

 Thus said, he turned; and Satan, bowing low,
 As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
 Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
 Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath,
 Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success, 740
 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, 5
While time was, our first parents had been warned
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped,
Haply so 'scaped his mortal snare: For now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter ere the accuser of mankind, 10
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell:
Yet, not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth 15
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 20
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 25
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.

BOOK IV

 "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,

30

35

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:

40

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,

45

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 ſdeigned ſubjection, and thought one ſtep higher
Would ſet me higheſt, and in a moment quit


50

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

55

Indebted and discharged; what burden then
 O, had his powerful destiny ordained
 Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
 Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised 60
 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. 65
 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. 70
 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; 75
 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? 80
 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 85
 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, 90
 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 95
 What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
 For never can true reconcilment grow,
 Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep:
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse 100
 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 105
 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, 110
 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 115
 Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.

For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware,
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practised falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
Yet not enough had practised to deceive
Uriel once warned; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort; his gestures fierce
He marked and mad demeanour, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
Access denied; and overhead upgrew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend,
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighbouring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, laden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,

BOOK IV

120

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Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed: BOOK IV
 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 150
 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 155
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who fail
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
 Mozambick, off at sea north-east winds blow
 Sabean odours from the spicy shore 160
 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 165
 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 170
 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. 175
 One gate there only was, and that looked east

On the other side: which when the arch-felon saw,	BOOK IV
Due entrance he disdain'd; and, in contempt,	
At one slight bound high over-leaped all bound	
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within	180
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:	185
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;	190
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	195
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	200
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,	205
A Heaven on Earth: For blissful Paradise	

BOOK IV

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, 210
 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; 215
 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. 220
 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 225
 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, 230
 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, 235
 Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,

With mazy error under pendant shades BOOK IV
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
 Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
 In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon 240
 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; 245
 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 250
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose:
 Another side, umbrageous grots and caves 255
 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 260
 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, 265
 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 270
 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, 275
 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 280
 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 285
 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, 290
 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; 295
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace;

He for God only, she for God in him: BOOK IV
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung 300
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 305
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; 310
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, 315
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; 320
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 325
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed

To recommend cool Zephyr, and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers:
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
Couched, and now filled with pasture gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles, and in the ascending scale
Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad.
🌿 “O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold!

BOOK IV

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Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to heavenly Spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue 360
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 365
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 370
As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied: League with you I seek,
And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me 375
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, 380
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. 385
And should I at your harmless innocence

Melt, as I do, yet public 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." 390

 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, 395
 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; 400
 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, 405
 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 410
 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 415
 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 420
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, 425
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 430
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, 435
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 440
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 445
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. 450
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 455
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, 460
It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love: There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me; 'What thou see'st, 465
What there thou see'st, fair Creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy 470
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, 475
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, 480
 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 485
 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 490
 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 495
 Both of her beauty, and submissive charms,
 Smiled with superior 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 500
 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 505
 Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,

Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire, BOOK IV
 Among our other torments not the least,
 Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.
 Yet let me not forget what I have gained 510
 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? 515
 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 520
 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 525
 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 530
 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 535
 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 540
 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 545
 Still as it roſe, impoſſible to climb.
 Betwixt theſe rocky pillars Gabriel ſat,
 Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;
 About him exerciſed heroic games
 The unarmed youth of Heaven, but nigh at hand 550
 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 555
 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 ſtriſt watch, that to this happy place 560
 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 565
 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 volubile 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; 600
 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 605
 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 610
 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; 615
 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. 620
 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, 625
 That mock our scant manuring, and require

More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth: BOOK IV
Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
That lie bestrown, unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease; 630
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 635
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, 640
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, 645
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, 650
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 655
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?”



To whom our general ancestor replied.

BOOK IV

“Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,
These have their course to finish round the earth,
By morrow evening, and from land to land

660

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

665

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.

670

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

675

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,

680

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 harmonic number joined, their songs

685

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 jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; 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 hymenaeae 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

BOOK IV

690

695

700

705

710

715

On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

BOOK IV

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,

720

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

725

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

730

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

735

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:

740

Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.

745

Our Maker bids encrease; who bids abstain

But our Destroyer, foe to God and Man? BOOK IV
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else! 750
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. 755
Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used. 760
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, 765
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 770
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, 775
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.

BOOK IV

☞ “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.

780

785

☞ “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, seize fast, and hither bring.”

790

☞ 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

795

The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, as he list, phantasms and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint

800


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,

805

Blown up with high conceits ingendering pride. BOOK IV
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly; for no falshood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns 810
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, 815
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. 820
🌿 “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, 825
“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 830
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; 835
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.”

840

 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.”


845

850

 The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage;
 But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
 Champing his iron curb: To strive or fly
 He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
 His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
 The western point, where those half-rounding guards
 Just met, and closing stood in squadron joined,
 Awaiting next command. To whom their Chief,
 Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud.

855

860

 “O friends! I hear the tread of nimble feet
 Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
 Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;

865

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; 870
 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. 875
 “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; 880
 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 885
 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 890
 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 895
 His iron gates, if he intends our stay

In that dark durance: Thus much what was asked.

BOOK IV

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.

900

“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

905

However, and to ’scape his punishment!
So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath,
Which thou incurrest by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.

910

But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
Came not all hell broke loose? or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous Chief!

915

The first in flight from pain! hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.”

920

➤ 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.

925

But still thy words at random, as before, BOOK IV
 Argue thy inexperience what behoves
 From hard assays and ill successes past
 A faithful leader, not to hazard all 930
 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 935
 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 940
 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, 945
 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. 950
 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 955
 Once fawned, and cringed, and servily adored

Heaven's awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?

BOOK IV

But mark what I areed thee now: Avaunt!

Fly thither whence thou fledst! If from this hour

960

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

965

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

970

Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,

Used to the yoke, drawest his triumphant wheels

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

🌿 While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright

Turned fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns

975

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,

980

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

985

Sat Horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp

What seemed both spear and shield: Now dreadful deeds BOOK IV
 Might have ensued, nor only Paradise
 In this commotion, but the starry cope
 Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements 990
 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, 995
 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: 1000
 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 1005
 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 1010
 His mounted scale aloft: Nor more; but fled
 Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

BOOK V



Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was airy-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which the only sound 5
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek, 10
As through unquiet rest: He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice 15
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus. "Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight!
Awake: The morning shines, and the fresh field 20
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet." 25

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye

On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.

BOOK V

🌿 “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 30

(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, 35

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 40

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? 45

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 50

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 55

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? 60
 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 65
 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: 70
 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 angelic Eve!
 Partake thou also; happy though thou art, 75
 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 80
 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, 85
 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 90
 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, 95
 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 100
 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, 105
 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 110
 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, 115
 But with addition strange; yet be not sad.

Evil into the mind of God or Man

BOOK V

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.

120

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.”

125

🌿 So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered;
But silently a gentle tear let fall

130

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.

135

🌿 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

140

145

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, 150
 More tuneable than needed lute or harp
 To add more sweetness; and they thus began.
 🌿 “These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
 Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
 Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then! 155
 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, 160
 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. 165
 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. 170
 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, 175
 With the fixed Stars, fixed in their orb that flies;

And ye five other wandering Fires, that move	BOOK V
In mystic dance not without song, resound	
His praise, who out of darkness called up light.	
Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth	180
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	185
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,	190
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,	195
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	200
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	205
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.

210

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

215

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

220

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,

225

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

230

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,

235

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 240
 The fall of others from like state of bliss;
 By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
 But by deceit and lies: This let him know,
 Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
 Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned." 245

🌿 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, 250
 Flew through the midst of Heaven; the angelic 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 255
 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 260
 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 265
 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 270
 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 275
 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 280
 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, 285
 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. 290
 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
 Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will 295
 Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet,

Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss. BOOK V
 Him through the spicy forest onward come
 Adam discerned, as in the door he sat
 Of his cool bower, while now the mounted sun 300
 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 305
 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 310
 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 315
 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." 320
 🌿 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: 325
 But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,

Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel-guest, as he
Beholding shall confess, that here on Earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven.” 330
🌿 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 335
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 Punic coast, or where 340
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 345
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 350
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 355
Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,

BOOK V

Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
 Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,
 Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
 As to a superior nature bowing low, 360
 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 365
 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." 370

 Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild.
 "Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
 Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
 To visit thee; lead on then where thy bower 375
 o'ershades; for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
 I have at will." So to the sylvan lodge
 They came, that like Pomona's arbour smiled,
 With flowerets decked, and fragrant smells; but Eve,
 Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair 380
 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* 385
 Bestowed, the holy salutation used

Long after to bleſt Mary, ſecond Eve.

BOOK V

☞ “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

390

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;

395

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

400

The earth to yield; unſavoury food perhaps

To ſpiritual natures; only this I know,

That one celeftial Father gives to all.”

☞ To whom the Angel. “Therefore what he gives

(Whoſe praife be ever ſung) to Man in part

405

Spiritual, may of pureſt Spirits be found

No ingrateful food: And food alike thoſe pure

Intelligential ſubſtances require,

As doth your rational; and both contain

Within them every lower faculty

410

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

415

The groſſer feeds the purer, earth the ſea,


Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires BOOK V
 Ethereal, and as lowest first the moon;
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
 Vapours not yet into her substance turned. 420
 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 425
 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 430
 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 435
 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 empiric alchemist 440
 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 445
 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. 450

➤ 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 455
 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. 460

➤ "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, 465
 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, 470
 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, 475
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending

Each in their several active spheres assigned, BOOK V
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Spirits lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves 480
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, 485
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. 490
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; 495
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; 500
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." 505
 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 angelic host, that stand
In sight of God, enthroned, our happy state

BOOK V

510

515

520

525

530

535

Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds; BOOK V
 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: 540
 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, 545
 Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
 Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
 Aereal music send: Nor knew I not
 To be both will and deed created free;
 Yet that we never shall forget to love 550
 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, 555
 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." 560
 🌿 Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
 After short pause assenting, thus began.
 🌿 "High matter thou enjoinest me, O prime of men,
 Sad task and hard: For how shall I relate
 To human sense the invisible exploits 565
 Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,

BOOK V

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 570
 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 575
 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 580
 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 585
 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 590
 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, 595
 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.

600

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

605

All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord:
 Under his great vice-gerent reign abide
 United, as one individual soul,

610

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.’

615

☞ “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

620

Of planets, and of fixed, in all her wheels
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
 Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular

Then most, when most irregular they seem;
 And in their motions harmony divine

625

So smooths her charming tones, that God’s own ear

LISTENS delighted. Evening now approached, BOOK V
(For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need;) 630
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. 635
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 640
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 645
In darker veil,) and roseate dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest;
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous earth in plain outspread,
(Such are the courts of God) the angelic throng, 650
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, 655
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, 660
 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. 665
 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
 Unworshipped, unbeyed, the throne supreme, 670
 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 675
 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 680
 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 685
 Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,

And all who under me their banners wave, BOOK V
 Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
 The quarters of the north; there to prepare
 Fit entertainment to receive our King, 690
 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 695
 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, 700
 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 superior voice 705
 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. 710
 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 715
 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,

720

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

725

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

730

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

735

Justly hast in derision, and, secure,

Laugh’st 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

740

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,

745

Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun



Impearls on every leaf and every flower. BOOK V
 Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
 Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones,
 In their triple degrees; regions to which 750
 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 755
 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 760
 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, 765
 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 770
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears.
 🌿 “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers;
 If these magnificent titles yet remain
 Not merely titular, since by decree
 Another now hath to himself engrossed 775
 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, 780
 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 785
 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 790
 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 795
 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 800
 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 805
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,

Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
The current of his fury thus opposed.

BOOK V

🌿 “O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!

Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven 810

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 815

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, 820

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? 825

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 830

United. But to grant it thee unjust,

That equal over equals monarch reign:

Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,

Or all angelic nature joined in one,

Equal to him begotten Son? by whom, 835

As by his Word, the Mighty Father made

All things, even thee; and all the Spirits of Heaven BOOK V
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers, 840
 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, 845
 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, 850
 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! 855
 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 860
 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 865
 Who is our equal: Then thou shalt behold

Whether by supplication we intend
 Address, and to begirt the almighty throne
 Beseeching or besieging. This report,
 These tidings carry to the anointed King; 870
 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 875
 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 880
 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; 885
 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 890
 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.' 895
 🌿 "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
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And, with retorted scorn, his back he turned
On those proud towers to swift destruction doomed.”

BOOK V

900


905

BOOK VI



🌿 "All night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through Heaven's wide champaign 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, 5
Where light and darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour 10
To veil the Heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here: And now went forth the Morn
Such as in highest Heaven arrayed in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanished Night,
Shot through with orient beams; when all the plain 15
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 20
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 25
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 30

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 35

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 40

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, 45

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 50

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.’ 55

 “‘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: 60
 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 65
 Heroic 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 70
 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 75
 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 80
 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 hastening on 85
 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 90
 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, 95
 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, 100
 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 105
 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; 110
 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 115



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 120
 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 125
 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. 130

🌿 "'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 terror of thy power
 Or potent tongue: Fool! not to think how vain 135
 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, 140
 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 145
 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 150
 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 155
 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 160
 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 165
 I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
 Ministering 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.' 170
 🌿 "To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied.
 'Apostate! still thou erreest, 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, 175
 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, 180
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;
 Yet lewdly darest our ministering upbraid.
 Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
 In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine
 Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed; 185
 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 190
 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 195
 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, 200
 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 205
 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 210
 Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
 Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss
 Of fiery darts in flaming vollies flew,
 And flying vaulted either host with fire.
 So under fiery cope together rushed 215
 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 220
 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, 225
 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 230
 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 235
 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 240
 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 245
 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 250
 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, 255
 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 260
 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, 265
 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.

270

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.'

275

280

 "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.'

285


290

295

 "They ended parle, and both addressed for fight

Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue	BOOK VI
Of Angels, can relate, or to what things	
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift	
Human imagination to such highth	300
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	305
Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood	
In horror: From each hand with speed retired,	
Where erst was thickest fight, the angelic throng,	
And left large field, unsafe within the wind	
Of such commotion; such as, to set forth	310
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.	315
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	320
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,	325
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, 330
 Not long divisible; and from the gash
 A stream of nectarous 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 335
 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, 340
 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 345
 In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, 350
 All intellect, all sense; and, as they please,
 They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.
 🌿 “Mean while in other parts like deeds deserved
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought, 355
 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
 360 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,
 365 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
 370 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,
 375 Seek not the praise of men: The other sort,
 In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
 Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
 Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.
 380 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.
 385  "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, 390
 And fiery-foaming steeds; what stood, recoiled
 o'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic host
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised,
 Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain,
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought 395
 By sin of disobedience; till that hour
 Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
 Far otherwise the inviolable Saints,
 In cubic phalanx firm, advanced entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed; 400
 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. 405
 🌿 "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 410
 Michael and his Angels prevalent
 Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
 Cherubic waving fires: On the other part,
 Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
 Far in the dark dislodged; and, void of rest, 415
 His potentates to council called by night;

And in the midst thus undismayed began.

BOOK VI

 "O now in danger tried, now known in arms

Not to be overpowered, Companions dear,

Found worthy not of liberty alone,

420

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

425

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,

430

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,

435

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,

440

Or equal what between us made the odds,


In nature none: If other hidden cause

Left them superior, while we can preserve

Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,

Due search and consultation will disclose.'



445

 "He sat; and in the assembly next upstood

BOOK VI

Nisroch, of Principalities the prime;
 As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
 Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
 And cloudy in aspect thus answering spake. 450
 ‘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 455
 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, 460
 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 465
 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 uninvited that, which thou aright 470
 Believe’st 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; 475
 Whose eye so superficially surveys

These things, as not to mind from whence they grow	BOOK VI
Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,	
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till touched	
With Heaven's ray, and tempered, they shoot forth	480
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	485
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	490
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 despair'd.'	495
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	500
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	505
For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.	

 “Arm, Warriors, arm for fight; the foe at hand,
 Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
 This day; fear not his flight; so thick a cloud
 He comes, and settled in his face I see 540
 Sad resolution, and secure: Let each
 His adamantine coat gird well, and each
 Fit well his helm, gripe fast his orbéd shield,
 Borne even or high; for this day will pour down,
 If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower, 545
 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! 550
 Not distant far with heavy pace the foe
 Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
 Training his devilish engine, impaled
 On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
 To hide the fraud. At interview both stood 555
 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 560
 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 565
 Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch

What we propound, and loud that all may hear!

BOOK VI

☞ “So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce

Had ended; when to right and left the front

Divided, and to either flank retired:

570

Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,

A triple mounted row of pillars laid

On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,

Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,

With branches lopped, in wood or mountain felled,)

575

Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths

With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,

Portending hollow truce: At each behind

A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed

Stood waving tipped with fire; while we, suspense,

580

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,

585

From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar

Embellled 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

590

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

595

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 600
 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 605
 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 610
 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 615
 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. 620
 ‘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; 625
 Not understood, this gift they have besides,

They show us when our foes walk not upright.’

BOOK VI

☞ “So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, hightened in their thoughts beyond

All doubt of victory: Eternal Might 630

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 635

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 640

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 645

Up-lifting bore them in their hands: Amaze,

Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,

When coming towards them so dread they saw

The bottom of the mountains upward turned;

Till on those cursed engines’ triple-row 650

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; 655

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, 660
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,
Hurled to and fro with jaculation dire; 665
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; 670
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, 675
To honour his anointed Son avenged
Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferred: Whence to his Son,
The Assessor of his throne, he thus began.
 "“Effulgence of my glory, Son beloved, 680
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, 685
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, 690
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, 695
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 700
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; 705
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; 710
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 715
From all Heaven's bounds into the utter deep:

There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God, and Messiah his anointed King.'

BOOK VI

🌿 "He said, and on his Son with rays direct
Shone full; he all his Father full expressed
Ineffably into his face received;

720

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,

725

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,

730

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,

735

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,

740

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.'

745

So said, he, o'er his scepter bowing, rose

BOOK VI

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, 750
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
 Itself instinct with Spirit, but convoyed
 By four Cherubic shapes; four faces each
 Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
 And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels 755
 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 760
 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 765
 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; 770
 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 775
 Aloft by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven;

Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
 His army, circumfused on either wing,
 Under their Head imbodyed all in one.
 Before him Power Divine his way prepared; 780
 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, 785
 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? 790
 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 795
 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. 800
 🌿 “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, 805
 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 810
 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 supreme
 Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains, 815
 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 820
 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 terror changed
 His countenance too severe to be beheld, 825
 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. 830
 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 835
 Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent

Before him, such as in their souls infixed
Plagues: They, astonished, all resistance lost,
All courage; down their idle weapons dropped:
o'er shields, and helmets, 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 terrors, 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.

BOOK VI

840



845

850

855

860

865

 "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. 870
 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; 875
 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, 880
 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, 885
 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 890
 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 895
 What might have else to human race been hid;

The discord which befell, and war in Heaven
Among the angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled
With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that, with him
Bereaved of happiness, thou 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 VI

900

905

910

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

5

Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top

Of old Olympus dwellest; but, heavenly-born,

Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed,

Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,

Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play

10

In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased

With thy celestial song. Up led by thee

Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,

An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,

Thy tempering: with like safety guided down

15

Return me to my native element:

Leſt from this flying ſteed unreined, (as once

Bellerophon, though from a lower clime,)

Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall,

Erroneous there to wander, and forlorn.

20

Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound

Within the visible diurnal ſphere;

Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,

More ſafe I ſing with mortal voice, unchanged

To hoarſe or mute, though fallen on evil days,

25


On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;

BOOK VII

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, 30
 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 35
 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, 40
 The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarned
 Adam, by dire example, to beware
 Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
 To those apostates; lest the like befall
 In Paradise to Adam or his race, 45
 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, 50
 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, 55
 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 60
 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 65
 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, 70
 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; 75
 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 80
 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, 85
 How first began this Heaven which we behold

Distant so high, with moving fires adorned	BOOK VII
Innumerable; and this which yields or fills	
All space, the ambient air wide interfused	
Embracing round this florid Earth; what cause	90
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	95
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,	100
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	105
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:	110
 “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	115
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 120
 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. 125
 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. 130

🌿 “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 135
 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 140
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat
 Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
 He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
 Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see, 145
 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 150
 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 155
 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, 160
 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 165
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth;
 Boundless the Deep, because I Am who fill
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
 Though I, uncircumscribed myself, retire, 170
 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. 175
 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, 180
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 185
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 190
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 195
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 200
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 205
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 210
 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. 215
 🌿 "“Silence, ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, peace,
 Said then the Omnific Word; ‘your discord end!’
 Nor staid; but, on the wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
 Far into Chaos, and the world unborn; 220
 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 225
 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, 230
 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, 235
 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 240
 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 245
 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 250
 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; 255
 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. 260

 “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 265
 In circuit to the uttermost convex

BOOK VII

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. 270

🌿 “The Earth was formed, but in the womb as yet
 Of waters, embryon immature, involved,
 Appeared not: over all the face of Earth
 Main ocean flowed, not idle; but, with warm
 Prolific humour softening all her globe,
 Fermented the great mother to conceive,
 Sate with genial moisture; when God said,
 ‘Be gathered now, ye waters under Heaven
 Into one place, and let dry land appear.’
 Immediately the mountains huge appear 285
 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 295
 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; 300
 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 305
 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, 310
 And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
 Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.'
 He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
 Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad 315
 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 320
 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 325
 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 330
 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, 335
 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 340
 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. 345
 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 350
 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, 355
 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 360
 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, 365
 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, 370
 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, 375
 But opposite in levelled west was set,
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
 From him; for other light she needed none
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
 Till night; then in the east her turn she shines, 380
 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, 385
 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.

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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 fledged 420
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 425
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 430
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 435
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned 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 440
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 445
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, 450
 ‘Let the Earth bring forth fowl 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, 455
 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: 460
 Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
 Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upspring.
 The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
 The tawny lion, pawing to get free
 His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds, 465
 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 470
 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, 475
 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, 480
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
Minims of nature; some of serpent-kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet, provident 485
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 490
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, 495
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific, 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 500
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 505
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 510
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 515
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 520
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 525
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, 530
‘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 535
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 540
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, 545
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: 550
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 555
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
Answering his great idea. Up he rode
Followed with acclamation, and the sound
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
Angelic harmonies: The earth, the air 560
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, 565
'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, 570
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 575
To God's eternal house direct the way;
A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou see'st 580
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 585
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, 590
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, 595
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. 600
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 605
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, 610
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 615
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 620
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, 625
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

BOOK VII

Holy and just: Thrice happy, if they know
Their happiness, and persevere upright!

630

🌿 “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

635

From the beginning; that posterity,
Informed by thee, might know: If else thou seekest
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.”

640

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 5
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 10
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, 15
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 20
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, 25
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 30
 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, 35
 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 40
 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
 With lowliness majestic from her seat,
 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom, 45
 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, 50
 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 55
 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.

BOOK VIII

60

🌿 "To ask or search, I blame thee not; for Heaven

Is as the book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous 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

70

His secrets to be scanned by them who ought
Rather admire; or, if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens

75

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 centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,

80

Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb:
Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest

85

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 90
 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, 95
 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 100
 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 105
 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, 110
 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 115
 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, 120
 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? 125
 Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six thou see'st; and what if seventh to these
 The planet earth, so stedfast though she seem,
 Insensibly three different motions move? 130
 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 135
 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, 140
 Sent from her through the wide transparent 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 see'st 145
 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; 150
 Which two great sexes animate the world,
 Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
 By living soul, desert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute 155
 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, 160
 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, 165
 And bears thee soft with the smooth air along;
 Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid;
 Leave them to God above; him serve, and fear!
 Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
 Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou 170
 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 175
 Live, in what state, condition, or degree;

Contented that thus far hath been revealed
Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.”

BOOK VIII

🌿 To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied.

“How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure 180

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, 185

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, 190

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: 195

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 200

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; 205

And day is not yet spent; till then thou see'st

How subtly to detain thee I devise; BOOK VIII
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; 210
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 215
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 220
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 225
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 befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, 230
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, 235
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, 240
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 245
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 250
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 255
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 260
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; 265
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, 270
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, 275
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, 280
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, 285
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
Pensive I sat me down: There gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seised
My drowsed sense, untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state 290
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, 295
And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,

First Man, of men innumerable ordained	BOOK VIII
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,	300
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	305
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	310
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	315
Submit: He reared me, and 'Whom thou soughtest I am,'	
Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou see'st	
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.	
This Paradise I give thee, count it thine	
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:	320
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,	325
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, 330
 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 335
 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, 340
 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 345
 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 350
 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; 355
 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, 360
 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, 365
 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 370
 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.’ 375
 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. 380
 Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
 And these inferior far beneath me set?
 Among unequals what society
 Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due 385
 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 390
 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 395
 So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
 Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.'


 "Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeas'd.
 'A nice and subtle happiness, I see,
 Thou to thyself propos'st, in the choice 400
 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 405
 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 inferior, infinite descents 410
 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 415
 Is no deficiency found: Not so is Man,

But in degree; the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already Infinite; 420
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 425
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secrecy although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seekest not
Social communication; yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what highth thou wilt 430
Of union or communion, deified:
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.⁷
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found; which gained 435
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, 440
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; 445
And no such company as then thou sawest

Intended thee; for trial only brought, BOOK VIII
 To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet:
 What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
 Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, 450
 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, 455
 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 460
 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 465
 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, 470
 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, 475
 And into all things from her air inspired

The spirit of love and amorous delight. BOOK VIII
 She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure: 480
 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, 485
 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. 490

 “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 495
 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, 500
 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, 505
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,


Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned: BOOK VIII
 I followed her; she what was honour knew,
 And with obsequious majesty approved
 My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower 510
 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 515
 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. 520
 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, 525
 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, 530
 Commotion strange! in all enjoyments else
 Superior and unmoved; here only weak
 Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.
 Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
 Not proof enough such object to sustain; 535
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps

More than enough; at least on her bestowed BOOK VIII
 Too much of ornament, in outward show
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.
 For well I understand in the prime end 540
 Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind
 And inward faculties, which most excel;
 In outward also her resembling less
 His image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that dominion given 545
 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: 550
 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 555
 Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and Nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed."
 🌿 To whom the Angel with contracted brow. 560
 "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 565
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceivest.

For, what admirest thou, what transports thee so, BOOK VIII
 An outside? fair, no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love;
 Not thy subjection: Weigh with her thyself; 570
 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: 575
 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 580
 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. 585
 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 590
 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. 595
 “Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught

BOOK VIII

In procreation common to all kinds,
 (Though higher of the genial bed by far,
 And with mysterious reverence I deem,)
 600
 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
 605
 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,
 610
 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
 615
 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.
 620
 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;
 625
 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.


BOOK VIII

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,

630


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."

635

 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!"

640

645

 So parted they; the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

650

BOOK IX



🌿 No more of talk where God or Angel guest
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast; permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change 5
Those notes to tragic; 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, 10
That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
Death's harbinger: Sad task, yet argument
Not less but more heroic than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued 15
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:
If answerable style I can obtain 20
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering; or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse:
Since first this subject for heroic song 25
Pleased me long choosing, and beginning late;

Not sedulous by nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only argument
 Heroic deemed chief mastery to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabled knights 30
 In battles feigned; the better fortitude
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom
 Unsung; or to describe races and games,
 Or tilting furniture, imblazoned shields,
 Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds, 35
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals;
 The skill of artifice or office mean,
 Not that which justly gives heroic name 40
 To person, or to poem. Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climate, or years, damp my intended wing 45
 Depressed; and much they may, if all be mine,
 Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.
 🌿 The sun was sunk, and after him the star
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
 Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter 50
 'twixt day and night, and now from end to end
 Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round:
 When Satan, who late fled before the threats
 Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
 In meditated fraud and malice, bent 55
 On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap

Of heavier on himself, fearless returned. BOOK IX
 By night he fled, and at midnight returned
 From compassing the earth; cautious of day,
 Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried 60
 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 65
 From pole to pole, traversing each colure;
 On the eighth returned; and, on the coast averse
 From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth
 Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
 Now not, though sin, not time, first wrought the change, 70
 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 75
 Where to lie hid; sea he had searched, and land,
 From Eden over Pontus and the pool
 Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;
 Downward as far antarctic; and in length,
 West from Orontes to the ocean barred 80
 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 85
 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 90
 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 diabolic power 95
 Active within, beyond the sense of brute.
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured.
 🌿 "O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
 More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built 100
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
 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, 105
 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 110
 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 115
 Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,

Are his created, or, to spite us more, BOOK IX
Determined to advance into our room
A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original, 150
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, 155
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 160
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, 165
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, 170
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 175
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.”

BOOK IX

🌿 So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight-search, where soonest he might find
The serpent; him fast-sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:

180

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,

185

In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

190

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

195

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.

200


🌿 “Adam, well may we labour still to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,


205

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, 210
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 215
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 220
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?" 225
🌿 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 230
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 235
Labour, as to debar us when we need

Refreshment, whether food, or talk between, BOOK IX
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; 240
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 245
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
Assist us; But, if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield:
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return. 250
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 255
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: 260
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 265
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, 300
 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. 305
 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 310
 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 315
 When I am present, and thy trial choose
 With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"
 🌿 So spake domestic Adam in his care
 And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
 Less attributed to her faith sincere, 320
 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; 325
 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 330
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 335
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, 340
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 345
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. 350
But God left free the will; for what obeys
Reason, is free; and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,
She dictate false; and mis-inform the will 355
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 360
 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 365
 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 370
 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.” 375
 🌿 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, 380
 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 385
 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, 390
 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, 395
 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 400
 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! 405
 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 410
 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 415
 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 420
 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, 425
 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 430
 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; 435
 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 440
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;
 Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.
 Much he the place admired, the person more.
 As one who long in populous city pent, 445
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,


Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight;
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, 450
 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 455
 This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus early, thus alone: Her heavenly form
 Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
 Her graceful innocence, her every air
 Of gesture, or least action, overawed 460
 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, 465
 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 470
 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 475
 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 480
 The woman, opportune to all attempts,
 Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould; 485
 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 terror be in love 490
 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 495
 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; 500
 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, 505
 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 510
 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: 515
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field, 520
 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, 525
 Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air, 530
 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,
 Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze 535
 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 540
 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, 545
 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, 550
 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 555
 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 560
 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? 565
 Say, for such wonder claims attention due.”



To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied.

BOOK IX

“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:

570

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

575

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

580

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

585

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

590

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

595

I spared not; for, such pleasure till that hour,

At feed or fountain, never had I found. BOOK IX
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers; and speech 600
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: 605
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 610
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 615
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, 620
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. 625
"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.” 630

🌿 “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 635
 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 640
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;
 There swallowed up and lost, from succour far.
 So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud
 Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree
 Of prohibition, root of all our woe; 645
 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;
 Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects. 650
 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. 655
 “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.'"

660

🌿 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.

665

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.

670

675

🌿 "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.

680

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


685

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. 690
 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, 695
 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; 700
 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 705
 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, 710
 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. 715
 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, 720
 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 725
 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 730
 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 735
 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 waked
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell 740
 So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
 Inclined now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first
 Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused.
 🌿 "Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits, 745
 Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired;

Whose taste, too long forbore, 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, 750
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: 755
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 760
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, 765
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 770
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? 775
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 780

Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!
 Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
 Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
 The guilty Serpent; and well might; for Eve, 785

Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else
 Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true
 Or fancied so, through expectation high
 Of knowledge; not was Godhead from her thought. 790

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


 "O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees 795
 In Paradise! of operation blest

To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed.
 And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
 Created; but henceforth my early care,
 Not without song, each morning, and due praise, 800



Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
 Of thy full branches offered free to all;
 Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
 In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know;
 Though others envy what they cannot give: 805

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. 810
 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 815
 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 820
 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
 Superior; for, inferior, who is free 825
 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, 830
 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 835
 That dwelt within, whose presence had infused

Into the plant sciential sap, derived
 From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,
 Waiting desirous her return, had wove
 Of choicest 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, BOOK IX
Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit; and is become,
Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth 870
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, 875
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. 880
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.” 885
 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 890
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. 895
 “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, 900
 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, 905
 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! 910
 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 915
 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. 920

🌿 "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. 925
 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 930
 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 935
 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, 940
 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 945
 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?' 950
 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 955
 The bond of Nature draw me to my own;

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

BOOK IX

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.

960

“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,

965

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,

970

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

975

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

980

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,


985


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."


BOOK IX

🌿 So saying, she embraced him, and for joy 990
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 995
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 1000
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 1005
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society; that now,
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings, 1010
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: 1015
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
 1020 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,
 1025 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
 1030 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
 1035 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,
 1040 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,
 1045 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 1050
 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; 1055
 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 1060
 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, 1065
 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 1070
 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, 1075
 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 1110
 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 1115
 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, 1120
 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 1125
 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 1130
 Superior 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 1135
 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? BOOK IX
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint: What could I more 1170
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 1175
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 1180
The error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him, who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lest her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue, 1185
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 despiteful 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 5
Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
Omniscient? who, in all things wise and just,
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed,
Complete to have discovered and repulsed 10
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,
The high injunction, not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
(Incurred what could they less?) the penalty; 15
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste
The angelic guards ascended, mute, and sad,
For Man; for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend had stolen 20
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. 25
About the new-arrived, in multitudes

The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
 How all befell: They towards the throne supreme,
 Accountable, made haste, to make appear,
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance 30
 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, 35
 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 40
 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 45
 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, 50
 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, 55
 Vice-gerent Son? To thee I have transferred

All judgement, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.

BOOK X

Easy it may be seen that I intend

Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee

Man's friend, his Mediator, his designed

60

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

65

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,

70

Mayest ever rest well pleased. I go to judge

On earth these thy transgressors; 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

75

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

80

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

85

Of high collateral glory: Him Thrones, and Powers,

Princedom, 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 90
 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, 95
 Came the mild Judge, and Intercessor both,
 To sentence Man: The voice of God they heard
 Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
 Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
 And from his presence hid themselves among 100
 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, 105
 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; 110
 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. 115
 🌿 “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?”

120

🌿 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,

125

I should conceal, and not expose to blame

130

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

135

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,

140

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


145


Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,

Superior, 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; 180
 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, 185
 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; 190
 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 195
 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:* 200
 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, 205
 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.”

BOOK X

☞ So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour ſent;
And the inſtant ſtroke of death, denounced that day,

210

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,

215

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

220

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 re-aſſumed

225

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,

230

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

235

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 240
 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, 245
 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; 250
 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 255
 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, 260
 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, 265
 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.” 270

🌿 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, 275
 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 285
 Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
 Toſt up and down, together crowded drove,
 From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell;
 As when two polar winds, blowing adverse
 Upon the Cronian sea, together drive 290
 Mountains of ice, that ſtop the imagined way
 Beyond Petsora eaſtward, to the rich
 Cathaian coaſt. The aggregated ſoil
 Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
 As with a trident, ſmote; and fixed as firm 295
 As Delos, floating once; the reſt his look



Bound with Gorgonian rigour not to move;	BOOK X
And with Asphaltic slime, broad as the gate,	
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach	
They fastened, and the mole immense wrought on	300
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.	305
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,	310
And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.	
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art	
Pontifical, a ridge of pendant rock,	
Over the vexed abyss, following the track	
Of Satan to the self-same place where he	315
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	320
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,	325
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 330
 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 335
 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 340
 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 345
 And tidings fraught, to Hell he now returned;
 And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
 Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhoped
 Met, who to meet him came, his offspring dear.
 Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight 350
 Of that stupendous bridge his joy encreased.
 Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
 Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke.
 🌿 "O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
 Thy trophies! which thou viewest as not thine own; 355
 Thou art their author, and prime architect:

For I no sooner in my heart divined,
 My heart, which by a secret harmony
 Still moves with thine, joined in connexion sweet,
 That thou on earth hadst prospered, which thy looks 360
 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, 365
 Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
 Detain from following thy illustrious track.
 Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
 Within Hell-gates till now; thou us empowered
 To fortify thus far, and overlay, 370
 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, 375
 There didst not; there let him still victor sway,
 As battle hath adjudged; from this new world
 Retiring, by his own doom alienated;
 And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
 Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds, 380
 His quadrature, from thy orbicular world;
 Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.”
 🌿 Whom thus the Prince of darkness answered glad.
 “Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both;
 High proof ye now have given to be the race 385
 Of Satan (for I glory in the name,

Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King,) BOOK X
 Amply have merited of me, of all
 The infernal empire, that so near Heaven's door
 Triumphal with triumphal act have met, 390
 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 395
 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, 400
 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 405
 My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
 Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
 If your joint power prevail, the affairs of Hell
 No detriment need fear; go, and be strong!"
 🌿 So saying he dismissed them; they with speed 410
 Their course through thickest constellations held,
 Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,
 And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse
 Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
 The causey to Hell-gate: On either side 415
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,

And with rebounding surge the bars assailed, BOOK X
 That scorned his indignation: Through the gate,
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,
 And all about found desolate; for those, 420
 Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
 Flown to the upper world; the rest were all
 Far to the inland retired, about the walls
 Of Pandemonium; city and proud seat
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion called 425
 Of that bright star to Satan paragoned;
 There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
 In council sat, solicitous what chance
 Might intercept their emperor sent; so he
 Departing gave command, and they observed. 430
 As when the Tartar from his Russian foe,
 By Astracan, over the snowy plains,
 Retires; or Bactrian Sophi, from the horns
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
 The realm of Aladule, in his retreat 435
 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 440
 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 445
 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 450
 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: 455
 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; 460
 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, 465
 And dungeon of our tyrant: Now possess,
 As Lords, a spacious world, to our native Heaven
 Little inferior, by my adventure hard
 With peril great achieved. Long were to tell
 What I have done; what suffered; with what pain 470
 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 475
 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 480
 The new created world, which fame in Heaven
 Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful
 Of absolute perfection! therein Man
 Placed in a Paradise, by our exile
 Made happy: Him by fraud I have seduced 485
 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, 490
 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 495
 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, 500
 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, 505
 To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears

With spattering noise rejected: oft they assayed,
 Hunger and thirst constraining; drugged as oft,
 With hatefullest disrelish writhed their jaws,
 With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell
 Into the same illusion, not as Man
 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 Dictæan 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 ravin I may meet;
 Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
 To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound corpse.”

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🌿 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.”

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🌿 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.

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🌿 “See, with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
 To waste and havoc yonder world, which I
 So fair and good created; and had still
 Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
 Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
 Folly to me; so doth the Prince of Hell
 And his adherents, that with so much ease
 I suffer them to enter and possess
 A place so heavenly; and, conniving, seem
 To gratify my scornful enemies,
 That laugh, as if, transported with some fit

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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 630
 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, 635
 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." 640
 🌿 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, 645
 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, 650
 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 655
 Solstitial summer's heat. To the blank 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 660
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 665
Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
With terror through the dark aerial hall.
Some say, he bid his Angels turn askance
The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the sun's axle; they with labour pushed 670
Oblique the centric globe: Some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the Tropic Crab: thence down amain 675
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 vernal flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those 680
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 685
From cold Estotiland, and south as far

Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit BOOK X
 The sun, as from Thyestean banquet, turned
 His course intended; else, how had the world
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now, 690
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
 These changes in the Heavens, though slow, produced
 Like change on sea and land; sideral blast,
 Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
 Corrupt and pestilent: Now from the north 695
 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; 700
 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, 705
 Sirocco and Libeccchio. 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, 710
 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 715
 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.

BOOK X

🌿 "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

Concurred not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust;
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received; unable to perform 750
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy Justice seems; yet to say truth, too late, 755
I thus contest; then should have been refused
Those terms whatever, when they were proposed:
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy Son 760
Prove disobedient, and, reprov'd, retort,
'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not':
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity begot. 765
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return: 770
O welcome hour whenever! why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fixed on this day? why do I overlive,
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet 775
Mortality my sentence, and be earth

In sensible! 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

BOOK X

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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 810
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 815
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! 820
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 825
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 830
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; 835
Than all the world much heavier, though divided

With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desirest, BOOK X
 And what thou fearest, alike destroys all hope
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
 Beyond all past example and future; 840
 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, 845
 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 850
 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 855
 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 860
 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: 865
 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 falsehood, 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

BOOK X

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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 930
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; 935
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 940
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, 945
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 950
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; 955
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,

To me committed, and by me exposed. BOOK X
But rise;—let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten 960
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." 965
 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, 970
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, 975
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 980
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 985
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 990
 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, 995
 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, — 1000
 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, 1005
 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, 1010
 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; 1015
 But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes


That excellence thought in thee; and implies, BOOK X
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end 1020
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 1025
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 1030
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 1035
Would be revenge indeed! which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved, as thou proposest; so our foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordained, and we 1040
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 1045
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild

And gracious temper he both heard, and judged, BOOK X
Without wrath or reviling; we expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day; when lo! to thee 1050
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; 1055
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 1060
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 1065
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 1070
Reflected may with matter sere foment;
Or, by collision of two bodies, grind
The air attrite to fire; as late the clouds
Jostling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine the slant lightning; whose thwart flame, driven down
Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine; 1075



1075

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, 1080
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. 1085
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 1090
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure; in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed and most severe, 1095
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 1100
Before him reverent; and both confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged; with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.

BOOK XI



Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood
Praying; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead; that sighs now breathed 5
Unutterable; which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory: Yet their port
Not of mean suitors; nor important less
Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair 10
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout. To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds 15
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they passed
Dimensionless through heavenly doors; then clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed,
By their great intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne: them the glad Son 20
Presenting, thus to intercede began.

“See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in Man; these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer mixed
With incense, I thy priest before thee bring; 25
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 30
 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 35
 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 40
 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. 45
 “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, 50
 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 55
 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; 60
 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, 65
 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, 70
 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 75
 To sound at general doom. The angelic 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 80
 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 85
 Of that defended fruit; but let him boast

His knowledge of good lost, and evil got; BOOK XI
 Happier! had it sufficed him to have known
 Good by itself, and evil not at all.
 He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite, 90
 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 95
 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 100
 Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend,
 Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
 Vacant possession, some new trouble raise:
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
 Without remorse drive out the sinful pair; 105
 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 110
 Bewailing their excess,) all terror 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 115
 My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed;

So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace: BOOK XI
 And on the east side of the garden place,
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
 Cherubic watch; and of a sword the flame 120
 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.” 125
 🌿 He ceased; and the arch-angelic 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 130
 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 embalmed 135
 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. 140
 🌿 “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, 145
 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; 150
 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; 155
 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 160
 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 transgressor; who, for thee ordained
 A help, became thy snare; to me reproach 165
 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, 170
 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; 175
 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."

BOOK XI

180

🌿 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.



185

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

190

🌿 "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?"

195

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,

200

205

And slow descends with something heavenly fraught?"

BOOK XI

🌿 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;

210

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;

215

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

220

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.

225

🌿 "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,

230

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;

235

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

240

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

245

In manhood where youth ended; by his side,

As in a glistening zodiac, 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.

250

🌿 “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 seizure many days

Given thee of grace; wherein thou mayest repent,

255

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,

260

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

265

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,

270

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

275

at 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

280

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?”

285

☞ 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

290

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.

295

☞ “Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named

Of them the highest; for such of shape may seem	BOOK XI
Prince above princes! gently hast thou told	
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,	
And in performing end us; what besides	300
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	305
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:	310
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,	315
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	320
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,	325
Or monument to ages; and thereon	

Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers:	BOOK XI
In yonder nether world where shall I seek	
His bright appearances, or foot-step trace?	
For though I fled him angry, yet recalled	330
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;	335
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	340
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	345
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	350
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	355
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 360
 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 365
 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 slept'st, while she to life was formed.”
 🌿 To whom thus Adam gratefully replied. 370
 “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, 375
 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. 380
 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 385
 City of old or modern fame, the seat



Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls	BOOK XI
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,	
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne,	
To Paquin of Sinaean kings; and thence	390
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,	395
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	400
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	405
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	410
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;	415
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; 420
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 425
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 430
New reaped; the other part sheep-walks and folds;
I’ the midst an altar as the land-mark stood,
Rustic, of grassy sward; thither anon
A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf, 435
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: 440
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 445
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?” 450

🌿 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 455
 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. 460

🌿 “Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!
 But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
 I must return to native dust? O sight
 Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
 Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!” 465

🌿 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. 470
 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 475
 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 480
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Demoniac frenzy, moaping melancholy, 485
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; 490
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, 495
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 500
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 not accept 505
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 510
 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 515
 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, 520
 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." 525

🌿 "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 530
 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 535
 Into thy mother's lap; or be with ease

Gathered, nor harshly plucked; for death mature: BOOK XI
 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, 540
 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 545
 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 550
 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." 555
 🌿 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 560
 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 565
 Had melted, (whether found where casual fire

Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale, BOOK XI
 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 570
 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, 575
 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 580
 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 585
 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 590
 Hymen, then first to marriage rites invoked:
 With feast and music all the tents resound.
 Such happy interview, and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
 And charming symphonies, attached the heart 595
 Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,

The bent of nature; which he thus expressed.

BOOK XI

☞ “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.”

600

☞ 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.

605

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.

610

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

615

Woman’s domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye:

620

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

625

The world ere long a world of tears must weep.”

BOOK XI

☞ 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

630

Paths indirect, or in the mid way faint!

But still I see the tenor of Man’s woe

Holds on the same, from Woman to begin.”

☞ “From Man’s effeminate slackness it begins,”

Said the Angel, “who should better hold his place

635

By wisdom, and superior gifts received.

But now prepare thee for another scene.”

☞ He looked, and saw wide territory spread

Before him, towns, and rural works between;

Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,

640

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;

645

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,

650

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

655

Lay siege, encamped; by battery, scale, and mine,

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

In other part the sceptered heralds call

660

To council, in the city-gates; anon
 Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
 Assemble, and harangues are heard; but soon,

In factious opposition; till at last,

Of middle age one rising, eminent

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,



665




670

675

680

685

Produce prodigious births of body or mind.	BOOK XI
Such were these giants, men of high renown;	
For in those days might only shall be admired,	
And valour and heroic virtue called;	690
To overcome in battle, and subdue	
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite	
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch	
Of human glory; and for glory done	
Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors	695
Patrons of mankind, Gods, and sons of Gods;	
Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.	
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;	
And what most merits fame, in silence hid.	
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st	700
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,	705
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;	710
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;	715
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,	

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, 720
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: 725
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; 730
Smeared round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contrived; and of provisions laid in large,
For man and beast: when lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
Came sevens, and pairs; and entered in as taught 735
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 740
Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,
Sent up amain; and now the thickened sky
Like a dark ceiling stood; down rushed the rain
Impetuous; and continued, till the earth
No more was seen: the floating vessel swum 745
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, 750
Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
And stabled; of mankind, so numerous late,
All left, in one small bottom swum embarked.
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad, 755
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 760
His children, all in view destroyed at once;
And scarce to the Angel uttered'st 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 765
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 770
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, 775
Grievous to bear: but that care now is past,

Man is not whom to warn: those few escaped BOOK XI
 Famine and anguish will at last consume,
 Wandering that watery desert: I had hope,
 When violence was ceased, and war on earth, 780
 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, 785
 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; 790
 Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste
 Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
 Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey;
 Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
 Surfeit, and lust; till wantonness and pride 795
 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 800
 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: 805
 So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved;

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, 840
 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, 845
 As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
 From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
 With soft foot towards the deep; who now had stopped
 His sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut.
 The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground, 850
 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, 855
 And after him, the surer messenger,
 A dove sent forth once and again to spy
 Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may light:
 The second time returning, in his bill
 An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign: 860
 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 865
 Conspicuous with three lifted colours gay,

Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.

BOOK XI

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.

870

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.

875

But say, what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven
Distended, as the brow of God appeased?
Or serve they, as a flowery verge, to bind
The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
Lest it again dissolve, and shower the earth?”

880

☞ To whom the Arch-Angel. “Dextrously thou aimest;
So willingly doth God remit his ire,
Though late repenting him of Man depraved;

885

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

890

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

895

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 XI

900

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. 5

“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: 10
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, 15
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, 20
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 25
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) 30
 With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse
 Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
 A mighty hunter thence he shall be stiled
 Before the Lord; as in despite of Heaven,
 Or from Heaven, claiming second sovereignty; 35
 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 40
 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 45
 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, 50
 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: 55
 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, 60
 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 65
 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 70
 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 75
 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 80
 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: 85
 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	90
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;	95
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;	100
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,	
<i>Servant of servants</i> , on his vicious race.	
Thus will this latter, as the former world,	105
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;	110
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	115
(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,	

While yet the patriarch lived, who 'scaped the flood,	BOOK XII
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	120
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	125
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	130
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	135
Pitched about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain	
Of Moreh; there by promise he receives	
Gift to his progeny of all that land,	
From Hameth northward to the Desert south;	
(Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed;)	140
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	145
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, 150
 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 grand-child, with twelve sons encreased, departs 155
 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 160
 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 165
 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 170
 His people from enthralment, they return,
 With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
 But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies
 To know their God, or message to regard,
 Must be compelled by signs and judgements dire; 175
 To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;

Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill
With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
His cattle must of rot and murrain die;
Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss, 180
And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,
Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian 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 185
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 190
This 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 195
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, 200
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: 205
All night he will purſue; but his approach

Darkness defends between till morning watch; BOOK XII
 Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,
 God looking forth will trouble all his host,
 And craze their chariot-wheels: when by command 210
 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 215
 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 220
 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 225
 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 230
 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 235
 To mortal ear is dreadful: They beseech

That Moses might report to them his will, BOOK XII
 And terror cease; he grants what they besought,
 Instructed that to God is no access
 Without Mediator, whose high office now 240
 Moses in figure bears; to introduce
 One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
 And all the Prophets in their age the times
 Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus, laws and rites
 Established, such delight hath God in Men 245
 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 250
 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 255
 Seven lamps as in a zodiac 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 260
 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, 265
 And thou Moon in the vale of Ajalon,

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,

270

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

275

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

280

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

285

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,

290

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

295

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 300
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 305
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, 310
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, 315
Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies;
From whom as oft he saves them penitent
By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom 320
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 325
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. 330
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 335
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, 340
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, 345
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 350
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 355
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, 360
 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; 365
 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 370
 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 375
 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 380
 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." 385
 🌿 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 390
 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, 395
 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: 400
 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 405
 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. 410
 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, 415
 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 shouldst have died,
 In sin for ever lost from life; this act
 Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms;
 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. 450
 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; 455
 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; 460
 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." 465
 🌿 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, 470
 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 475
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;

BOOK XII

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 480
 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 485
 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 490
 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, 495
 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 wondrous gifts endue 500
 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, 505
 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 510
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, 515
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, 520
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; laws which none shall find
Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then
But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind 525
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: 530
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 535
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, 540
 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 545
 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; 550
 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, 555
 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. 560
 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 565
 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."

BOOK XII

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🌿 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.—

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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


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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 600
 (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." 605

 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
 Wearied I fell asleep: But now lead on;
 In me is no delay; with thee to go, 615
 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 620
 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 625
 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 marsh glides, 630
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, 635
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. 640
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; 645
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.