

B A N T A M C L A S S I C

THE
ANNOTATED MILTON
COMPLETE ENGLISH POEMS



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

JOHN MILTON was born on December 9, 1608. A brilliant scholar, he received his B.A. and M.A. from Christ's College, Cambridge, and began writing poetry. Instead of entering the ministry, he retired to his father's country house and for the next five years read day and night, devouring most of the existing written works in English, Greek, Latin, and Italian. During this period he wrote the masque *Comus* (1634) and "Lycidas" (1637), an elegy memorializing a college classmate. In 1638 he went on a tour of Europe, spending most of his time in Italy. He returned home prematurely because of the religious unrest in England and began writing tracts that branded him a radical. In 1642 he married Mary Powell, a seventeen-year-old girl. Within six weeks, she returned to her parents' home, and Milton wrote a series of angry pamphlets advocating divorce on the grounds of incompatibility. Eventually, she returned and bore him four children, three of whom survived. By 1651 Milton's poor eyesight failed completely, leaving him blind. After his wife's death, he remarried, only to have his second wife die some months after childbirth. His third marriage, to Elizabeth Minshull, was a longer and happier one. At the Restoration, Milton narrowly escaped execution because of his politics, but was left impoverished. Now he returned to writing poetry and created the masterpieces for which he will be forever remembered, beginning with *Paradise Lost* (1667). He followed this epic with *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* (jointly published in 1671). Milton died in 1674. Along with Chaucer and Shakespeare, Milton is one of the true giants of our language.

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*Complete English Poems with annotations
lexical, syntactic, prosodic, and referential*

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A Bantam Book

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1608 Milton born, 9 December, in London
- 1618?–20? tutored by Thomas Young
- 1615?
- 1620?–25 St. Paul's School
- 1625 begins at Cambridge University, enrolled in Christ's College
- 1629 March, B.A. degree
- 1632 March, M.A. degree
- 1632–38 residence at his father's house
- 1634 September, *Comus* performed at Ludlow
- 1637 3 April, death of Milton's mother
- 1638–39 European tour: France, Italy, Switzerland
- 1640 schoolteacher, in London
- 1641 *Of Reformation in England*
Of Prelatical Episcopacy
Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defense
- 1642 May/June, married Mary Powell
The Reason of Church Government
An Apology for Smectymnuus
October, Civil War begins
- 1643 *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*
April, Milton's father comes to live with him
- 1644 *Of Education*

- The Judgment of Martin Bucer Concerning
Divorce
Areopagitica*
Milton's sight begins to fail
- 1645 *Tetrachordon*
Colasterion
- 1646 *Poems*
29 July, daughter Anne born
- 1647 March, death of Milton's father
- 1648 25 October, daughter Mary born
- 1649 30 January, Charles I executed
The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates
March, appointed Secretary for Foreign
Tongues, Council of State
- 1650 left eye fails
- 1651 *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*
16 March, son John born
- 1652 February/March, complete blindness
2 May, daughter Deborah born
May, Mary Powell Milton's death
16 June, death of son, John
- 1654 *Defensio Secunda*
- 1655 *Pro Se Defensio*
- 1656 November, married Katherine Woodcock
- 1657 19 October, daughter Katherine born
- 1658 February, death of Katherine Woodcock Milton
17 March, death of daughter Katherine
3 September, Oliver Cromwell's death
- 1659 *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical
Causes*
*Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the
Church*

- 1660 *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a
Free Commonwealth*
May, Charles II restored to the throne
Milton arrested, released
- 1663 February, married Elizabeth Minshull
- 1665 resided at Chalfont St. Giles during plague
- 1667 February, ten-book edition of *Paradise Lost*
- 1669 *Accidence Commenced Grammar*
- 1670 *History of Britain*
- 1671 *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*
- 1672 *Joannis Miltoni Angli, Artis Logicae Plenior
Institutio*
- 1673 *Minor Poems* (enlarged edition)
Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration
- 1674 *Paradise Lost*, twelve-book edition
8 November, Milton's death, in London

PREFACE

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

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

The text of the English poems, however, is not only complete, but has been conservatively modernized and edited for maximum accessibility. Nothing has been done to

interfere in any way whatever with the prosody of these poems. The vexing problem of syllabified versus unsyllabified vowels has been preempted by (1) the use of spelling to indicate each prosodically suppressed vowel (usually by means of an apostrophe, sometimes by such spellings as “shouldst” or “didst”), and (2) the addition of an accent mark each time a vowel is syllabified (“wingèd,” “blessèd”). My prosodic markings are consistent throughout this book. When, therefore, a word such as “winged” is mono- rather than bisyllabic, I have added neither an apostrophe nor an accent mark; the reader can assume that any word without one of those marks does not in my judgment require one.

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

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

Most of my lexical annotations are to words rather than to phrases, clauses, or sentences. As a teacher, I have found that students need to know what the components mean, just as much as they need to know the meaning of the finished product. Indeed, understanding syntax becomes a good deal easier when the components are clearly understood—and many of my annotations are syntactic as well

as lexical. All syntactic material is placed in square brackets: [verb]. If, as is usually the case, annotations are both lexical *and* syntactic, the lexical portion always precedes the syntactic.

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

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

evil store = *an abundance of evil*

those in servitude: *servants*

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

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

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

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

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

common, ordinary, uneducated

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

having no material being/body

care for/prediction of the future

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

not maternal/the mother of

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

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

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

Horeb = Sinai, in Exodus and Deuteronomy

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

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

not specified: the basic nature of the Godhead?

face (defiantly)? await?

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

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

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

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

Hecate [trisyllabic], *ghost-world goddess*

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

INTRODUCTION

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

*Lo I the man, whose Muse whilom did mask,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherd's weeds,
Am now enforced a far unfitter task,
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights' and Ladies' gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too mean, the sacred Muse areeds*

[advises, teaches]

*To blazon broad amongst her learnèd throng:
Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.*

*Help then, O holy Virgin, chief of nine,
Thy weaker Novice to perform thy will,
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne [chest for
books/documents]*

*The antique rolls which there lie hidden still,
Of Faery knights and fairest Tanaquil* [wife of
Tarquinius; here Queen Elizabeth]

*Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeservèd wrong:*

O help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my dull tongue.

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

- insistently lofty, elevated diction, expressive of the urgent conviction that poet and reader are engaged not in some casual, friendly dialogue or in mere entertainment, but in an activity at once both serious and highly moral; note that in line 7 the Muse is called "sacred"
- constant, even fundamental reference to past persons and events, including regular allusions to past intellectual belief structures (and note, please, the use of the plural; we here meet classical Muses and shepherds along with medieval knights, Roman along with British history, pagan along with Christian religion, and so on)
- frequent reliance on archaically tinted vocabulary (I have here modernized spelling, but the attentive reader will not be fooled)
- markedly convoluted syntax, with sentences being stretched (and bent) over many lines

- what modern poets and readers might call a long breath line—rhythms that elongate and tend to roll like the waves of the sea, rather than (as in much modern poetry) poke and dart even as they loll
- reliance on more or less objectified conventions, which are the very farthest thing from “personal” to either the poet or his poem: e.g., the confession in line 3 not only of the poet’s incapacity for *this* task but of his general poetic ineptitude (he is here called to “a far unfitter task”—and see also “Me, all too mean,” in line 7, and the reference to his “weak wit” and “dull tongue” in the final line of the second stanza)
- a set of assumptions, apparently fixed and settled for all time, about trumpets being “stern” (line 4), knights and ladies “gentle” (line 5) and their prior praises plainly insufficient (line 6), poets and their readers being “learnèd” (line 8), what is old being always good (the “antique rolls” of line 13), royalty invariably “noble” if male and “fair” or even “fairest” if female (lines 14 and 15), and princely suffering being both romantic and unfair (lines 16 and 17)

And there is more. But this is the introduction to a book about John Milton, not Edmund Spenser, vastly influential on Milton as Spenser clearly was. All the same, to nail the point home, let me quickly carry the story of Spenser’s fame and influence into the nineteenth and, just barely, the twentieth century. William Wordsworth, at age thirty-one, was reported on Monday, the sixteenth of November, 1801, to be feeling “some what weakish,” but in compensation (and perhaps as a curative) “now at 7 o’clock reading Spenser” (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, 59). Eight days later, “after tea William read Spenser[,] now and then a little aloud to us,” his wife and sister (62). And on Thursday, the first of July, 1802, said to be “a very rainy day,” we learn

that “we had a nice walk, and afterwards sate by a nice snug fire and William read Spenser and I read ‘As you like it’ ” (144). Plainly, Spenser traveled and was seen to belong in some pretty special company. Indeed, the very first poem in *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats*, identified therein as “the earliest known composition of Keats,” is an “Imitation of Spenser” (1). Spenser’s tracks are all over the Keats volume, from a “Spenserian Stanza, written at the close of book v. of THE FAERIE QUEENE” (8–9), a sonnet “To Spenser” (42), and three more “Spenserian Stanzas” aimed in 1819 at Charles Armitrage Brown, in response (in Keats’ own words) to “Brown this morning . . . writing some Spenserian stanzas against Mrs., Miss [Fanny] Brawne and me.”

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

Yet Milton not only participates in a long and strong tradition, connecting to it in more ways than I can here com-

ment upon, but he has always been, and still remains, an immensely significant, powerful contributor to that tradition. He draws upon Shakespeare (he was born eight years before Shakespeare's death), as has everyone else. But he also adds to Shakespeare, as most others neither have done nor could do.

*He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous shield,
Ethereal¹ temper,² massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan³ artist⁴ views
At evening, from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry⁵ new lands,
Rivers, or mountains in her spotty⁶ globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
Of some great ammiral,⁷ were but a wand⁸—
He walked with, to support uneasy⁹ steps
Over the burning marl,¹⁰ not like those steps
On Heaven's azure. And the torrid clime
Smote¹¹ on him sore besides, vaulted¹² with fire.*

PARADISE LOST, 1:284–98

¹ celestial

² hardness

³ Italian: Galileo

⁴ practical scientist, learned man

⁵ discover, make known

⁶ spotted, patchy

⁷ admiral's ship, flagship

⁸ straight slender stick

⁹ difficult, troublesome

¹⁰ soil

¹¹ beat/shone strongly

¹² covered, roofed

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

It is not difficult, of course, to find this side of Milton, especially in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* but also, in different and younger ways, in *Lycidas* and, fittingly, in his quite early "On Shakespeare," probably written when he was only twenty-two. This is the Milton of whom Douglas Bush could declare, "Whoever the third of English poets may be [Shakespeare and Chaucer being overwhelming consensus choices for numbers 1 and 2], Milton's place has been next to the throne" (*English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, 359). But whether writing about angels or demons, Milton's touch can also be delicate and lyrically shimmering:

... how he fell

*From Heaven they fabled,*¹³ *thrown by angry Jove*
*Sheer*¹⁴ *o'er the crystal battlements.*¹⁵ *From morn*
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,

¹³ talked idly, lied about

¹⁴ steeply, perpendicularly

¹⁵ fortifications placed on top of walls

*A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith,¹⁶ like a falling star . . .*

PARADISE LOST, 1:740-45

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

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

PARADISE LOST, 4:18-23

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

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

*Thus sang the uncouth¹⁷ swain to th' oaks and rills,¹⁸
While the still morn went out with sandals gray.
He touched the tender stops of various quills,¹⁹*

¹⁶ directly overhead

¹⁷ unpolished, rough

¹⁸ streams

¹⁹ reeds, pipes, flutes

*With eager thought warbling his Doric²⁰ lay.
And now the sun had stretched out²¹ all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose and twitched²² his mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.*

LYCIDAS, 186–93

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

The principal function of the introduction to a book like this is to inform prospective readers of the editor's goals and intentions and of the nature of the material offered in support of those goals and intentions in the pages that follow. Introductions to editions of Milton customarily explain the editor's view of Milton's theological concerns, usually discussing the poetry's relationship to those concerns. Biographical information is often set out as well. (Biographical material is here offered, in capsule form, in the Chronology, which immediately follows the Contents listing above.) In this volume, however, much of the necessary theological and other informational material is spread throughout the book, being contained in the annotations (affixed to the poems for which such information is necessary), these comprising whatever value the book may possess. Those who employ this edition as a university textbook, which in all

²⁰ pastoral

²¹ extended across

²² pulled around him

likelihood will be its chief use, will have an informed and communicative instructor to frame additionally needed contexts. And the brief list of suggested reading at the end of this volume offers, I trust, whatever further guidance may be required, at least in the initial stages of coming to know John Milton's English poetry. Most of the items there cited, of course, contain references to still further critical and historical materials.

THE ANNOTATED
MILTON

A PARAPHRASE ON PSALM 114

1624

*When the blest seed of Terah's faithful son¹
After long toil their liberty had won,
And passed from Pharian² fields to Canaan land,
Led by the strength of the Almighty's hand,
Jehovah's wonders were in Israel shown,
His praise and glory was in Israel known.
That saw the troubled sea,³ and shivering fled,
And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head
Low in the earth. Jordan's clear streams recoil,
As a faint⁴ host⁵ that hath received the foil.⁶
The high, huge-bellied mountains skip like rams
Amongst their ewes, the little hills like lambs.
Why fled the oceans and why skipped the mountains?
Why turned Jordan toward his crystal fountains?
Shake earth, and at the presence be aghast
Of Him that ever was, and aye⁷ shall last,
That⁸ glassy floods from ruggèd rocks can crush,
And make soft rills⁹ from fiery flint-stones gush.*

10

¹ Terah = Abraham's father

² Egyptian

³ i.e., the sea saw the strength of the Almighty's hand

⁴ cowardly

⁵ army

⁶ defeat

⁷ always, forever

⁸ who

⁹ streams, brooks

PSALM 136

1624

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

*Let us blaze¹⁰ His name abroad,¹¹
For of gods He is the God,
For His, etc.*

*O let us His praises tell,
Who doth the wrathful tyrants quell,¹²
For His, etc.*

10

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

*Who by His wisdom did create
The painted¹³ Heav'ns so full of state,¹⁴
For His, etc.*

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

¹⁰ proclaim

¹¹ widely, at large

¹² destroy, kill, overcome

¹³ brightly colored

¹⁴ greatness, power, dignity

*Who by His all-commanding might
Did fill the new-made world with light,
For His, etc.* 20

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

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

*He with His thunder-clasping hand
Smote the first-born of Egypt land,
For His, etc.* 30

*And in despite of Pharaoh fell,¹⁵
He brought from thence His Israel,¹⁶
For His, etc.*

*The ruddy waves He cleft in twain,
Of the Erythraean main,¹⁷
For His, etc.*

*The floods stood still like walls of glass
While the Hebrew bands did pass,
For His, etc.* 40

*But full soon they did devour
The tawny¹⁸ king with all his power,
For His, etc.*

¹⁵ cruel, terrible, savage [adjective]

¹⁶ the Hebrew people

¹⁷ the Red Sea

¹⁸ brown-skinned

*His chosen people He did bless
In the wasteful¹⁹ wilderness,
For His, etc.*

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

*He foiled bold Seon and his host,
That ruled the Amorrean²⁰ coast,
For His, etc.*

50

*And large-limbed Og²¹ He did subdue,
With all his over-hardy²² crew,
For His, etc.*

*And to His servant Israel²³
He gave their land, therein to dwell,
For His, etc.*

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

60

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

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

¹⁹ desolate

²⁰ the Amorites, pre-Israelite dwellers in Canaan

²¹ Amorite king, and an exceedingly large man

²² excessively bold, daring

²³ Jacob

*Let us therefore warble²⁴ forth
His mighty majesty and worth,
For His, etc.*

70

*That His mansion hath on high,
Above the reach of mortal eye,
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.*

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT DYING OF A COUGH

1625–26? 1628?

I

*O fairest flower no sooner blown²⁵ but blasted,²⁶
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honor if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak winter's force, that made thy blossom dry,
For he being amorous on that lovely dye
That did thy cheek envermeil,²⁷ thought to kiss,
But killed, alas, and then bewailed his fatal bliss.*

²⁴ to sing, celebrate in song

²⁵ blossomed

²⁶ withered

²⁷ color vermilion

II

*For since grim Aquilo,²⁸ his²⁹ charioteer,
 By boisterous³⁰ rape th' Athenian damsel³¹ got,
 He thought it touched³² his deity full near 10
 If likewise he some fair one wedded not,³³
 Thereby to wipe away the infamous³⁴ blot
 Of long-uncoupled bed and childless eld,³⁵
 Which 'mongst the wanton³⁶ gods a foul reproach was held.*

III

*So mounting up in icy-pearlèd car³⁷
 Through middle empire of the freezing air
 He wandered long, till thee he spied from far.
 There ended was his quest, there ceased his care:
 Down he descended from his snow-soft chair,
 But all unwares with his cold-kind embrace 20
 Unhoused thy virgin soul from her fair bidding³⁸ place.*

IV

*Yet art thou not inglorious³⁹ in thy fate,
 For so Apollo, with unweeting⁴⁰ hand,*

²⁸ the north wind (Aquilo = "eagle")

²⁹ winter's

³⁰ rough, coarse, violent

³¹ Orythia, daughter of the king of Athens

³² affected injuriously

³³ i.e., unless he too wedded some fair one

³⁴ notorious

³⁵ maturity, old age

³⁶ frisky, sportive

³⁷ carriage, chariot

³⁸ dwelling

³⁹ shamed, disgraced

⁴⁰ unknowing, unwitting

*Whilom⁴¹ did slay his dearly lovèd mate,⁴²
 Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas' strand,⁴³
 Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land,
 But then transformed him to a purple flower:
 Alack, that so to change thee winter had no power.*

V

*Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead
 Or that thy corpse corrupts in earth's dark womb, 30
 Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
 Hid from the world in a low-delved⁴⁴ tomb.
 Could Heav'n, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
 Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
 Above mortality that showed thou wast divine.*

VI

*Resolve⁴⁵ me, then, O soul most surely blest
 (If so it be that thou these plaints⁴⁶ dost hear)!
 Tell me, bright spirit, where'er thou hoverest,
 Whether above that high, first-moving sphere
 Or in the Elysian fields (if such there were), 40
 Oh say me true if thou were mortal wight⁴⁷
 And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.*

⁴¹ once

⁴² Zephyr, the west wind, also loved Hyacinth, and in revenge caused a quoit (iron ring thrown at a peg in the ground) thrown by Apollo to swerve, hit, and kill Hyacinth

⁴³ Eurotas = Laconian river; strand = bank, shore

⁴⁴ shallowly dug? or an in-ground grave rather than a properly elevated tomb structure?

⁴⁵ explain, clarify

⁴⁶ verses, poem

⁴⁷ creature, being

VII

*Were thou some star which from the ruined roof
Of shaked Olympus by mischance didst fall?
Which careful Jove in Nature's true behoof⁴⁸
Took up, and in fit⁴⁹ place did reinstall?
Or did, of late, earth's sons besiege the wall
Of shiny Heav'n, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectared head?*

VIII

*Or were thou that just maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth,⁵⁰ O tell me sooth,
And cam'st again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou Mercy, that sweet smiling youth?
Or that crowned matron, sage white-robèd Truth?
Or any other of that heav'nly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?* 50

IX

*Or wert thou of the golden-wingèd host,
Who having clad thyself in human weed⁵¹
To earth from thy prefixèd seat didst post,⁵²
And after short abode fly back with speed,
As if to show what creatures Heav'n doth breed,
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid⁵³ world, and unto Heav'n aspire?* 60

⁴⁸ benefit, behalf

⁴⁹ appropriate, proper

⁵⁰ Astraea ("starry maiden"), goddess of justice and the last god to leave the earth

⁵¹ clothing

⁵² travel quickly

⁵³ dirty, repulsive

X

*But oh, why didst thou not stay here below
 To bless us with thy Heav'n-loved innocence?
 To slake his wrath, whom sin hath made our foe?
 To turn swift-rushing black perdition hence,
 Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence?
 To stand 'twixt us and our deservèd smart?⁵⁴
 But thou canst best perform that office where thou art. 70*

XI

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

AT A VACATION EXERCISE IN THE COLLEGE, PART LATIN, PART ENGLISH

1628

The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began:

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

⁵⁴ pain, grief

*Driving dumb silence from the portal door,
 Where he had mutely sat two years before!
 Here I salute thee, and thy pardon ask,
 That now I use thee in my later task.
 Small loss it is that hence can come unto thee:
 I know my tongue but little grace can do thee. 10
 Thou needst not be ambitious to be first:
 Believe me, I have thither⁵⁵ packed the worst—
 And, if it happen, as I did forecast,
 The daintiest dishes shall be served up last.
 I pray thee, then, deny me not thy aid
 For this same small neglect that I have made,
 But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
 And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure,
 Not those new-fangled toys and trimming slight
 Which takes our late fantastics with delight, 20
 But cull those richest robes and gay'st attire
 Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire.
 I have some naked⁵⁶ thoughts that rove about
 And loudly knock to have their passage out,
 And, weary of their place, do only stay
 Till thou has decked them in thy best array,
 That so they may without suspect⁵⁷ or fears
 Fly swiftly to this fair assembly's ears.
 Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
 Thy service in some graver subject use, 30
 Such as may make thee search thy coffers⁵⁸ round⁵⁹
 Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound—
 Such where the deep transported mind may soar
 Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'n's door
 Look in, and see each blissful deity*

⁵⁵ i.e., in the preceding part, which is a pun-filled "Prolusion"

⁵⁶ obvious, bare, plain

⁵⁷ suspicion

⁵⁸ boxes, chests

⁵⁹ thoroughly, all over

*How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
 Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
 To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe⁶⁰ brings
 Immortal nectar to her kingly sire.
 Then passing through the spheres of watchful fire, 40
 And misty regions of wide air next under,
 And hills of snow and lofts⁶¹ of piled thunder,
 May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
 In Heav'n's defiance mustering all his waves.
 Then sing of secret things that came to pass
 When beldam⁶² Nature in her cradle was.
 And last, of kings and queens and heroes old,
 Such as the wise Demodocus⁶³ once told,
 In solemn songs at king Alcinous' feast,
 While sad Ulysses' soul and all the rest 50
 Are held with his melodious harmony
 In willing chains and sweet captivity.
 But fie, my wand'ring muse! How thou dost stray!
 Expectance calls thee now another way:
 Thou know'st it must be now thy only bent
 To keep in compass⁶⁴ of thy predicament.⁶⁵
 Then quick, about thy purposed business come,
 That to the next I may resign my room.⁶⁶*

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

⁶⁰ Zeus and Hera's daughter; cupbearer to the gods

⁶¹ layers

⁶² old woman, grandmother

⁶³ see Homer's *Odyssey* 8:499ff.

⁶⁴ within the boundary

⁶⁵ an academic pun: predicament = (1) term used in Aristotelian rhetoric, (2) Milton's difficulty with his "wand'ring muse"

⁶⁶ place

Good luck befriend thee, son, for at thy birth
The fairy ladies danced upon the hearth. 60
Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy
Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,
And sweetly singing round about thy bed
Strew all their blessings on thy sleeping head.
She heard them give thee this: that thou should'st still
From eyes of mortals walk invisible.
Yet there is something that doth force my fear,
For once it was my dismal⁶⁷ hap⁶⁸ to hear
A sibyl⁶⁹ old, bow-bent with crooked age,
That far events full wisely could presage, 70
And in time's long and dark prospective glass
Foresaw what future days should bring to pass:
"Your son," said she, "(nor can you it prevent)
Shall be subject to many an accident.
O'er all his brethren he shall reign as king,
Yet every one shall make him underling,
And those that cannot live from him asunder⁷⁰
Ungratefully shall strive to keep him under.
In worth and excellence he shall out-go⁷¹ them,
Yet being above them, he shall be below them. 80
From others he shall stand in need of nothing,
Yet on his brothers shall depend for clothing.
To find a foe it shall not be his hap,
And peace shall lull him in her flow'ry lap.
Yet shall he live in strife, and at his door
Devouring war shall never cease to roar.
Yea, it shall be his natural property⁷²
To harbor those that are at enmity."

⁶⁷ unlucky, disastrous, dreadful

⁶⁸ chance, luck

⁶⁹ prophetess, fortune-teller, witch

⁷⁰ apart

⁷¹ outdistance, surpass

⁷² attribute, quality, nature

*What power, what force, what mighty spell, if not
Your learned hands, can loose this Gordian knot?* 90

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

*Rivers*⁷³ arise, whether thou be the son
Of utmost⁷⁴ Tweed,⁷⁵ or Ouse, or gulfy Dun,⁷⁶
Or Trent, who like some earth-born giant spreads
His thirty⁷⁷ arms along the indented meads,
Or sullen Mole, that runneth underneath,
Or Severn swift, guilty of maiden's death,⁷⁸
Or rocky Avon, or of sedgy Lea,
Or coaly Tyne,⁷⁹ or ancient hallowed Dee,
Or Humber loud, that keeps⁸⁰ the Scythian's name,
Or Medway smooth, or royal-towered Thame.⁸¹

⁷³ one George Rivers (or his brother, Nizell) played the part of Relation

⁷⁴ outermost

⁷⁵ on the border of England and Scotland

⁷⁶ the Don, in Yorkshire

⁷⁷ *trente* = "thirty," in French, and the Trent takes its name therefrom

⁷⁸ see the story of the river nymph Sabrina in *Comus*, lines 824ff.

⁷⁹ the river runs past Newcastle, proverbial for its coal

⁸⁰ i.e., is supposedly named for a Scythian chief who drowned in that river

⁸¹ the Thames, which runs past various royal castles

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

1629

I

*This is the month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the son of Heav'n's eternal king,
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring.
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit⁸² should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.*

II

*That glorious form, that light unsufferable,⁸³
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty
Wherewith he went,⁸⁴ at Heav'n's high council-table IO
To sit, the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside, and here with us to be
Forsook the courts⁸⁵ of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.*

⁸² crime, fault, penalty

⁸³ unbearable, intolerable

⁸⁴ was accustomed

⁸⁵ residence/offices of a sovereign

III

*Say Heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein⁸⁶
 Afford⁸⁷ a present to the infant God?
 Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,⁸⁸
 To welcome him to this his new abode,
 Now while the Heav'n by the sun's team⁸⁹ untrod,
 Hath took no print⁹⁰ of the approaching light 20
 And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons
 bright?*

IV

*See how, from far, upon the eastern road
 The star-led wizards⁹¹ haste, with odors sweet!
 O run, prevent⁹² them with thy humble ode,
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet!
 Have thou the honor, first thy Lord to greet,
 And join thy voice unto the Angel choir
 From out his secret altar, touched with hallowed fire.*

THE HYMN

I

*It was the winter wild,
 While the Heav'n-born child 30
 All meanly⁹³ wrapped in the rude⁹⁴ manger⁹⁵ lies.*

⁸⁶ style, talent

⁸⁷ effect, accomplish

⁸⁸ style, tone

⁸⁹ the horses pulling the sun god's chariot

⁹⁰ impression, stamp

⁹¹ the three Magi/wise men

⁹² come before [*pre* = before, *venir* = come]

⁹³ poorly, shabbily

⁹⁴ rough, coarse, inelegant

⁹⁵ feeding trough in stable/barn

*Nature in awe⁹⁶ to him
 Had doffed⁹⁷ her gaudy⁹⁸ trim,⁹⁹
 With her great master so to sympathize.
 It was no season then for her
 To wanton with the sun, her lusty¹ paramour.*

II

*Only with speeches fair
 She woos the gentle air
 To hide her guilty front² with innocent snow,
 And on her naked shame, 40
 Pollute³ with sinful blame,
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
 Confounded⁴ that her Maker's eyes
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.*

III

*But he, her fears to cease,
 Sent down the meek-eyed Peace.
 She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
 Down through the turning sphere,
 His ready harbinger,⁵
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing, 50
 And waving wide her myrtle wand
 She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.*

⁹⁶ reverential wonder

⁹⁷ laid aside, taken away, taken off

⁹⁸ brilliant, fine

⁹⁹ adornment

¹ joyful, lively, lustful

² forehead, face

³ corrupted, foul, filthy, stained [adjective]

⁴ abashed, ashamed

⁵ forerunner (advance person)

IV

*No war or battle's sound
 Was heard the world around.
 The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
 The hookèd⁶ chariot stood
 Unstained with hostile blood,
 The trumpet spoke not to the armèd throng,
 And kings sat still, with awful⁷ eye,
 As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.* 60

V

*But peaceful was the night
 Wherein the Prince of Light
 His reign of peace upon the earth began.
 The winds, with wonder whist,⁸
 Smoothly the waters kissed,
 Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,⁹
 While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.*

VI

*The stars with deep amaze
 Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,* 70
 *Bending one way their precious influence,
 And will not take their flight,
 For all the morning light,
 Or Lucifer¹⁰ that often warned them thence,
 But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
 Until their Lord himself bespoke, and bid them go.*

⁶ with hook/scythelike protrusions? a hook-shaped chariot?

⁷ respectful, reverential

⁸ hushed, silent

⁹ rage, roar

¹⁰ the morning star, *not* (in this usage) Satan

VII

*And though the shady gloom
 Had given day her room,¹¹
 The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
 And hid his head for shame, 80
 As¹² his inferior flame
 The new-enlightened world no more should need;
 He saw a greater sun appear
 Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.*

VIII

*The shepherds on the lawn,
 Or ere the point¹³ of dawn,
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row.
 Full little thought they then
 That the mighty Pan
 Was kindly come to live with them below. 90
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
 Was all that did their silly¹⁴ thoughts so busy keep.*

IX

*When such music sweet
 Their hearts and ears did greet,
 As never was by mortal finger struck,
 Divinely-warbled voice
 Answering the stringèd noise
 As all their souls in blissful rapture took.¹⁵*

¹¹ place

¹² as if

¹³ moment, instant

¹⁴ simple, humble

¹⁵ gripped, seized, charmed (the "stringèd noise" took "all their souls in blissful rapture")

*The air such pleasure loath to lose
 With thousand echoes still prolongs each
 heavenly close.*¹⁶

100

X

*Nature that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's¹⁷ seat, the airy region thrilling,
 Now was almost won
 To think her part was done,
 And that her reign had here its last fulfilling.
 She knew such harmony alone
 Could hold all Heav'n and earth in happier union.*

XI

*At last surrounds their sight
 A globe of circular light,
 That with long beams the shame-faced night
 arrayed.*¹⁸
*The helmèd Cherubim
 And swordèd Seraphim
 Are seen in glittering ranks, with wings displayed,
 Harping in loud and solemn choir,
 With unexpressive¹⁹ notes to Heav'n's new-born heir.*

110

XII

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

¹⁶ cadence¹⁷ the moon¹⁸ prepared, dressed¹⁹ inexpressible

While the Creator great 120
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering²⁰ waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears
(If ye have power to touch our senses so),
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of Heav'n's deep organ blow, 130
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold,
And speckled²¹ vanity
Will sicken soon, and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould,
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous²² mansions²³ to the
peering day. 140

²⁰ rolling, tossing, tumbling

²¹ full of moral blemishes/defects

²² suffering, mourning

²³ houses, tents

XV

*Yea, Truth and Justice then
 Will down return to men,
 Orbed in a rainbow; and like²⁴ glories wearing
 Mercy will sit between,
 Throned in celestial sheen,
 With radiant feet the tissued²⁵ clouds down steering,
 And Heav'n, as at some festival,
 Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.*

XVI

*But wisest Fate says no,
 This must not yet be so, 150
 The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy
 That on the bitter cross
 Must redeem our loss,
 So both himself and us to glorify.
 Yet first to those ychained in sleep
 The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the
 deep*

XVII

*With such a horrid clang
 As on Mount Sinai rang
 While the red fire and smoldering clouds out-break.
 The aged earth aghast 160
 With terror of that blast
 Shall from the surface to the center shake;
 When at the world's last session²⁶*

²⁴ similar

²⁵ delicate, gauzy texture

²⁶ meeting of a deliberative council [trisyllabic]

The dreadful²⁷ Judge in middle air shall spread His throne,

XVIII

*And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is—*

*But now begins, for from this happy day
Th' old dragon under ground
In straiter²⁸ limits bound*

*Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway, 170
And wroth²⁹ to see his kingdom fail
Swinges³⁰ the scaly horror of his folded tail.*

XIX

*The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum*

*Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,³¹*

*With hollow shriek the steep³² of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance or breathèd spell
Inspires³³ the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell. 180*

XX

*The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,*

²⁷ fearful, awe-inspiring

²⁸ narrower, tighter

²⁹ wrathful, indignant

³⁰ lashes, brandishes, whips

³¹ prognosticate

³² slope

³³ prompts, animates

*A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament.
 From haunted spring and dale
 Edged with poplar pale³⁴
 The parting genius³⁵ is with sighing sent.
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn
 The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.*

XXI

*In consecrated earth,
 And on the holy hearth, 190
 The lars and lemures³⁶ moan with midnight plaint.
 In urns and altars round,
 A drear and dying sound
 Affrights the flamens³⁷ at their service quaint,³⁸
 And the chill marble seems to sweat,
 While each peculiar³⁹ power⁴⁰ forgoes his wonted seat.*

XXII

*Peor⁴¹ and Baalim⁴²
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-battered god of Palestine
 And moonèd Ashtaroth,⁴³ 200
 Heav'n's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt⁴⁴ with tapers' holy shine.*

³⁴ silver-leafed?

³⁵ local spirit (pagan)

³⁶ Roman household and hearth gods

³⁷ Roman priests

³⁸ odd, strange

³⁹ separate

⁴⁰ spiritual/divine being

⁴¹ mountain/Phoenician sun god

⁴² followers of Baal

⁴³ Phoenician moon goddess

⁴⁴ encircled

*The Libyc Hammon⁴⁵ shrinks⁴⁶ his horn.
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz⁴⁷
mourn,*

XXIII

*And sullen Moloch,⁴⁸ fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue.
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace⁴⁹ blue. 210
The brutish⁵⁰ gods of Nile as fast,
Isis⁵¹ and Orus,⁵² and the dog Anubis,⁵³ haste.*

XXIV

*Nor is Osiris⁵⁴ seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling th' unshowered grass with lowings loud,
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest:⁵⁵
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud.*

⁴⁵ Ammon, Egyptian god with the head of a ram

⁴⁶ withers

⁴⁷ Phoenician Adonis

⁴⁸ deity associated with Baal

⁴⁹ into which babies were thrown, as sacrifices to Moloch

⁵⁰ animal-like/shaped

⁵¹ Egyptian earth goddess, horned like a cow

⁵² Egyptian sun god, Isis' son

⁵³ son of Orus, dog/jackal-headed

⁵⁴ chief of the Egyptian gods, portrayed as a black bull

⁵⁵ see line 220, below

*In vain with timbreled⁵⁶ anthems⁵⁷ dark
The sable-stolèd⁵⁸ sorcerers bear his worshipped ark. 220*

XXV

*He feels from Judah's land
The dreaded infant's hand,
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn.⁵⁹
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon⁶⁰ huge, ending in snaky twine.⁶¹
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.*

XXVI

*So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red, 230
Pillows his chin upon an orient⁶² wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail.
Each fettered ghost slips to his several⁶³ grave
And the yellow-skirted fays⁶⁴
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved
maze.⁶⁵*

⁵⁶ percussion instrument, tambourinelike

⁵⁷ songs of praise/gladness

⁵⁸ robed

⁵⁹ eyes

⁶⁰ hundred-headed fire-breathing giant, a serpent below the waist

⁶¹ coils

⁶² eastern

⁶³ separate, individual

⁶⁴ fairies

⁶⁵ labyrinth (as in a fairy ring?)

XXVII

*But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.*

*Time is our tedious⁶⁶ song should here have ending.
Heav'n's youngest-teemèd⁶⁷ star* 240

Hath fixed her polished car,

*Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending,
And all about the courtly stable*

Bright-harnessed⁶⁸ angels sit in order serviceable.⁶⁹

THE PASSION

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

I

*Erewhile⁷⁰ of music and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of air and earth did ring,*

And joyous news of Heav'nly infant's birth,

My muse with Angels did divide to sing.⁷¹

But headlong joy is ever on the wing,

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

⁶⁶ long and wearisome (used in a jocund rather than literal sense)

⁶⁷ youngest-born/produced

⁶⁸ i.e., wearing gleaming body armor

⁶⁹ ready to be useful [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁷⁰ once, formerly, some time ago

⁷¹ to sing in counterpoint

II

*For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
 And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
 Which on our dearest Lord did seize⁷² ere long* 10
*Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
 Which he for us did freely undergo,
 Most perfect hero, tried in heaviest⁷³ plight⁷⁴
 Of labors huge and hard, too hard for human wight.⁷⁵*

III

*He sov'reign priest, stooping his regal head
 That dropped with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
 Poor fleshly tabernacle⁷⁶ entered,
 His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies.
 Oh what a mask was there, what a disguise!*
 Yet more: the stroke of death he must abide,⁷⁷ 20
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

IV

*These latter scenes confine my roving verse;
 To this horizon is my Phoebus⁷⁸ bound:
 His Godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
 And former sufferings elsewhere are found.
 Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound.⁷⁹*

⁷² fasten upon, clutch, take hold of

⁷³ gravest, most severe

⁷⁴ peril, danger, risk

⁷⁵ creature, being

⁷⁶ temporary dwelling, place, abode

⁷⁷ put up with, endure

⁷⁸ Phoebus Apollo, god of (among other things) poetry

⁷⁹ Marco Girolamo Vida's *Christiad*; he was a native of Cremona

*Me softer airs befit,⁸⁰ and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still,⁸¹ more apt for mournful things.*

V

*Befriend me, night, best patroness of grief,
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw, 30
And work my flattered fancy to belief
That Heav'n and earth are colored with my woe,
My sorrows are too dark for day to know.*

*The leaves should all be black wheron I write,
And letters, where my tears have washed, a wannish
white.*

VI

*See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels
That whirled the prophet⁸² up, at Chebar flood!
My spirit some transporting Cherub feels,
To bear me where the towers of Salem⁸³ stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood. 40*

*There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive⁸⁴ trance,⁸⁵ and anguish, and ecstatic fit.⁸⁶*

VII

*Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of Heav'n's richest store,⁸⁷*

⁸⁰ proper to

⁸¹ subdued

⁸² Ezekiel

⁸³ Jerusalem (Shalem = ancient Semitic god)

⁸⁴ anxiously thoughtful

⁸⁵ absorption

⁸⁶ mood? seizure?

⁸⁷ treasures

*And here though grief my feeble hands uplock⁸⁸
 Yet on the softened quarry⁸⁹ would I score⁹⁰
 My plaining⁹¹ verse, as lively⁹² as before,
 For sure so well instructed are my tears
 That they would fitly fall in ordered characters.⁹³*

VIII

*Or should I, thence hurried on viewless wing, 50
 Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
 The gentle neighborhood of grove and spring
 Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild,
 And I (for grief is easily beguiled)
 Might think th' infection⁹⁴ of my sorrows loud
 Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.*

⁸⁸ i.e., as in prayer

⁸⁹ mass of stone

⁹⁰ mark, engrave

⁹¹ lamenting

⁹² vivid, fresh, brightly gay

⁹³ letters of the alphabet

⁹⁴ i.e., infections being carried by some germlike agent, the poet's tears of sorrow, like a sort of sickly semen, spawn "a race of mourners" on that which carries water down on men, namely, a cloud

SONG: ON MAY MORNING

1630–31

*Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,⁹⁵
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.*

*Hail bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire,
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,⁹⁶
Hill and dale⁹⁷ doth boast thy blessing.*

*Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.*

⁹⁵ forerunner (literally)

⁹⁶ attiring, arraying

⁹⁷ valley, hollow

ENGLISH⁹⁸ SONNETS⁹⁹

SONNET 1

1628? 1630?

*O nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray¹
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious² May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay³
Now timely⁴ sing, ere the rude⁵ bird of hate⁶
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh, 10
As thou from year to year hast sung too late*

⁹⁸ Sonnets 2–6, written in Italian, are not here included

⁹⁹ arranged by compositional order rather than chronologically; dates of composition are, as usual, indicated with the title of each poem

¹ twig, shoot

² gracious, favorably inclined

³ song

⁴ soon/soon enough (opportunely)

⁵ barbarous, ignorant

⁶ the cuckoo, linked to sexual jealousy/betrayal

*For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
 Whether the muse or love call thee his mate,
 Both them I serve, and of their train⁷ am I.*

SONNET 7

1632

*How soon hath time, the subtle⁸ thief of youth,
 Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year!
 My hasting days fly on, with full career,⁹
 But my late spring no bud or blossom show 'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
 That I to manhood am arrived so near,
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 That some more timely-happy spirits indu 'th.¹⁰
 Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still¹¹ in strictest measure ev'n¹² IO
 To that same lot,¹³ however mean¹⁴ or high,
 Towards which time leads me, and the will of Heav'n.
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great task-master's eye.*

⁷ retinue, attendants

⁸ ingenious, cunning, tricky

⁹ speed, impetus

¹⁰ are invested with

¹¹ yet? always?

¹² equal, proportionate

¹³ destiny

¹⁴ low

SONNET 8

1642

*Captain or colonel,¹⁵ or knight in arms,
 Whose chance¹⁶ on these defenseless doors may
 seize,¹⁷
 If ever deed of honor did thee please
 Guard them, and him within¹⁸ protect from harms.
 He can requite¹⁹ thee, for he knows the charms
 That call fame on such gentle²⁰ acts as these,
 And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
 Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
 Lift not thy spear against the muses' bow'r!²¹
 The great Emathian conqueror²² bid spare IO
 The house of Pindarus,²³ when temple and tow'r
 Went to the ground, and the repeated air²⁴
 Of sad Electra's poet²⁵ had the power
 To save th' Athenian walls from ruin bare.*

¹⁵ [trissyllabic]

¹⁶ luck, fortuitous circumstance

¹⁷ In October 1642, during the early days of England's civil war, the royalist army almost reached London; Milton's house lay just outside the city walls

¹⁸ Milton himself

¹⁹ repay

²⁰ noble, honorable, gentlemanly

²¹ dwelling

²² Alexander the Great: Emathia was a Macedonian province

²³ Pindar, Greek poet

²⁴ music: in Athenian Greece, the chorus referred to in the next footnote would have been sung

²⁵ Euripides: a chorus from the play is said to have persuaded the Spartans not to sack Athens, in 404 B.C.

SONNET 9

1643–45

*Lady,²⁶ that in the prime of earliest youth
 Wisely hath shunned the broad way,²⁷ and the green,
 And with those few art eminently²⁸ seen
 That labor up the hill of Heav'nly truth,
 The better part with Mary, and with Ruth,²⁹
 Chosen thou hast, and they that overween³⁰
 And at thy growing virtues fret³¹ their spleen
 No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.³²
 Thy care³³ is fixed, and zealously attends³⁴
 To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light, 10
 And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure,
 Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends
 Passes to bliss, at the mid hour of night,
 Hast gained thy entrance, virgin wise and pure.*

²⁶ the lady is unknown

²⁷ "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him" (Song of Solomon 3:2)

²⁸ conspicuously

²⁹ "And Jesus . . . said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one good thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41–42); see also Ruth 1:8–18

³⁰ are arrogant, presumptuous

³¹ gnaw, wear away at

³² compassion, pity

³³ concern

³⁴ follows, waits upon

SONNET 10

1643–45

*Daughter to that good earl,³⁵ once president
 Of England's Council and her Treasury,
 Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,
 And left them both, more in himself content,
 Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
 Broke him,³⁶ as that dishonest victory
 At Chaeronéa,³⁷ fatal to liberty
 Killed with report that old man, eloquent.³⁸
 Though later born than to have known the days
 Wherein your father flourished, yet by you, IO
 Madam, methinks I see him living yet,
 So well your words his noble virtues praise
 That all both judge you to relate³⁹ them true
 And to possess them, honored Margaret.*

SONNET 11

1645?

*I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs⁴⁰
 By the known rules of ancient liberty⁴¹*

³⁵ Lady Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Marlborough

³⁶ Marlborough died four days after King Charles dissolved his third Parliament, in 1629

³⁷ Philip of Macedon's defeat of Thebes and Athens in 338 B.C.

³⁸ Chaeronéa marked the end of Greek independence; Isocrates committed suicide four days after hearing the news

³⁹ recount, tell

⁴⁰ block of wood attached to the feet of men or horses, to impede movement

⁴¹ by the writing of two tracts on divorce, one of which was entitled *Tetrachordon*: see Sonnet 12, below

*When straight a barbarous noise environs*⁴² *me*
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs.
*As when those hinds*⁴³ *that were transformed to frogs*
*Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,*⁴⁴
Which after held the sun and moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom, in their senseless mood,
*And still*⁴⁵ *revolt when truth would set them free.* 10
Licence, they mean, when they cry "liberty,"
For who loves that must first be wise and good.
But from that mark how far they rove we see
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

SONNET 12

1647?

*A book was writ, of late, called Tetrachordon,*⁴⁶
And woven close both matter, form, and style.
The subject new, it walked the town a while,
*Numb'ring good intellects—now seldom pored on.*⁴⁷
Cries the stall-reader, "Bless us! What a word on
*A title page is this!" And some in file*⁴⁸

⁴² surrounds, besieges, besets

⁴³ rustics, boors

⁴⁴ Apollo and Diana, twin children of Latona and Jupiter; peasants who refused water to Latona were turned into frogs by Jupiter

⁴⁵ yet

⁴⁶ Milton's 1645 book on divorce was shaped by the "four chief places in Scripture which treat of Marriage"

⁴⁷ read, studied

⁴⁸ line

*Stand spelling false, while⁴⁹ one might walk to Mile-
End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than Gordon,⁵⁰
Colkitto,⁵¹ or MacDonnell,⁵² or Galasp?⁵³
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,¹⁰
That would have made Quintilian⁵⁴ stare and gasp!
Thy age, like ours—O soul of Sir John Cheek!—⁵⁵
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge, and King Edward,
Greek.*

SONNET 13

1646

*Harry,⁵⁶ whose tuneful and well-measured⁵⁷ song
First taught our English music how to span⁵⁸
Words with just⁵⁹ note and accent, not to scan
With Midas ears,⁶⁰ committing⁶¹ short and long.
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for envy to look wan.*

⁴⁹ in the time that

⁵⁰ James Gordon, Lord Aboyne, Scots royalist

⁵¹ Alexander MacDonnell, known also as MacColkitto and MacGillespie, general in the royalist army of James Graham, Earl Montrose

⁵² see footnote 50, above

⁵³ see footnote 50, above

⁵⁴ Roman rhetorician

⁵⁵ first professor of Greek at Cambridge, and tutor to Prince (later King) Edward

⁵⁶ Henry Lawes, 1596–1662, master musician, who composed the music for *Comus*

⁵⁷ rhythmical

⁵⁸ measure out, extend

⁵⁹ proper, right, correct

⁶⁰ Midas having judged Pan a better flutist than Apollo, Apollo gave him donkey ears

⁶¹ perpetrating

*To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air⁶² couldst humor best our
tongue.*

*Thou honor'st verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honor thee, the priest of Phoebus choir, IO
That tun'st their happiest lines, in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella,⁶³ whom he wooed to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.*

SONNET 14

1646

*When faith and love, which parted from thee⁶⁴ never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavor,
Stayed not behind nor in the grave were trod,
But as faith pointed with her golden rod
Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.
Love led them on, and faith, who knew them best—
Thy handmaids—clad them o'er with purple beams IO
And azure wings, that up they flew, so dressed,
And spoke the truth of thee in glorious themes⁶⁵
Before the judge, who thenceforth bid thee rest
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.*

⁶² melody, tune

⁶³ musician of Florence, Dante's friend, who appears, and sings, in *Purgatorio* 2:76ff.

⁶⁴ Catherine, wife of George Thomason, London bookseller and publisher; died in 1646

⁶⁵ melodies

SONNET 15

1648

*Fairfax,*⁶⁶ *whose name in arms through Europe rings,*
Filling each mouth with envy, or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze
And rumors loud, that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
*Their hydra heads, and the false North*⁶⁷ *displays*
*Her broken league,*⁶⁸ *to imp*⁶⁹ *her serpent wings:*⁷⁰
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
For what can wars but endless wars still breed, 10
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth valor bleed
*While avarice and rapine*⁷¹ *share the land.*

⁶⁶ Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander in chief of the Parliamentary army

⁶⁷ Scotland

⁶⁸ a covenant of friendship made in 1643 between Parliament and the Scots was broken a month later by a Scottish invasion

⁶⁹ to engraft new feathers onto damaged wings

⁷⁰ the covenant with Parliament, being un-serpentlike, broke Scotland's "serpent wings," but invading England and breaking that covenant restored her native serpentlike qualities

⁷¹ plunder, pillage, robbery

SONNET 16

1652

*Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
 Not of war only, but detractions⁷² rude,⁷³
 Guided by faith and matchless fortitude
 To peace and truth thy glorious way hath ploughed,
 And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
 Hast reared God's trophies, and His work pursued,
 While Darwen⁷⁴ stream with blood of Scots embrou'd,⁷⁵
 And Dunbar⁷⁶ field resounds thy praises loud,
 And Worcester's⁷⁷ laureat wreath, yet much remains
 To conquer still. Peace hath her victories 10
 No less renowned than war, new foes arise,
 Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains!
 Help us to save free conscience from the paw
 Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.⁷⁸*

SONNET 17

1652

*Vane,⁷⁹ young in years but in sage counsel old,
 Than whom a better senator ne'er held*

⁷² slander, defamations, calumnies

⁷³ coarse

⁷⁴ battle of 1648

⁷⁵ soaked

⁷⁶ battle of 1650

⁷⁷ battle of 1651 [bisyllabic, as if written "WOOSter"]

⁷⁸ mouth, appetite

⁷⁹ Sir Henry Vane (the Younger), statesman and councilor

*The helm of Rome, when gowns,⁸⁰ not arms, repelled
 The fierce Epeirut⁸¹ and th' African⁸² bold:
 Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
 The drift⁸³ of hollow⁸⁴ states, hard to be spelled;⁸⁵
 Then to advise how war may best, upheld,
 Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
 In all her equipage;⁸⁶ besides, to know
 Both spiritual power and civil, what each means, IO
 What severs each—thou hast learned, which few
 have done.
 The bounds of either sword to thee we owe.
 Therefore, on thy firm hand religion leans
 In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.*

SONNET 18

1655

*Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered Saints,⁸⁷ whose bones
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold—
 Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
 When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones!
 Forget not! In Thy book record⁸⁸ their groans,*

⁸⁰ i.e., the togas worn by the senators of Rome

⁸¹ Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, invaded Rome in the third century B.C.

⁸² Hannibal of Carthage, in Africa, also invaded Rome in the third century B.C.

⁸³ purpose, intent

⁸⁴ pun on "Holland"

⁸⁵ gibe at the spelling and pronunciation of Dutch

⁸⁶ equipment

⁸⁷ the Vaudois, Swiss Protestants, attacked and killed by Catholic partisans in 1655

⁸⁸ [verb]

*Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold*⁸⁹
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, who rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyred blood and ashes sow IO
O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
*The triple tyrant,*⁹⁰ *that from these may grow*
A hundred-fold, who having learned Thy way
*Early, may fly*⁹¹ *the Babylonian woe.*⁹²

SONNET 19

1655

*When I consider how my life is spent,*⁹³
*Ere*⁹⁴ *half my days in this dark world and wide,*
*And that one talent*⁹⁵ *which is death to hide*
*Lodged with me, useless, though my soul more bent*⁹⁶
*To serve therewith my Maker, and present*⁹⁷
*My true account, lest He, returning,*⁹⁸ *chide*—⁹⁹
“Doth God exact day labor, light denied?”
I fondly ask, but patience, to prevent

⁸⁹ sheep pen: here, of course, metaphorical

⁹⁰ the Pope

⁹¹ flee

⁹² the papacy

⁹³ used up, exhausted

⁹⁴ before

⁹⁵ in biblical times, “talent” also meant a monetary unit: see Matthew 25:14ff, the parable of the talents

⁹⁶ devoted, bound

⁹⁷ bring/show to God [verb]

⁹⁸ as per the parable of the talents

⁹⁹ scold, rebuke

*That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
 Either man's work or His own gifts. Who best IO
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state
 Is kingly. Thousands at His bidding speed
 And post¹ o'er land and ocean, without rest.
 They also serve who only stand and wait."*

SONNET 20

1655

*Lawrence,² of virtuous father, virtuous son,
 Now that the fields are dank, and ways³ are mire,⁴
 Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
 Help waste a sullen⁵ day, what⁶ may be won
 From the hard season⁷ gaining?⁸ Time will run
 On smoother, till Favonius⁹ re-inspire
 The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
 The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.¹⁰*

¹ hurry² Edward Lawrence, member of Parliament; his father, Henry Lawrence, was president of Cromwell's Council of State³ roads, lanes, paths⁴ boggy, slushy, muddy⁵ gloomy, dark, dismal, dull⁶ a day that⁷ winter, with its ice⁸ which is gaining on us/coming closer and closer⁹ the west wind¹⁰ "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin": Matthew 6:28

*What neat¹¹ repast shall feast us, light and choice,
 Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise IO
 To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
 Warble immortal notes and Tuscan¹² air?
 He who of those delights can judge, and spare¹³
 To interpose¹⁴ them oft, is not unwise.*

SONNET 21

1655

*Cyriack!¹⁵ Whose grandsire on the Royal Bench¹⁶
 Of British Themis,¹⁷ with no mean¹⁸ applause
 Pronounced¹⁹ and in his volumes²⁰ taught our laws,
 Which others at their Bar²¹ so often wrench²²—
 Today deep thoughts resolve with me to drench²³
 In mirth, that after no repenting draws.²⁴
 Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
 And what the Swede²⁵ intends, and what the French!*

¹¹ dainty, elegant

¹² Italian

¹³ afford? spare time for? leave off, forbear?

¹⁴ introduce, or delay

¹⁵ Cyriack Skinner, 1627–1700, Milton's student, friend, helper, and more than likely his amanuensis

¹⁶ Sir Edward Coke, 1552–1634, chief justice of the King's Bench and a legendary figure in the law to this day

¹⁷ goddess of justice

¹⁸ petty, insignificant

¹⁹ as a judge handing down ("pronouncing") decisions

²⁰ notably *The Institutes of the Law of England*

²¹ i.e., other lawyers, members of the bar

²² twist, stretch, alter

²³ soak, drown

²⁴ moves

²⁵ Sweden

*To measure life, learn thou betimes²⁶ and know
 Toward solid²⁷ good what leads the nearest way. IO
 For other things, mild Heav'n a time ordains,
 And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
 That with superfluous burden loads the day
 And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains!*

SONNET 22

1655

*Cyriack, this three years day these eyes, though clear
 To outward view of blemish or of spot,
 Bereft²⁸ of light their seeing have forgot,
 Nor to their idle²⁹ orbs doth sight appear
 Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
 Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
 Against Heav'n's hand or will, nor bate³⁰ a jot³¹
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
 The conscience, friend, t'have lost them overplied³² IO
 In liberty's defense, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
 This thought might lead me through the world's vain
 mask,
 Content, though blind, had I no better guide.*

²⁶ speedily, in good time

²⁷ sober, sound, practical

²⁸ deprived

²⁹ useless, inactive; unemployed

³⁰ lessen, reduce

³¹ the smallest of small amounts

³² overworked/employed/worked/used

SONNET 23

1656–58?

*Methought I saw my late espousèd saint*³³
*Brought to me, like Alcestis,*³⁴ *from the grave,*
Who Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
*Mine as whom, washed from spot of child-bed taint,*³⁵
*Purification in th' old law*³⁶ *did save,*
And such as yet once more I trust to have
*Full sight of her in Heav'n, without restraint,*³⁷
*Came vested*³⁸ *all in white, pure as her mind.*
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight IO
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
*But O, as to embrace me she inclined,*³⁹
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

³³ probably, but not certainly, Milton's second wife, Katherine Woodcock, to whom he was married in 1656, and who died in 1658, not long after giving birth to a daughter

³⁴ Admetus, her husband, had his life extended in return for her voluntarily dying in his stead; Hercules, Jove's son, successfully wrestled with Death, and then brought her back to life

³⁵ stain, blemish

³⁶ see Leviticus 12:5

³⁷ limitation, reserve

³⁸ clothed, dressed

³⁹ bent, leaned

ON SHAKESPEARE

1630

*What needs my Shakespeare, for his honored bones,
The labor of an age in pilèd stones,
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory,⁴⁰ great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument!
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavoring⁴¹ art
Thy easy numbers⁴² flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued⁴³ book
Those Delphic⁴⁴ lines with deep⁴⁵ impression⁴⁶ took,
Then thou our fancy, of itself bereaving,⁴⁷
Dost make us marble⁴⁸ with too much conceiving,⁴⁹
And so sepulchred⁵⁰ in such pomp⁵¹ dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.*

10

⁴⁰ the Muses were the daughters of Memory

⁴¹ slow-striving

⁴² prosody

⁴³ invaluable, priceless

⁴⁴ inspired by Apollo, god of poetry, who lived in the city of Delphi

⁴⁵ (1) heavy, (2) profound: see footnote 46, below

⁴⁶ (1) mold, cast, copy (as in printing), (2) effect, influence

⁴⁷ depriving, stripping

⁴⁸ (1) stone, such as is used in tombs and gravestones, or rigid/cold/white like marble, (2) the marbled pattern or paper used in ornamenting/binding books

⁴⁹ imagining

⁵⁰ buried (metaphorical: "absorbed")

⁵¹ splendor, magnificence

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER⁵²

1631

who sickened in the time of his vacancy,⁵³ being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague.

*Here lies old Hobson.⁵⁴ Death has broke his girt⁵⁵
And here, alas, hath laid him in the dirt,
Or else the ways⁵⁶ being foul, twenty to one
He's here stuck in a slough,⁵⁷ and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter,⁵⁸ that if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down,
For he had any time this ten years full⁵⁹
Dodged⁶⁰ with him, betwixt Cambridge and The Bull.⁶¹
And surely, Death could never have prevailed
Had not his weekly course of carriage⁶² failed, IO
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,*

⁵² deliveryman

⁵³ temporary idleness

⁵⁴ also a renter of horses: the proverbial phrase "Hobson's choice" stems from his insisting that a would-be customer either accepted whatever horse was nearest to the door or else got no horse at all

⁵⁵ belt or band (leather or cloth) around a horse's body, securing saddle/pack/etc.; possibly also a pun on Hobson's own girt(h) and Death having broken *him*

⁵⁶ roads

⁵⁷ muddy ditch

⁵⁸ trickster, con man

⁵⁹ entire

⁶⁰ to dodge = to give (someone) the slip, to avoid, to baffle

⁶¹ inn in London, located on a main thoroughfare

⁶² habitual path, route

*In the kind office of a chamberlain⁶³
 Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
 Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.⁶⁴
 If any ask for him, it shall be said,
 "Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed."*

ANOTHER ON THE SAME

1631

*Here lieth one who did most truly prove
 That he could never die while he could move,
 So hung⁶⁵ his destiny never to rot⁶⁶
 While he might still jog on and keep his trot,
 Made of sphere-metal,⁶⁷ never to decay
 Until his revolution⁶⁸ was at stay.⁶⁹
 Time numbers⁷⁰ motion, yet (without a crime
 'Gainst old truth) motion numbered out his time,
 And like an engine⁷¹ moved with wheel and weight,
 His principles⁷² being ceased, he ended straight.⁷³*

10

⁶³ Death = the "kind . . . chamberlain," or inn servant

⁶⁴ a candle—but Death extinguishes a person's light

⁶⁵ remained?

⁶⁶ decompose, die

⁶⁷ the indestructible stuff of which stars and other heavenly bodies are formed

⁶⁸ just as the stars revolve, so too did Hobson, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth . . .

⁶⁹ stopped

⁷⁰ measures, assigns values to

⁷¹ any mechanical contrivance/machine

⁷² primary cause, which was movement

⁷³ at once—but also "straight" in the sense of no longer revolving

*Rest that gives all men life, gave him his death,
 And too much breathing⁷⁴ put him out of breath.
 Nor were it contradiction to affirm
 Too long vacation hastened on his term.⁷⁵
 Merely to drive the time away⁷⁶ he sickened,
 Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.⁷⁷
 “Nay,” quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,
 “If I may not carry, sure I’ll ne’er be fetched,⁷⁸
 But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
 For one carrier put down⁷⁹ to make six bearers.”⁸⁰ 20
 Ease was his chief disease, and to judge right
 He died for heaviness⁸¹ that his cart went light.
 His leisure⁸² told him that his time was come,
 And lack of load⁸³ made his life burdensome,
 That⁸⁴ even to his last breath (there be that say’t)
 As⁸⁵ he were pressed to death,⁸⁶ he cried, “More weight!”
 But had his doings lasted as they were
 He had been an immortal carrier.⁸⁷
 Obedient to the moon, he spent his date⁸⁸*

⁷⁴ one sense of the word “breathe,” as in “to take breath,” is “to rest”

⁷⁵ “term” = when college is in session, “vacation” = when college is not in session

⁷⁶ “drive the time away” as in “killing time”—but he was literally a “driver” (coachman)

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

⁷⁸ “fetch and carry” = common phraseology

⁷⁹ abolished, done away with—but also “put down” in the ground, buried

⁸⁰ i.e., six men will be required/used to carry him to his grave

⁸¹ boredom, sorrow

⁸² involving unconcern with time

⁸³ load = burden

⁸⁴ so that

⁸⁵ as if

⁸⁶ a form of torture

⁸⁷ transformed, like so many classical figures, into a star/constellation?

⁸⁸ the “date” of a document is the “time” assigned to it (by the calendar)

*In course reciprocal,⁸⁹ and had his fate
 Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas,
 Yet (strange to think) his wain⁹⁰ was his increase.
 His letters are delivered all and gone,
 Only remains this superscription.⁹¹*

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

1631

*This rich marble doth inter⁹²
 The honored wife of Winchester;⁹³
 A Viscount's daughter,⁹⁴ an Earl's heir,⁹⁵
 Besides what her virtues fair
 Added to her noble birth,
 More than she could own from earth.
 Summers three times eight save one
 She had told⁹⁶—alas, too soon,
 And so short time of breath,*

⁸⁹ i.e., as regular as the moon

⁹⁰ “wain” = wagon; “wane” = decrease

⁹¹ written on his tomb, or as his funereal inscription generally, just as letters too have their “superscriptions,” or inside addresses

⁹² hold/enclose the corpse of

⁹³ dead in childbirth, together with her child, in 1631, at age twenty-three

⁹⁴ Thomas, Viscount of Rock-Savage

⁹⁵ on her mother's side, heir of Lord Darcy, Earl of Rivers

⁹⁶ counted, reckoned up

To house⁹⁷ with darkness and with death. 10
Yet had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
Her high birth and her graces sweet
Quickly found a lover meet;⁹⁸
The virgin choir for her request
The god that sits at marriage feast.⁹⁹
He at their invoking came
But with a scarce well-lighted flame,¹ 20
And in his garland as he stood
Ye might discern a cypress bud.²
Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son,³
And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina⁴ to her throes.⁵
But whether by mischance or blame
Atropos⁶ for Lucina came,
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree: 30
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, yet not laid in earth,
And the languished mother's womb
Was not long a living tomb.⁷

⁹⁷ dwell

⁹⁸ proper, fit

⁹⁹ Hymen

¹ she had been married at sixteen; at twenty-three she died

² cypress = a funereal wood, its branches and twigs a symbol of mourning

³ born in 1629

⁴ goddess of childbirth

⁵ childbirth labor

⁶ one of the three Fates, who cut the thread of life

⁷ the child was dead before delivery

*So have I seen some tender slip*⁸
Saved with care from winter's nip,
*The pride of her carnation train,*⁹
*Plucked up by some unheedy*¹⁰ *swain*¹¹
*Who only thought to crop*¹² *the flower*
*New shot up from vernal*¹³ *shower.*
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears
*Prove to be presaging*¹⁴ *tears*
Which the sad morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.

40

Gentle lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have.
After this, thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That to give the world increase
Shortened hast thy own life's lease.
Here besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
*Wept for thee in Helicon,*¹⁵
*And some flowers and some bays*¹⁶
*For thy hearse to strew the ways,*¹⁷

50

⁸ a cutting from a plant/flower

⁹ retinue?

¹⁰ careless

¹¹ youth, rustic, lover

¹² pluck, cut

¹³ springtime, like springtime

¹⁴ predictive, warning

¹⁵ the mountain where the Muses dwelled

¹⁶ twigs/sprays used as wreaths

¹⁷ roads

*Sent thee from the banks of Came,*¹⁸
Devoted to thy virtuous name, 60
Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt'st in glory,
Next her much like to thee in story,
*That fair Syrian shepherdess*¹⁹
Who after years of barrenness
The highly-favored Joseph bore
*To him that served for her before,*²⁰
And at her next birth, much like thee,
*Through pangs fled to felicity,*²¹
Far within the bosom bright
Of blazing Majesty and Light. 70
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

L' ALLEGRO²²

1631?

Hence, loathèd melancholy,
*Of Cerberus*²³ *and blackest midnight born,*
*In Stygian*²⁴ *cave forlorn*

¹⁸ the River Cam, for which Cambridge is named

¹⁹ Rachel

²⁰ the child she bore was Benjamin

²¹ happiness (in heaven)

²² (in Italian) lively, cheerful, gay, merry

²³ monstrous dog, guardian of the entrance to Hades

²⁴ Styx = underground river across which Charon ferried the souls of the dead into Hades

*'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights
unholy!*

Find out some uncouth²⁵ cell²⁶

*Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings.*

*There under ebon shades and low-browed²⁷ rocks
As ragged as thy locks,*

In dark Cimmerian²⁸ desert ever dwell. 10

But come thou, goddess fair and free,

In Heaven yclept²⁹ Euphrosyne,³⁰

And by men heart-easing mirth,

Whom lovely Venus at a birth

With two sister Graces more

To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore—

Or whether (as some, sager, sing)

The frolic wind that breathes³¹ the spring,

Zephyr with Aurora playing,

As he met her once a-Maying, 20

There on beds of violets blue

And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,

Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,

So buxom,³² blithe,³³ and debonair.³⁴

²⁵ unknown

²⁶ small, solitary chamber

²⁷ projecting cliff edges

²⁸ according to Homer, a people who live at the outer edge of the world and thus are in perpetual darkness

²⁹ named, called

³⁰ the three Graces are Agalia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne [four syllables, the second and fourth accented]

³¹ exhales

³² jolly, lively, unresisting

³³ merry, gay

³⁴ affable, graceful

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks,³⁵ and wanton wiles,³⁶
Nods, and becks,³⁷ and wreathèd smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's³⁸ cheek
And love to live in dimple sleek, 30
Sport³⁹ that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter, holding both its sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light-fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet liberty.
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unprovèd⁴⁰ pleasures free, 40
To hear the lark begin his flight
And, singing, startle the dull⁴¹ night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled⁴² dawn doth rise,
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine,
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin, 50

³⁵ fanciful turns of speech, conceits

³⁶ sportive/cunning/amorous tricks

³⁷ nod of the head, signaling either assent or command

³⁸ goddess of youth [bisyllabic]

³⁹ frolic, diversion

⁴⁰ uncensured

⁴¹ slow, listless

⁴² speckled

⁴³ "rear" as in "rear guard": the image is military

*And to the stack⁴⁴ or the barn door
 Stoutly⁴⁵ fierce struts his dames before.⁴⁶
 Oft listening how the hounds and horn
 Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn
 From the side of some hoar⁴⁷ hill,
 Through the high wood echoing shrill.
 Sometime walking not unseen⁴⁸
 By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
 Right against the eastern gate
 Where the great⁴⁹ sun begins his state,⁵⁰
 Robed in flames and amber light,
 The clouds in thousand liveries⁵¹ dight,⁵²
 While the ploughman, near at hand,
 Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
 And the mower whets⁵³ his scythe,
 And every shepherd tells his tale
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.*

60

*Straight, mine eye hath caught new pleasures
 Whilst the landscape round it measures,⁵⁴
 Russet⁵⁵ lawns, and fallows⁵⁶ gray,*

70

⁴⁴ as in "haystack"

⁴⁵ brave, fierce, vigorous

⁴⁶ "struts his dames before" = struts in front of his lady folk

⁴⁷ light gray

⁴⁸ in plain view, openly

⁴⁹ elevated, distinguished, of high rank

⁵⁰ display of high dignity/rank/wealth

⁵¹ elaborate costumes/uniforms

⁵² equipped, ordered

⁵³ sharpens

⁵⁴ appraises

⁵⁵ reddish brown

⁵⁶ farmland ploughed and harrowed but left uncultivated for a period (usually a year)

*Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
 Mountains on whose barren breast
 The laboring clouds do often rest,
 Meadows trim with daisies pied,⁵⁷
 Shallow brooks and rivers wide.
 Towers and battlements⁵⁸ it sees,
 Bosomed high in tufted trees,
 Where perhaps some beauty⁵⁹ lies,⁶⁰
 The cynosure⁶¹ of neighboring eyes.
 Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
 From betwixt two agèd oaks,
 Where Corydon and Thyrsis,⁶² met,
 Are at their savory dinner set
 Of herbs⁶³ and other country messes,⁶⁴
 Which the neat-handed⁶⁵ Phyllis dresses.⁶⁶
 And then in haste her bow'r⁶⁷ she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind⁶⁸ the sheaves,⁶⁹
 Or if the earlier season⁷⁰ lead⁷¹*

80

⁵⁷ spotted, variegated

⁵⁸ indented parapets at the tops of walls

⁵⁹ i.e., some beautiful woman

⁶⁰ dwells

⁶¹ center of attraction

⁶² Corydon and Thyrsis = prototypical names for characters in Greek pastorals

⁶³ leafy edible plants

⁶⁴ food

⁶⁵ deft, dexterous

⁶⁶ prepares

⁶⁷ abode, cottage

⁶⁸ tie up

⁶⁹ bundles made after reaping (usually of grains)

⁷⁰ i.e., before harvest time (autumn)

⁷¹ conduct, guide, show the way

To the tanned⁷² haycock⁷³ in the mead,⁷⁴ 90
Sometimes with secure⁷⁵ delight
The upland⁷⁶ hamlets⁷⁷ will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund⁷⁸ rebecks⁷⁹ sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the checkered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail.
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab⁸⁰ the junkets⁸¹ eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said,
And he, by friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl, duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail⁸² hath threshed the corn⁸³
That ten day-laborers could not end,

⁷² browned by exposure

⁷³ conical heaps of hay, in the fields/pastures

⁷⁴ meadow

⁷⁵ free from care/doubt/worry

⁷⁶ highland

⁷⁷ small villages or groups of houses, having no church

⁷⁸ merry, joyful, light-hearted

⁷⁹ primitive three-stringed fiddle

⁸⁰ a principal fairy

⁸¹ cakes, sweetmeats, dainties

⁸² threshing tool: a wooden handle to which is tied a free-swinging clublike swingle (or "swipple")

⁸³ grain

Then lies him down (the lubber fend!)⁸⁴ 110
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And, crop-full,⁸⁵ out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin⁸⁶ rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
 Tow'red cities please us, then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds⁸⁷ of peace high triumphs⁸⁸ hold, 120
With store⁸⁹ of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen⁹⁰ oft appear
In saffron⁹¹ robe, with taper⁹² clear,
And pomp,⁹³ and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry,
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
Then to the well-trod stage anon,

⁸⁴ beneficent goblin

⁸⁵ stuffed with food

⁸⁶ morning call

⁸⁷ garments

⁸⁸ public spectacle/festivity

⁸⁹ sufficient/abundant supply

⁹⁰ god of marriage

⁹¹ orange-red/yellow

⁹² wax candle

⁹³ splendor, magnificence

*If Jonson's⁹⁴ learnèd sock be on,⁹⁵
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's⁹⁶ child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.
 And ever, against eating⁹⁷ cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,⁹⁸
 Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting⁹⁹ soul may pierce
 In notes, with many a winding bout¹
 Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
 With wanton² heed³ and giddy⁴ cunning,⁵
 The melting voice through mazes running,
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony,
 That Orpheus⁶ self may heave⁷ his head
 From golden slumber on a bed
 Of heaped Elysian⁸ flowers, and hear
 Such strains⁹ as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto,¹⁰ to have quite set free*

140

⁹⁴ Ben Jonson, 1572–1637, poet, dramatist, critic; friend/colleague of Shakespeare

⁹⁵ comedy (in which the actors wore low-heeled slippers, or “socks”)

⁹⁶ imagination

⁹⁷ corrosive

⁹⁸ the Lydian (ancient Greek) mode (musical scale) was soft, often melancholy; air = melodies

⁹⁹ gentle

¹ round

² see footnote 36 to line 27, above

³ attention, care

⁴ whirling, intoxicated

⁵ skill, craft

⁶ legendary poet/musician

⁷ raise, lift

⁸ Elysian Fields/Elysium = legendary island of the blessed

⁹ melodies

¹⁰ lord of the underworld

*His half-regained Eurydice.*¹¹

150

*These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.*¹²

IL PENSEROSO¹³

1631?

Hence, vain deluding joys,

The brood of folly without father bred!

*How little you bestead,*¹⁴

*Or fill the fixèd¹⁵ mind with all your toys!*¹⁶

Dwell in some idle brain,

And fancies fond¹⁷ with gaudy¹⁸ shapes possess

As thick and numberless

As the gay motes¹⁹ that people the sun beams,

Or likest hovering dreams,

The fickle pensioners²⁰ of Morpheus²¹ train.

10

¹¹ Orpheus had won her right to live again, provided he not look back at her as she followed him up into the world of the living. He finally did look back, at her urgent request, and she disappeared forever [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹² The reference is to Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd"; see also lines 37–40, above

¹³ (in Italian) thoughtful, serious, grave

¹⁴ help, assist

¹⁵ resolved, determined

¹⁶ whims

¹⁷ foolish, credulous, idiotic

¹⁸ showy

¹⁹ minute particle (of dust)

²⁰ hirelings, mercenaries, tools, creatures

²¹ son of Hypnos (Sleep), and god of dreams

*But hail thou, goddess, sage and holy,
 Hail divinest Melancholy,
 Whose saintly visage is too bright
 To hit²² the sense of human sight
 And, therefore, to our weaker view
 O'er laid with black, staid wisdom's hue—
 Black, but such as in esteem
 Prince Memnon's²³ sister might beseem,²⁴
 Or that starr'd Ethiop²⁵ Queen that strove
 To set her beauty's praise above 20
 The sea nymphs, and their powers offended.
 Yet thou art higher far descended,
 Thee, bright-haired Vesta,²⁶ long of yore
 To solitary Saturn bore:
 His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
 Such mixture was not held a stain),
 Oft in glimmering bow'rs and glades
 He met her, and in secret shades
 Of woody Ida's²⁷ inmost grove,
 While yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
 Come, pensive nun,²⁸ devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,²⁹*

²² reach, light upon

²³ a handsome Ethiopian prince; his sister's name is Himera—but the allusion remains obscure

²⁴ suit

²⁵ Cassiopeia, queen of Ethiopia, boasted that Andromeda, her daughter, was more beautiful than the Nereids, who responded by turning Andromeda into a constellation ["Ethiopo" = bisyllable—i.e., first syllable stressed, second syllable elided]

²⁶ virgin daughter of Saturn (Chronos) and goddess of the hearth

²⁷ in Crete? where Jove (Zeus) lived—and plotted against Saturn (Chronos)

²⁸ priestess of a pagan deity

²⁹ sober, grave, serious, reserved

*All in a robe of darkest grain,³⁰
 Flowing with majestic train,
 And sable³¹ stole³² of cypress lawn³³
 Over thy decent³⁴ shoulders drawn!
 Come, but keep thy wonted³⁵ state
 With even step and musing gait,
 And looks commercing³⁶ with the skies,
 Thy rapt³⁷ soul sitting in thine eyes. 40
 There held in holy passion still,
 Forget thyself to marble, till
 With a sad,³⁸ leaden³⁹ downward cast⁴⁰
 Thou fix them⁴¹ on the earth as fast.⁴²
 And join with thee calm peace, and quiet,
 Spare⁴³ fast,⁴⁴ that oft with gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring
 Aye⁴⁵ round about Jove's altar sing.
 And add to these retired⁴⁶ leisure,
 That in trim⁴⁷ gardens takes his pleasure. 50*

³⁰ color

³¹ sable-colored: black

³² mantlelike vestment, worn over the shoulders

³³ fine linen fabric; unlike most linens, cypress lawn is black

³⁴ comely

³⁵ usual, habitual, customary

³⁶ to communicate/hold intercourse with

³⁷ transported, carried away, enraptured

³⁸ steadfast, firm, grave, serious

³⁹ heavy

⁴⁰ glance, look

⁴¹ i.e., her eyes

⁴² with equal firmness

⁴³ lean

⁴⁴ fasting (abstinence from food)

⁴⁵ always

⁴⁶ withdrawn

⁴⁷ well-ordered

*But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
 Him⁴⁸ that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,⁴⁹
 The cherub Contemplation,⁵⁰
 And the mute silence hist⁵¹ along,
 'Less⁵² Philomel⁵³ will deign a song
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,⁵⁴
 Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
 While Cynthia⁵⁵ checks⁵⁶ her dragon yoke,⁵⁷
 Gently o'er th' accustomed oak— 60
 Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
 Most musical, most melancholy!
 Thee, chantress,⁵⁸ oft the woods among,
 I woo⁵⁹ to hear thy even song,
 And missing thee, I walk unseen
 On the dry, smooth-shaven⁶⁰ green,
 To behold the wand'ring moon
 Riding near her highest noon
 Like one that had been led astray
 Through the Heav'ns' wide pathless way, 70
 And oft, as if her head she bowed,*

⁴⁸ “the Cherub Contemplation” (line 54, below)

⁴⁹ Ezekiel's vision of a heavenly chariot: see Ezekiel 10:1–2 and 9–22

⁵⁰ [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

⁵¹ summon (with a whisper)

⁵² unless

⁵³ the nightingale

⁵⁴ mood, manner

⁵⁵ moon goddess

⁵⁶ curbs, restrains

⁵⁷ yoke = wooden device for coupling more than one horse or other dray animal to one vehicle

⁵⁸ singer (the nightingale)

⁵⁹ solicit, entreat

⁶⁰ not by lawn cutting but by sheep nibbling

*Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft on a plat⁶¹ of rising ground
 I hear the far-off curfew sound
 Over some wide-watered shore,
 Swinging slow with sullen⁶² roar.
 Or if the air will not permit,
 Some still⁶³ removèd⁶⁴ place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,⁶⁵ 80
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the bellman's⁶⁶ drowsy charm⁶⁷
 To bless the doors from nightly harm.
 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
 Be seen in some high lonely tow'r
 Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,⁶⁸
 With thrice great Hermes,⁶⁹ or unsphere
 The spirit of Plato⁷⁰ to unfold⁷¹
 What worlds, or what vast regions, hold 90
 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion⁷² in this fleshly nook,⁷³*

⁶¹ a piece/patch of ground, usually small

⁶² deep mournful tone

⁶³ quiet

⁶⁴ remote, secluded

⁶⁵ darkness

⁶⁶ the night watchman/town crier

⁶⁷ incantation

⁶⁸ the constellation Ursa Major ("Great Bear"), which never sets

⁶⁹ Hermes Trismegistus ("thrice great Hermes"), third-century Neoplatonist

⁷⁰ Plato's spirit is assumed, here, to now reside in a planetary sphere: Plato argued that great men's souls do in fact so ascend after their bodies die

⁷¹ explain

⁷² dwelling

⁷³ corner, outlying/remote region

*And of those daemons⁷⁴ that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent⁷⁵
With planet, or with element.*

*Sometime let gorgeous⁷⁶ tragedy
In sceptered⁷⁷ pall⁷⁸ come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes',⁷⁹ or Pelops' line,⁸⁰
Or the tale of Troy divine.*

100

*Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined⁸¹ stage.
But, O sad virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musaeus⁸² from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek
And made Hell grant what love did seek.*

*Or call up him⁸³ that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,⁸⁴
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,*

110

⁷⁴ a being intermediate between god and man: an inferior deity

⁷⁵ accord, agreement

⁷⁶ brilliant, showy

⁷⁷ scepter = ornamental rod/wand

⁷⁸ rich purple cloth

⁷⁹ of which Oedipus was king

⁸⁰ i.e., Agamemnon, Orestes, Electra, Iphigenia

⁸¹ high thick-soled boots worn in tragedies, as opposed to the "sock" (low slipper) worn in comedies

⁸² mythical Greek poet, said to have been taught by Orpheus

⁸³ Geoffrey Chaucer, "Squire's Tale" (in *Canterbury Tales*): the first two parts were finished, but we have only the first two lines of part three

⁸⁴ [three syllables, first and third accented]

*And of the wondrous horse of brass
 On which the Tartar king did ride.
 And if ought else, great bards beside
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung
 Of tourneys,⁸⁵ and of trophies hung,
 Of forests, and enchantments drear,
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.⁸⁶ 120
 Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,⁸⁷
 Till civil-suited⁸⁸ morn appear,
 Not tricked⁸⁹ and frowned,⁹⁰ as she was wont
 With the Attic boy⁹¹ to hunt,
 But kerchiefed in a comely cloud
 While rocking winds are piping loud,
 Or ushered with a shower still,
 When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling leaves,
 With minute drops from off the eaves. 130*

*And when the sun begins to fling
 His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
 To archèd walks of twilight groves
 And shadows brown that Sylvan⁹² loves
 Of pine, or monumental oak,
 Where the rude⁹³ ax, with heavèd⁹⁴ stroke,
 Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,*

⁸⁵ tournaments

⁸⁶ not ironic, but a reference to Spenser, one of Milton's favorite poets, who (in Book IV, canto 2, of *The Fairie Queene*) added allegory to the tale Chaucer left unfinished

⁸⁷ path

⁸⁸ sober

⁸⁹ decked, adorned

⁹⁰ pleated, curled

⁹¹ Cephalus, husband of Procris, trapped in an ultimately fatal human-deity triangle when Eos ("dawn") fell in love with him

⁹² god of forests

⁹³ harsh, violent, rugged

⁹⁴ lifted, raised

Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.⁹⁵
There in close covert,⁹⁶ by some brook,
Where no profaner⁹⁷ eye may look, 140
Hide me from day's garish⁹⁸ eye,
While the bee, with honeyed thigh,
That at her flow'ry work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring
With such consort⁹⁹ as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eye-lids laid. 150
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen genius¹ of the wood.
But let my due² feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters' pale³
And love the high embowèd⁴ roof,
With antic pillars massy⁵-proof,
And storied⁶ windows richly dight,⁷
Casting a dim religious light. 160

⁹⁵ frequently visited place

⁹⁶ shelter, covering

⁹⁷ unhallowed, polluted, alien

⁹⁸ glaringly bright

⁹⁹ company? harmony?

¹ tutelary god/spirit

² proper

³ bounds [noun]

⁴ arched, vaulted

⁵ "massily" [adverb]

⁶ ornamented with scenes ("stories") from history, legend, etc.

⁷ made, ordered, arrayed

*There let the pealing⁸ organ blow
 To the full voiced choir below,
 In service high, and anthems clear,
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
 Dissolve me into ecstasies
 And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
 And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell
 Where I may sit and rightly spell⁹
 Of every star that Heav'n doth shew,¹⁰
 And every herb that sips the dew,
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
 And I with thee will choose to live.*

170

ARCADES

1633–34?

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

1. Song

*Look, nymphs, and shepherds, look!
 What sudden blaze of majesty*

⁸ resounding, sounding forth

⁹ ponder

¹⁰ show

*Is that which we from hence descry,¹¹
Too divine to be mistook.*

*This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.*

*Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise.*

10

*Less than half we find expressed:
Envy bid conceal the rest.*

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

*Might she the wise Latona¹² be,
Or the towered Cybele,¹³
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds.¹⁴*

20

*Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparall'ed?*

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

*Gen. Stay, gentle¹⁵ swains,¹⁶ for though in this
disguise*

¹¹ catch sight of

¹² Leto, a Titan, mother of twins, Apollo and Artemis, whose father is Zeus

¹³ the Great Mother [trisyllabic, first and third syllables accented]

¹⁴ i.e., give her any further competitive advantage

¹⁵ gentlemanly, noble, high-born, aristocratic

¹⁶ shepherds, rustics

*I see bright honor sparkle through your eyes.
 Of famous Arcady¹⁷ ye are, and sprung
 Of that renownèd flood¹⁸ so often sung,
 Divine Alphéus, who by secret sluice 30
 Stole under seas, to meet his Arethuse.¹⁹
 And ye the breathing roses of the wood,
 Fair silver-buskined²⁰ nymphs as great and good,
 I know this quest of yours, and free²¹ intent,
 Was all in honor and devotion meant
 To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
 Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
 And with all helpful service will comply
 To further this night's glad solemnity,
 And lead ye where you may more near behold 40
 What shallow-searching fame hath left untold,
 Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
 Have sat to wonder at and gaze upon.*

*For know, by lot²² from Jove I am the pow'r
 Of this fair wood and live in oaken bow'r
 To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
 With ringlets quaint,²³ and wanton²⁴ windings wove.
 And all my plants I save from nightly ill
 Of noisome²⁵ winds or blasting²⁶ vapors chill,
 And from the boughs brush off the evil dew 50*

¹⁷ Arcadia: region of Greece which Virgil's *Eclogues* made the traditional locale of the pastoral ideal

¹⁸ river, stream

¹⁹ river that fell in love with the nymph Arethusa and, after Diana transformed her into a fountain, flowed under the sea to reach her

²⁰ buskin halfboot

²¹ generous, noble, honorable

²² choice of

²³ skillful, dainty, pretty, elegant

²⁴ profuse, extravagant, sportive, fanciful

²⁵ noxious, harmful

²⁶ blighting, infectious

*And heal the harms, of²⁷ thwarting²⁸ thunder blew,
 Or what the cross, dire-looking planet²⁹ smites,
 Or hurtful worm with cankered³⁰ venom bites.
 When evening gray doth rise, I fetch³¹ my round
 Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground,
 And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
 Awakes the slumb'ring leaves, or tasseled horn³²
 Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
 Number³³ my ranks,³⁴ and visit every sprout
 With puissant³⁵ words, and murmurs made to bless. 60
 But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
 Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
 To the celestial sirens' harmony,
 That sit upon the nine enfoldèd spheres
 And sing to those that hold the vital shears³⁶
 And turn the adamantine³⁷ spindle round,³⁸
 On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
 Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie
 To lull the daughters of Necessity
 And keep unsteady³⁹ Nature to her law, 70
 And the low⁴⁰ world in measured⁴¹ motion draw
 After the heav'nly tune, which none can hear*

²⁷ from

²⁸ crossing, traversing (the sky)

²⁹ Saturn

³⁰ ulcerative, decaying

³¹ go

³² hunting horn

³³ count

³⁴ rows

³⁵ potent, powerful

³⁶ vital shears = shears of life

³⁷ unbreakable

³⁸ the Fates, daughters of Necessity

³⁹ fickle, changeable

⁴⁰ (1) below, (2) of humble rank

⁴¹ rhythmical, regular

*Of human mould, with gross⁴² unpurgèd⁴³ ear.
 And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
 The peerless height of her immortal praise,
 Whose luster leads us, and for her most fit,
 If my inferior hand or voice could hit
 Inimitable sounds. Yet as we go
 Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
 I will assay,⁴⁴ her worth to celebrate. 80
 And so attend⁴⁵ ye toward her glittering state,
 Where ye may all (that are of noble stem)⁴⁶
 Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's⁴⁷ hem.*

2. Song

*O'er the smooth enamelled⁴⁸ green
 Where no print of step hath been,
 Follow me as I sing
 And touch the warbled string.
 Under the shady roof
 Of branching elm, star-proof,⁴⁹
 Follow me: 90
 I will bring you where she sits,
 Clad in splendor as befits
 Her deity.
 Such a rural queen
 All Arcadia hath not seen.*

⁴² coarse

⁴³ unpurified

⁴⁴ try, attempt

⁴⁵ direct one's attention

⁴⁶ stock

⁴⁷ clothing

⁴⁸ glossy, variegated

⁴⁹ i.e., providing shelter against the malign influence of evil stars

3. Song

*Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more
 By sandy Ladon's⁵⁰ lillied banks.
 On old Lycaeus,⁵¹ or Cyllene⁵² hoar,⁵³
 Trip no more in twilight ranks.
 Though Erymanth⁵⁴ your loss deplore
 A better soil shall give you thanks. 100
 From the stony Maenalus⁵⁵
 Bring your flocks and live with us.
 Here ye shall have greater grace
 To serve the lady of this place.
 Though Syrinx⁵⁶ your Pan's mistress were,
 Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
 Such a rural queen
 All Arcadia hath not seen.*

⁵⁰ the River Ladon runs through Arcadia and joins the Alpheus

⁵¹ Arcadian mountain, birthplace of Pan, associated with the worship of Zeus

⁵² Arcadian mountain

⁵³ gray/grayish white

⁵⁴ Arcadian mountain range, where Hercules hunted and killed a fierce wild boar

⁵⁵ Arcadian mountain, associated with Pan

⁵⁶ nymph beloved by Pan

COMUS: A MASQUE⁵⁷

1634; revised 1637

THE PERSONS

the attendant spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis

Comus, with his crew

the lady

brother 1 [older]

brother 2 [younger]

Sabrina, the nymph

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

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live ensphered
In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth and, with low-thoughtèd care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold⁵⁸ here,
Strive to keep up a frail and fev'rish being,
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants, 10
Amongst the enthronèd gods, on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key

⁵⁷ written to celebrate the Earl of Bridgewater's election as Lord President of Wales. As performed at Lord Bridgewater's Ludlow castle, 29 September 1634, the lady was played by Bridgewater's daughter and the brothers by her brothers. Thyrsis/attendant spirit was played by the composer of the masque's music (and music tutor to the family), Henry Lawes.

⁵⁸ cattle pen

That opes the palace of eternity:
 To such my errand is, and but for such
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
 With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune—besides the sway
 Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream—
 Took in, by lot twixt high and nether Jove,⁵⁹ 20
 Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
 That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
 The unadornèd bosom of the deep,
 Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
 By course⁶⁰ commits to several government
 And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
 And wield their little tridents. But this isle,
 The greatest and the best of all the main,⁶¹
 He quarters to his blue-haired deities,
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun 30
 A noble peer, of mickle⁶² trust and power,
 Has in his charge, with tempered⁶³ awe⁶⁴ to guide
 An old and haughty nation, proud in arms,
 Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
 Are coming to attend their father's state
 And new-entrusted scepter. But their way
 Lies through the perplex'd⁶⁵ paths of this drear Wood,
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger.
 And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40

⁵⁹ Pluto, lord of the underworld, as Jove was lord of that above ground

⁶⁰ custom, practice

⁶¹ i.e., the mainsea, the ocean

⁶² much, great

⁶³ temperate

⁶⁴ power

⁶⁵ intricate, entangled

But that by quick command from sov'reign Jove
 I was dispatched for their defence and guard.
 And listen why, for I will tell you now
 What never yet was heard in tale or song
 From old or modern bard, in hall or bow'r.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
 Crushed the sweet poison of mis-used wine,
 After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
 Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed
 On Circe's island fell (who knows not Circe, 50
 The daughter of the sun? whose charmèd cup
 Whoever tasted lost his upright shape
 And downward fell, into a grovelling swine).
 This nymph that gazed upon his⁶⁶ clust'ring locks
 With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
 Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
 Much like his father, but his mother more,
 Whom therefore she brought up and Comus named,
 Who ripe and frolic⁶⁷ of ⁶⁸ his full-grown age,
 Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60
 At last betakes him to this ominous⁶⁹ Wood
 And, in thick shelter of black shade embow'red,
 Excels his mother at her mighty art,
 Off'ring to every weary traveller
 His orient⁷⁰ liquor, in a crystal glass,
 To quench the drought of Phoebus, which as they taste
 (For most do taste, through fond,⁷¹ intemperate thirst),
 Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance—
 Th' express resemblance of the gods—is changed

⁶⁶ Bacchus

⁶⁷ free

⁶⁸ with

⁶⁹ menacing, inauspicious

⁷⁰ brilliant, precious

⁷¹ foolish

Into some brutish form of wolf or bear
 Or ounce,⁷² or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
 All other parts remaining as they were.
 And they, so perfect is their misery,
 Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
 But boast themselves more comely⁷³ than before
 And all their friends and native home forget,
 To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
 Therefore, when any favored of high Jove
 Chances to pass through this advent'rous glade,
 Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
 I shoot from Heav'n, to give him safe convoy—
 As now I do. But first I must put off
 These my sky robes, spun out of Iris⁷⁴ woof,
 And take the weeds⁷⁵ and likeness of a swain⁷⁶
 That to the service of this house belongs,
 Who with his soft pipe⁷⁷ and smooth-dittied song
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch
 Likeliest and nearest to the present aid
 Of this occasion.

80

90

But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps. I must be viewless, now.

*Comus enters, with a charming⁷⁸ rod in one hand, his glass
 in the other. With him a rout⁷⁹ of monsters headed⁸⁰ like*

⁷² lynx

⁷³ fair, pleasing, proper

⁷⁴ goddess of the rainbow

⁷⁵ garments

⁷⁶ male servant, attendant, rustic, shepherd

⁷⁷ reed flute

⁷⁸ magical, enchanting

⁷⁹ band, crowd, herd

⁸⁰ having the heads of

sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening. They come in, making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.

COMUS. The star that bids⁸¹ the shepherd fold,⁸²
 Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
 And the gilded car of day
 His glowing axle doth allay⁸³
 In the steep Atlantic stream,
 And the slope⁸⁴ sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal 100
 Of his chamber in the east.
 Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
 Midnight shout and revelry,
 Tipsy dance and jollity!
 Braid your locks with rosy twine,⁸⁵
 Dropping⁸⁶ odors, dropping wine.
 Rigor now is gone to bed,
 And advice, with scrupulous head.
 Strict age, and sour severity
 With their grave saws⁸⁷ in slumber lie. 110
 We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry choir
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds⁸⁸ and seas, with all their finny drove,⁸⁹

⁸¹ commands

⁸² to shut up sheep in a fold (pen, enclosure)

⁸³ (1) temper, abate, mitigate, (2) lay down

⁸⁴ sloping, slanting

⁸⁵ threads, cords

⁸⁶ sprinkling down

⁸⁷ proverbs, maxims

⁸⁸ channels, inlets

⁸⁹ herd, flock, multitude

Now to the moon in wavering morris⁹⁰ move,
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert⁹¹ fairies and the dapper⁹² elves.
 By dimpled⁹³ brook and fountain brim
 The wood nymphs, decked with daisies trim, 120
 Their merry wakes⁹⁴ and pastimes keep.
 What has night to do with sleep?
 Night has better sweets to prove:
 Venus now wakes, and wakens love.

Come, let us our rites begin!
 'Tis only daylight that makes sin—
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
 Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark-veil'd Cotytto,⁹⁵ t'whom the secret flame
 Of midnight torches burns! Mysterious dame 130
 That ne'er art called but⁹⁶ when the dragon womb
 Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom
 And makes one blot of all the air!
 Stay thy cloudy ebon⁹⁷ chair,
 Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat,⁹⁸ and befriend
 Us, thy vowèd priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
 Ere the blabbing⁹⁹ eastern scout,¹
 The nice² morn on th' Indian steep

⁹⁰ morris dance: traditional English country dance, especially associated with May Day celebrations

⁹¹ lively, skilled

⁹² lively, spruce

⁹³ rippling

⁹⁴ festivals, holidays

⁹⁵ Thracian goddess of orgies

⁹⁶ except

⁹⁷ black

⁹⁸ Hecate [trissyllabic], ghost-world goddess

⁹⁹ blabbering

¹ spy

² fussy, overly refined

From her cabined loop-hole peep,
 And to the tell-tale sun descry³
 Our conceal'd solemnity.
 Come, knit hands and beat the ground
 In a light fantastic round!

*The measure.*⁴

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds,⁵ within these brakes⁶ and trees:
 Our number may affright. Some virgin, sure
 (For so I can distinguish, by mine art),
 Benighted⁷ in these woods. Now to my charms,
 And to my wily trains.⁸ I shall ere long
 Be well-stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
 About my mother, Circe. Thus I hurl
 My dazzling spells into the spongy⁹ air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear¹⁰ illusion
 And give it false presentments,¹¹ lest the place
 And my quaint¹² habits breed astonishment
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
 Which must not be, for that's against my course.
 I under fair pretence of friendly ends
 And well-placed words of glozing¹³ courtesy,
 Baited with reasons not implausible,
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,

³ announce

⁴ i.e., they dance

⁵ shelter, hiding place

⁶ thickets

⁷ overtaken by darkness

⁸ tricks, traps, snares

⁹ elastic, impressionable

¹⁰ dim

¹¹ appearances, form

¹² crafty, clever, skillful

¹³ flattering, coaxing, specious

And hug him into snares. When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
 I shall appear some harmless villager
 Whom thrift¹⁴ keeps up about¹⁵ his country gear.
 But here she comes. I fairly¹⁶ step aside
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The lady enters.

LADY. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true: 170
 My best guide, now. Methought it was the sound
 Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
 Such as the jocund¹⁷ flute or gamesome¹⁸ pipe
 Stirs up amongst the loose, unlettered hinds,¹⁹
 When for their teeming flocks and granges full
 In wanton²⁰ dance they praise the bounteous Pan
 And thank the gods amiss.²¹ I should be loath
 To meet the rudeness²² and swill'd insolence
 Of such late wassailers.²³ Yet where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180
 In the blind maze of this tangled Wood?
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favor of these pines,
 Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side,
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
 As the kind, hospitable woods provide.

¹⁴ prosperity

¹⁵ maintains in connection with

¹⁶ (1) completely, (2) becomingly

¹⁷ merry

¹⁸ sportive

¹⁹ rustics, farmhands

²⁰ frisky, unregulated

²¹ in error

²² uncivilized/coarse behavior

²³ drinkers

They left me then, when the gray-hooded ev'n
 Like a sad votarist²⁴ in palmer's²⁵ weeds²⁶
 Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus' wain.²⁷ 190
 But where they are, and why they came not back,
 Is now the labor of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
 They had engaged their wand'ring steps too far,
 And envious darkness, ere they could return,
 Had stol'n them from me—else, O thievish night!
 Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
 In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
 That Nature hung in Heav'n, and filled their lamps
 With everlasting oil, to give due light
 To the misled and lonely traveller? 200

This is the place, as well as I may guess,
 Whence ev'n now the tumult of loud mirth
 Was rife²⁸ and perfect²⁹ in my list'ning ear.
 Yet nought but single³⁰ darkness do I find.
 What might this be? A thousand fantasies
 Begin to throng into my memory,
 Of calling shapes and beck'ning shadows dire,
 And airy tongues that syllable men's names
 On sands and shores, and desert wildernesses.

These thoughts may startle well, but not astound 210
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
 By a strong siding³¹ champion, conscience—
 O welcome, pure-eyed faith, white-handed hope,
 Thou fluttering Angel girt with golden wings!
 And thou, unblemished form of chastity,

²⁴ devotee

²⁵ pilgrim

²⁶ clothing, garments, dress

²⁷ wagon

²⁸ abundant

²⁹ complete

³⁰ unbroken, absolute

³¹ supporting

I see ye visibly, and now believe
 That He, the supreme good, t' whom all things ill
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
 Would send a glist'ring³² guardian, if need were,
 To keep my life and honor unassailed. 220

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
 I did not err: there does a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
 I cannot halloo to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make, to be heard farthest,
 I'll venture, for my new-enlivened spirits
 Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph that liv'st unseen 230
Within thy airy cell
By slow Maeander's³³ margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well,
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That liketh thy Narcissus³⁴ are?
O if thou have
Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
Tell me but where, 240
Sweet queen of parley,³⁵ daughter of the sphere,
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'n's harmonies.

³² glittering, gleaming

³³ river in western Asia Minor, flowing into the Aegean

³⁴ beloved by Echo, and punished for rejecting her

³⁵ speech

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?
 Sure, something holy lodges in that breast
 And with these raptures moves the vocal³⁶ air
 To testify his hidden residence!
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night, 250
 At every fall³⁷ smoothing the raven down³⁸
 Of darkness, till she smiled. I have oft heard
 My mother, Circe, with the Sirens three,
 Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled Naiades,³⁹
 Culling their potent⁴⁰ herbs and baleful drugs,
 Who as they sung would take the prisoned soul
 And lap it in Elysium. Scylla⁴¹ wept
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis⁴² murmured soft applause!
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense, 260
 And in sweet madness robbed it of itself.
 But such a sacred and home-felt⁴³ delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her
 And she shall be my queen.

Hail, foreign wonder!

Whom certain these rough shades did never breed—
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with Pan⁴⁴ or Silvan,⁴⁵ by blest song

³⁶ resounding

³⁷ drop in pitch

³⁸ [noun]

³⁹ water nymphs [trisyllabic, first and third syllables accented]

⁴⁰ powerful, mighty

⁴¹ multiheaded, voracious monster

⁴² deadly whirlpool, located opposite Scylla

⁴³ felt intimately/in the heart

⁴⁴ god of shepherds, flocks, and their fertility; half human, half goat

⁴⁵ god of wildernesses

Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall Wood! 270

LADY. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.

Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift⁴⁶
How to regain my severed company
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COMUS. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

LADY. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

COMUS. Could that divide you from near-ushering⁴⁷
guides?

LADY. They left me, weary, on a grassy turf. 280

COMUS. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

LADY. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.

COMUS. And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

LADY. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

COMUS. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them?

LADY. How easy my misfortune is to hit!⁴⁸

COMUS. Imports⁴⁹ their loss, beside the present need?

LADY. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

COMUS. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

LADY. As smooth as Hebe's,⁵⁰ their unrazored lips. 290

COMUS. Two such I saw, what time the labored ox
In his loose traces⁵¹ from the furrow came,

⁴⁶ expedient device

⁴⁷ ushering = escorting

⁴⁸ hit/come upon, guess

⁴⁹ to be important, to signify/matter

⁵⁰ daughter of Zeus and Hera, cupbearer of the gods [bisyllabic, first accented]

⁵¹ straps, ropes, harness

And the swinked⁵² hedger⁵³ at his supper sat.
 I saw 'em under a green mantling⁵⁴ vine
 That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots.
 Their port⁵⁵ was more than human, as they stood:
 I took it for a fairy vision
 Of some gay⁵⁶ creatures of the element
 That in the colors of the rainbow live
 And play i' th' pleated clouds. I was awe-struck,
 And as I passed I worshipped! If those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to Heav'n
 To help you find them.

300

LADY. Gentle villager,
 What readiest way would bring me to that place?

COMUS. Due west it rises, from this shrubby point.

LADY. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,
 Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guess of well-practiced feet.

310

COMUS. I know each lane, and every alley green,
 Dingle⁵⁷ or bushy dell⁵⁸ of this wide wood,
 And every bosky⁵⁹ bourn,⁶⁰ from side to side
 My daily walks and ancient neighborhood,
 And if your stray attendance⁶¹ be yet lodged⁶²

⁵² wearied, overworked

⁵³ tender/cutter of hedges

⁵⁴ covering, as by a mantle/cloak

⁵⁵ bearing, carriage

⁵⁶ airy, joyful, bright, etc.

⁵⁷ dell, hollow, cleft between hills

⁵⁸ shallow hollow or pit

⁵⁹ bushy

⁶⁰ brook

⁶¹ escort

⁶² residing

Or shroud⁶³ within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake or the low-roosted lark
 From her thatched pallet⁶⁴ rouse. If otherwise,
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low⁶⁵
 But loyal⁶⁶ cottage, where you may be safe 320
 Till further quest.

LADY. Shepherd, I take thy word
 And trust thy honest offered courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoky rafters than in tap'stry halls
 And courts of princes, where it first was named
 And yet is most pretended. In a place
 Less warranted⁶⁷ than this, or less secure,
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest providence, and square⁶⁸ my trial
 To my proportioned strength!

Shepherd, lead on.— 330

The two brothers.

BROTHER 1. Unmuffle, ye faint stars, and thou fair moon
 That wont'st⁶⁹ to love the traveller's benison,⁷⁰
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud
 And disinherit chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness and of shades!
 Or if your influence be quite dammed up
 With black, usurping mists, some gentle taper⁷¹

⁶³ sheltered

⁶⁴ straw bed

⁶⁵ poor, humble, inferior

⁶⁶ dutiful, faithful

⁶⁷ guaranteed, attested

⁶⁸ adapt, regulate

⁶⁹ are in the habit/practice of

⁷⁰ blessing

⁷¹ (1) wax wick/candle, (2) a light

Through a rush⁷² candle from the wicker hole⁷³
 Of some clay habitation visit us
 With thy long levelled rule of streaming light, 340
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady⁷⁴
 Or Tyrian⁷⁵ Cynosure.⁷⁶

BROTHER 2. Or if our eyes
 Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
 The folded⁷⁷ flocks penned in their wattled⁷⁸ cotes,⁷⁹
 Or sound of pastoral reed⁸⁰ with oaten⁸¹ stops,⁸²
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
 Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
 It would be some solace yet, some little cheering
 In this close⁸³ dungeon of innumerable boughs.
 But O, that hapless virgin, our lost sister! 350
 Where may she wander now? Whither betake her
 From the chill dew, amongst rude burrs and thistles?
 Perhaps some cold bank⁸⁴ is her bolster,⁸⁵ now,
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
 Leans her unpillowed head, fraught⁸⁶ with sad fears.
 What if in wild amazement and affright,

⁷² reed

⁷³ small door

⁷⁴ Arcadia (site of proverbial pastoral simplicity)

⁷⁵ Tyre = ancient Phoenician city

⁷⁶ Callisto, raped and impregnated by Jupiter, is turned by Juno into Ursa Minor:
 the Pole Star is in its tail

⁷⁷ shut into their folds/enclosures/pens

⁷⁸ interlaced twigs, sprigs, and the like

⁷⁹ sheds, stalls

⁸⁰ flute

⁸¹ made of oat stems/straw

⁸² that which forms/encloses a fingerhole

⁸³ narrow, enclosed, confined

⁸⁴ ridge

⁸⁵ large pillow

⁸⁶ filled

Or while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

BROTHER 1. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite⁸⁷
To cast⁸⁸ the fashion⁸⁹ of uncertain evils, 360
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown
What need a man forestall his date of grief
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion?
I do not think my sister so to seek,⁹⁰
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms⁹¹ ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not) 370
Could stir the constant⁹² mood of her calm thoughts
And put them into misbecoming⁹³ plight.⁹⁴
Virtue could see to do what virtue would,
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet, retired solitude,
Where with her best nurse, contemplation,⁹⁵
She plumes⁹⁶ her feathers and lets grow her wings
That in the various bustle of resort⁹⁷
Were all too ruffled,⁹⁸ and sometimes impaired. 380

⁸⁷ overexcited/intense

⁸⁸ reckon, resolve

⁸⁹ form, shape

⁹⁰ i.e., I do not plan to look for her in that spirit

⁹¹ embraces, hides

⁹² fixed, steadfast

⁹³ unsuitable

⁹⁴ peril, danger, risk

⁹⁵ [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

⁹⁶ preens

⁹⁷ quotidian activities

⁹⁸ confused

He that has light within his own clear breast
 May sit i' th' center⁹⁹ and enjoy bright day,
 But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
 Benighted¹ walks under the midday sun—
 Himself is his own dungeon.

BROTHER 2. 'Tis most true
 That musing meditation most affects²
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,³
 Far from the cheerful haunt⁴ of men and herds,
 And sits as safe as in a Senate house—
 For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,⁵ 390
 His few books, or his beads,⁶ or maple dish,
 Or do his gray hairs any violence?
 But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
 Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
 Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye,
 To save her blossoms and defend her fruit
 From the rash hand of bold incontinence.⁷
 You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
 Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400
 Danger will wink on opportunity
 And let a single helpless maiden pass
 Uninjured, in this wild surrounding waste.
 Of night or loneliness, it recks me not:
 I fear the dread events that dog them both,

⁹⁹ of the earth

¹ blinded, clouded

² likes, seeks

³ single-person solitary dwelling

⁴ place of frequent resort

⁵ garments

⁶ prayer beads

⁷ unchastity

Lest some ill greeting touch attempt⁸ the person⁹
Of our unownèd¹⁰ sister.

BROTHER 1. I do not, brother,
Infer,¹¹ as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy.
Yet where an equal poise¹² of hope and fear 410
Does arbitrate¹³ th' event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear
And banish, gladly, squint¹⁴ suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine. She has a hidden strength
Which you remember not.

BROTHER 2. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?

BROTHER 1. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength
Which, if Heav'n gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity. 420
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And like a quivered nymph with arrows keen
May trace¹⁵ huge forests and unharbored¹⁶ heaths,¹⁷
Infamous hills and sandy perilous wilds,
Where through the sacred rays of chastity
No savage fierce, bandit or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,

⁸ assault

⁹ body

¹⁰ unacknowledged? unaccompanied?

¹¹ conclude

¹² balance

¹³ govern

¹⁴ indirect, oblique

¹⁵ travel, tread

¹⁶ having no shelter

¹⁷ open uncultivated ground

By grotts¹⁸ and caverns shagged¹⁹ with horrid²⁰ shades,
 She may pass on with unblenched²¹ majesty— 430
 Be it not done in pride or in presumption.
 Some say no evil thing that walks by night
 In fog, or fire, by lake or moory²² fen,²³
 Blue meager hag or stubborn unlaid²⁴ ghost
 That breaks his chains at curfew time,
 No goblin or swart²⁵ fairy of the mine,²⁶
 Has hurtful power o'er true virginity.

Do you believe me yet, or shall I call
 Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
 To testify the arms²⁷ of chastity? 440
 Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
 Fair silver-shafted queen, forever chaste,
 Wherewith she tamed the brinded²⁸ lioness
 And spotted mountain pard,²⁹ but set at naught
 The frivolous bolt³⁰ of Cupid. Gods and men
 Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' th' woods.
 What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
 That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
 Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
 But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450
 And noble grace that dashed³¹ brute violence

¹⁸ grotto = cave, excavation

¹⁹ covered

²⁰ bristling, frightful

²¹ not disconcerted/deceived

²² marshy, moorlike

²³ swampland, marsh

²⁴ unexorcised

²⁵ dark, swarthy

²⁶ from underground

²⁷ weapons

²⁸ tawny-spotted/streaked

²⁹ leopard, panther

³⁰ arrow

³¹ to frustrate, destroy

With sudden adoration and blank³² awe!
 So dear to Heav'n is saintly chastity
 That when a soul is found sincerely so
 A thousand liveried³³ Angels lackey³⁴ her,
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
 And in clear dream and solemn vision
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
 Till oft converse with Heav'nly habitants
 Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape, 460
 The unpolluted temple of the mind,
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
 Till all be made immortal. But when lust
 By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
 But most by lewd and lavish³⁵ act of sin
 Lets in³⁶ defilement to the inward parts,
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,³⁷
 Embodies³⁸ and embrates³⁹ till she quite lose
 The divine property of her first being.
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp, 470
 Oft seen in charnel⁴⁰ vaults and sepulchers
 Hovering, and sitting by a new-made grave,
 As⁴¹ loath to leave the body that it loved
 And linked itself, by carnal sensual'ty,
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

³² absolute, sheer

³³ dressed in livery (distinctive uniform of servants)

³⁴ serve, wait upon

³⁵ unrestrained, profuse

³⁶ admits

³⁷ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

³⁸ incorporates

³⁹ degrade, make bestial

⁴⁰ cemetery

⁴¹ as if

BROTHER 2. How charming is divine⁴² philosophy!
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.

BROTHER 1. List, list! I hear 480
 Some faroff halloo break the silent air.

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

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

BROTHER 2. Heav'n keep my sister! Again: again, and
 near!
 Best draw⁴³ and stand upon our guard.

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

The attendant spirit [enters], habited like a shepherd.

That halloo I should know. What are you? Speak! 490
 Come not too near: you fall on iron stakes,⁴⁴ else!

SPIRIT. What voice is that, my young lord? Speak again.

BROTHER 2. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd—sure!

BROTHER 1. Thyrsis? Whose artful strains⁴⁵ have oft
 delayed
 The huddling⁴⁶ brook, to hear his madrigal,

⁴² sacred, holy, religious

⁴³ unsheathe a sword

⁴⁴ i.e., swords

⁴⁵ melodies, tunes

⁴⁶ pushing, hurrying

And sweetened every muskrose of the dale.
 How cam'st thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
 Slipped from his fold, or young kid lost his dam,⁴⁷
 Or straggl⁴⁸ weather the pent flock forsook?⁴⁹
 How could'st thou find this dark, sequestered nook? 500

SPIRIT. O my loved master's heir, and his next⁵⁰ joy,
 I came not here on such a trivial toy
 As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
 Of pilfering wolf. Not all the fleecy wealth
 That doth enrich these downs⁵¹ is worth a thought
 To this my errand, and the care⁵² it brought!
 But O, my virgin lady: where is she?
 How chance she is not in your company?

BROTHER I. To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame
 Or our neglect we lost her as we came. 510

SPIRIT. Aye me, unhappy! Then my fears are true.

BROTHER I. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee, briefly
 show.

SPIRIT. I'll tell you. 'Tis not vain or fabulous⁵³
 (Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance),
 What the sage poets, taught by th' Heav'nly Muse,
 Storied⁵⁴ of old in high immortal verse
 Of dire chimeras⁵⁵ and enchanted isles,
 And rifted⁵⁶ rocks whose entrance leads to Hell,
 For such there be. But unbelief is blind.

⁴⁷ mother

⁴⁸ irregular

⁴⁹ caused to be abandoned

⁵⁰ nearest, closest

⁵¹ open expanse of upland

⁵² concern, fear

⁵³ fanciful, incredible

⁵⁴ [verb]

⁵⁵ monsters with lion heads, goat bodies, and serpent tails

⁵⁶ split

Within the navel of this hideous Wood, 520
 Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
 Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
 Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
 And here to every thirsty wanderer
 By sly enticement gives his baneful⁵⁷ cup,
 With many murmurs⁵⁸ mixed, whose pleasing poison
 The visage quite transforms of him who drinks,
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast
 Fixes instead, unmoulding⁵⁹ reason's mintage⁶⁰
 Charactered⁶¹ in the face. This have I learned, 530
 Tending my flocks hard by, i' th' hilly crofts⁶²
 That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night
 He and his monstrous rout⁶³ are heard to howl
 Like stabled⁶⁴ wolves or tigers at their prey,
 Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecate⁶⁵
 In their obscurèd haunts of inmost⁶⁶ bow'rs.
 Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
 T' inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
 Of them that pass, unweeting,⁶⁷ by the way.
 This evening, late—by then the chewing flocks 540
 Had ta'n their supper on the savory herb—
 I sat me down to watch, upon a bank
 With ivy canopied and interwove

⁵⁷ poisonous, life-destroying

⁵⁸ whispered charms/spells

⁵⁹ undoing

⁶⁰ coinage, stamp

⁶¹ engraved, written

⁶² pastures, fields

⁶³ crowd

⁶⁴ domesticated

⁶⁵ [trissyllabic]

⁶⁶ most remote (farthest in)

⁶⁷ unwitting

With flaunting⁶⁸ honeysuckle, and began,
 Wrapped in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy
 Till Fancy had her fill, but ere a close⁶⁹
 The wonted⁷⁰ roar was up amidst the woods
 And filled the air with barbarous dissonance, 550
 At which I ceased and listened them a while,
 Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
 Gave respite to the drowsy, frightened steeds
 That draw the litter of close-curtained sleep.
 At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
 Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes
 And stole upon the air, that even silence
 Was took, ere she was ware, and wished she might
 Deny her nature and be never more
 Still to be so displaced. I was all ear, 560
 And took in strains that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of Death. But O, ere long
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honored lady, your dear sister.
 Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear,
 And O, poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
 Then down the lawns I ran, with headlong haste,
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place 570
 Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
 (For so by certain signs I knew), had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,⁷¹
 The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey,
 Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
 Supposing him some neighbor villager.

⁶⁸ waving

⁶⁹ conclusion, end

⁷⁰ familiar

⁷¹ forestall

Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
 Ye were the two she meant. With that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here.
 But further know I not.

BROTHER 2. O night and shades, 580
 How are ye joined with Hell in triple knot
 Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
 Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother?

BROTHER 1. Yes, and keep it still,
 Lean on it safely: not a period⁷²
 Shall be unsaid for me! Against the threats
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm:
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
 Surprised by unjust force—but not enthralled.⁷³ 590
 Yea, even that which mischief⁷⁴ meant most harm
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory,
 But evil on itself shall back recoil
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last
 Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
 The pillared firmament is rottenness
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
 Against th' opposing will and arm of Heav'n 600
 May never this just sword be lifted up
 But for that damned magician, let him be girt
 With all the grisly legions⁷⁵ that troop
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,⁷⁶

⁷² a sentence [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁷³ enslaved

⁷⁴ evil

⁷⁵ [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁷⁶ the underworld, Hades

Harpies⁷⁷ and hydras,⁷⁸ or all the monstrous bugs⁷⁹
 'Twixt Africa and Ind! I'll find him out
 And force him to restore his purchase⁸⁰ back,
 Or drag him by the curls and cleave his scalp
 Down to the hips!

SPIRIT. Alas, good vent'rous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise,⁸¹
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead.⁸²
 Far other arms and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
 He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints
 And crumble all thy sinews!

610

BROTHER 1. Why prithee, shepherd,
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near
 As to make this relation?⁸³

SPIRIT. Care and utmost shifts!⁸⁴
 How to secure the lady from surprisal
 Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad
 Of small regard⁸⁵ to see to, yet well skilled
 In every virtuous⁸⁶ plant and healing herb
 That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray.
 He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing,
 Which when I did, he on the tender grass
 Would sit and hearken e'en to ecstasy,
 And in requital ope his leathern scrip⁸⁷

620

⁷⁷ monsters, part woman, part bird

⁷⁸ many-headed snakes

⁷⁹ hobgoblins

⁸⁰ booty

⁸¹ prowess

⁸² profit, advantage

⁸³ "as to tell us this story/narrative"

⁸⁴ tricks, stratagems

⁸⁵ value, merit

⁸⁶ strong, powerful, magically endowed

⁸⁷ pouch

And show me simples⁸⁸ of a thousand names,
 Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
 Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
 But of divine effect, he culled⁸⁹ me out. 630
 The leaf was darkish and had prickles on it,
 But in another country, as he said,
 Bore a bright golden flow'r—but not in this soil—
 Unknown, and like esteemed—and the dull swain
 Treads on it daily with his clouted⁹⁰ shoon.
 And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly⁹¹
 Which Hermes⁹² once to wise Ulysses gave.
 He⁹³ called it Haemony, and gave it me,
 And bade me keep it as of sov'reign⁹⁴ use
 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast,⁹⁵ or damp, 640
 Or ghastly Furies apparition.⁹⁶
 I pursed it up, but little reck'ning made,
 Till now that this extremity compelled.
 But now I find it true, for by this means
 I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised—
 Entered the very lime-twigs⁹⁷ of his spells
 And yet came off.⁹⁸ If you have this about you
 (As I will give you when we go) you may
 Boldly assault the necromancer's hall—
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood 650
 And brandished blade rush on him, break his glass

⁸⁸ herbs, medicinal plants

⁸⁹ picked, chose

⁹⁰ studded

⁹¹ a fabled and fabulous plant

⁹² fabulous plant given to Odysseus by the god Hermes [bisyllabic]

⁹³ the shepherd lad

⁹⁴ supreme

⁹⁵ blasting influence, curse

⁹⁶ [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

⁹⁷ entanglements

⁹⁸ retired, came away

And shed the luscious⁹⁹ liquor on the ground.
 But seize his wand. Though he and his cursed crew
 Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
 Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
 Yet will they soon retire,¹ if he but shrink.²

BROTHER I. Thyrsis, lead on apace.³ I'll follow thee.
 And some good Angel bear a shield before us!

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

COMUS. Nay, lady. Sit. If I but wave this wand
 Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster 660
 And you a statue—or as Daphne was,
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

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

COMUS. Why are you vexed, lady? Why do you frown?
 Here dwell no frowns, nor anger. From these gates
 Sorrow flies far. See here be all the pleasures
 That Fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
 When the fresh blood grows lively and returns 670
 Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
 And first behold this cordial⁴ julip,⁵ here,
 That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,⁶

⁹⁹ sweet, pleasing

¹ withdraw, vanish

² retreat, recoil, slip away

³ quickly, at once

⁴ stimulating, invigorating

⁵ sweet drink

⁶ boundaries, limits

With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
 Not that nepenthes⁷ which the wife of Thon⁸
 In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
 Is of such power to stir up joy as this—
 To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
 Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
 And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent 680
 For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
 But you invert the cov'nants⁹ of her trust,
 And harshly deal like an ill borrower
 With that which you received on other terms,
 Scorning the unexempt¹⁰ condition¹¹
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
 That¹² have been tired all day without repast,
 And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
 This will restore all soon.¹³

LADY. 'Twill not, false traitor! 690
 'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
 That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
 Was this the "cottage," and the "safe abode"
 Thou toldst me of? What grim aspects¹⁴ are these,
 These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
 Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
 Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
 With visored¹⁵ falsehood and base forgeries
 And wouldst thou seek again to trap me, here,

⁷ grief-banishing drug

⁸ wife of Thon = Polydamna

⁹ terms, promises

¹⁰ not privileged, not freed from

¹¹ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹² those who

¹³ quickly

¹⁴ looks, faces

¹⁵ masked, disguised

With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute? 700
 Were it a draught for Juno, when she banquets,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer! None
 But such as are good men can give good things,
 And that which is not good is not delicious
 To a well-governed and wise appetite.

COMUS. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
 To those budge¹⁶ doctors of the stoic fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the cynic tub,¹⁷
 Praising the lean and sallow abstinence.
 Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth 710
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
 Thronging the seas with spawn¹⁸ innumerable,
 But all to please and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk
 To deck her sons. And that no corner might
 Be vacant of her plenty in her own loins
 She hatched¹⁹ th' all-worshipped ore and precious gems
 To store²⁰ her children with. If all the world 720
 Should in a pet²¹ of temperance feed on pulse,²²
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,²³
 Th' all-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
 Not half His riches known, and yet despised,
 And we would serve Him as a grudging master,
 As a penurious niggard²⁴ of His wealth,

¹⁶ pompous, formal, solemn

¹⁷ Diogenes, Cynic philosopher who lived in a tub

¹⁸ offspring

¹⁹ stored

²⁰ furnish

²¹ sulk

²² peas, beans, lentils, etc.

²³ coarse wool

²⁴ miser

And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
 Who²⁵ would be quite surcharged²⁶ with her own weight
 And strangled with her waste fertility,
 Th' earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with
 plumes.²⁷ 730
 The herds would over-multitude their lords,
 The sea o'er-fraught²⁸ would swell, and th' unsought
 diamonds
 Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
 And so be-stud with stars, that they below
 Would grow inured to light, and come at last
 To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
 List, lady. Be not coy, and be not cozened²⁹
 With that same vaunted³⁰ name, virginity.
 Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
 But must be current,³¹ and the good thereof 740
 Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
 Unsavory in th' enjoyment of itself.
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk, with languished head.
 Beauty is Nature's brag,³² and must be shown
 In courts, at feasts, on high solemnities
 Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
 It is for homely³³ features to keep home:
 They had their name thence. Coarse complexions³⁴

²⁵ Nature

²⁶ overburdened

²⁷ feathers [the line, having ten syllables, *can* be scanned as iambic pentameter—
but not easily]

²⁸ overfreighted, overloaded

²⁹ duped

³⁰ boasted of, praised

³¹ in general use, passing/flowing from hand to hand

³² show

³³ plain, simple, unpolished

³⁴ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

And cheeks of sorry³⁵ grain³⁶ will serve to ply³⁷ 750
 The sampler³⁸ or to tease³⁹ the housewife's wool.
 What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that?
 Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
 There was another meaning in those gifts!
 Think what, and be advised.⁴⁰ You are but young yet.

LADY. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
 In this unhallowed air, but⁴¹ that this juggler⁴²
 Would think to charm my judgment as⁴³ mine eyes,
 Obtruding⁴⁴ false rules pranked⁴⁵ in reason's garb!
 I hate when vice can bolt⁴⁶ her arguments 760
 And virtue has no tongue to check her⁴⁷ pride.

Impostor! Do not charge⁴⁸ most innocent Nature,
 As if she would⁴⁹ her children should be riotous
 With her abundance! She, good cateress,⁵⁰
 Means her provision only to the good
 That live according to her sober laws
 And holy dictate of spare temperance.
 If every just man that now pines with want
 Had but a moderate and beseeming⁵¹ share

³⁵ vile, wretched, worthless

³⁶ color

³⁷ work busily at

³⁸ embroidery

³⁹ to separate, to card

⁴⁰ judicious

⁴¹ except

⁴² magician, trickster, buffoon

⁴³ as he has

⁴⁴ thrusting forward, intruding

⁴⁵ decked, dressed

⁴⁶ sift, examine

⁴⁷ vice's

⁴⁸ blame, burden

⁴⁹ wished

⁵⁰ provider

⁵¹ suitable, seemly

Of that which lewdly-pampered luxury 770
 Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
 Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
 In unsuperfluous,⁵² ev'n proportion,⁵³
 And she no whit encumbered with her store.
 And then the giver would be better thanked,
 His praise due paid—for winish gluttony
 N'er looks to Heav'n, amidst his gorgeous⁵⁴ feast,
 But with besotted base ingratitude
 Crams, and blasphemes his feeder.

Shall I go on?

Or have I said enough? To him that dares 780
 Arm his profuse tongue with contemptuous words
 Against the sun-clad power of chastity
 Fain would I something say—yet to what end?
 Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
 The sublime notion and high mystery⁵⁵
 That must be uttered, to unfold the sage
 And serious doctrine of virginity.
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
 More happiness than this thy present lot.
 Enjoy your dear wit and gay rhetoric 790
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence!⁵⁶
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
 Yet should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence
 That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
 And the brute earth would lend her nerves,⁵⁷ and shake

⁵² [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁵³ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁵⁴ showy, dazzling

⁵⁵ holy secret

⁵⁶ the practice of swordplay

⁵⁷ sinews

Till all thy magic structures reared so high
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head!

COMUS. She fables not. I feel that I do fear 800
Her words, set off by some superior power.
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus⁵⁸
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble
And try⁵⁹ her yet more strongly.

Come, no more.

This is mere moral babble and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.⁶⁰
I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees⁶¹
And settlings of a melancholy blood. 810
But this will cure all straight!⁶² One sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The brothers rush in, with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground. His rout makes sign of resistance, but all are driven in. The attendant spirit comes in.

SPIRIT. What? Have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook, ye should have snatched his wand
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering⁶³ power,
We cannot free the lady that sits here,
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay,⁶⁴ be not disturbed. Now I bethink me: 820

⁵⁸ i.e., Jove consigns the rebels against him to "the chains" of Hell

⁵⁹ test, afflict

⁶⁰ i.e., creation

⁶¹ sediments, dregs

⁶² at once

⁶³ disjoining, parting, separating

⁶⁴ stop

Some other means I have which may be used,
 Which once of Melibaeus⁶⁵ old I learned—
 The soothest⁶⁶ shepherd that e'er piped⁶⁷ on plains.

There is a gentle nymph, not far from hence,
 That with moist curb⁶⁸ sways⁶⁹ the smooth Severn⁷⁰
 stream.

Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure.

Whilom⁷¹ she was the daughter of Lochrine,⁷²

That had the scepter from his father Brute.⁷³

She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit

Of her enraged stepdam, Gwendolen,

830

Commended her fair innocence to the flood⁷⁴

That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.

The water nymphs that in the bottom⁷⁵ played

Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,

Bearing her straight to agèd Nereus⁷⁶ hall,

Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank⁷⁷ head

And gave her to his daughters to embathe

In nectared lavers,⁷⁸ strewn with asphodil,

And through the porch⁷⁹ and inlet of each sense

Dropped in ambrosial oils, till she revived

840

And underwent a quick immortal change,

⁶⁵ character in Spenser's *Fairie Queene*

⁶⁶ truest, most genuine

⁶⁷ played his pipe/flute

⁶⁸ check, restraint

⁶⁹ governs

⁷⁰ river flowing out of Wales, ending in Bristol Channel

⁷¹ once upon a time

⁷² son of Brutus, legendary founder of Britain

⁷³ Brutus

⁷⁴ river

⁷⁵ depths

⁷⁶ sea god, father of the Nereids

⁷⁷ limp, loose

⁷⁸ spiritual cleansers

⁷⁹ vestibule

Made goddess of the river. Still she retains
 Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
 Helping all urchin⁸⁰ blasts⁸¹ and ill luck signs
 That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
 Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals.
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carol⁸² her goodness, loud in rustic lays,⁸³
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream, 850
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasping⁸⁴ charm and thaw the numbing spell,
 If she be right invoked in warbled song,
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
 To aid a virgin such as was herself,
 In hard besetting⁸⁵ need. This will I try
 And add the power of some adjuring⁸⁶ verse.

SONG

*Sabrina, fair,
 Listen where thou are sitting 860
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lillies knitting
 The loose train of the amber-dropping hair.
 Listen for dear honor's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.*

⁸⁰ elf, goblin

⁸¹ breaths of malignant air, curses, infections

⁸² sing joyously

⁸³ songs

⁸⁴ encircling

⁸⁵ surrounding, hemming in

⁸⁶ exorcising

Listen and appear to us
 In name of great Oceanus⁸⁷—
 By th' earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
 And Tethys' grave, majestic pace— 870
 By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
 And the Carpathian wizard's hook—
 By scaly Triton's winding⁸⁸ shell,
 And old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell—
 By Leucothea's⁸⁹ lovely hands,
 And her son that rules the strands⁹⁰—
 By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
 And the songs of Sirens' sweet—
 By dead Parthenope's⁹¹ dear tomb,
 And fair Ligéa's golden comb, 880
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
 Sleeking her soft, alluring locks—
 By all the nymphs that nightly dance
 Upon thy streams, with wily⁹² glance!
 Rise, rise, and heave⁹³ thy rosy head
 From thy coral-paven bed,
 And bridle⁹⁴ in thy headlong wave
 Till thou our summons answered have.
 Listen and save.

⁸⁷ [four syllables, second and fourth accented] Oceanus' wife, mother of rivers, is Tethys; Neptune = Poseidon, god of the sea and of earthquakes; Nereus is father of the Nereids, one of whom is Thetis; the "Carpathian wizard" is Proteus, a shape-shifter; Triton is son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, human from the waist up, fish below; Glaucus is a fisherman who became immortal and a sea god; Leucothea is a Greek sea goddess; Parthenope is a Siren, as is Ligéa.

⁸⁸ blown, sounded

⁸⁹ [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁹⁰ beaches, shores

⁹¹ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁹² sly, artful

⁹³ raise, lift

⁹⁴ toss one's head

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

By the rushy-fringed bank, 890
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate and the azure sheen
Of turquoise blue, and emerald green
That in the channel strays,
Whilst from off the waters fleet⁹⁵
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslips' velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.

Gentle swain, at thy request 900
 I am here.

SPIRIT. Goddess dear,
 We implore thy powerful hand
 To undo the charmèd band⁹⁶
 Of true virgin, here distressed⁹⁷
 Through the force and through the wile
 Of unblessed enchanter vile.

SABRINA. Shepherd, it is my office⁹⁸ best
 To help ensnarèd chastity.
 Brightest lady, look on me! 910
 Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
 Drops that from my fountain pure
 I have kept, of precious cure.⁹⁹
 Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip!
 Next, this marble-venomed seat

⁹⁵ [adjective]

⁹⁶ shackle, chain, fetter, etc.

⁹⁷ constrained, pressed tightly

⁹⁸ duty

⁹⁹ healing effect

Smear'd with gums¹ of glutinous² heat
 I touch with chaste palms, moist and cold.
 Now the spell hath lost his hold—
 And I must haste, ere morning hour,
 To wait³ in Amphitrite's⁴ bow'r.

920

Sabrina descends, and the lady rises out of her seat.

SPIRIT. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
 Sprung of old Anchises'⁵ line,
 May thy brimmèd waves, for this,
 Their full tribute never miss
 From a thousand petty⁶ rills⁷
 That tumble down the snowy hills.
 Summer drought or singèd air
 Never scorch thy tresses fair,
 Nor wet October's torrent flood
 Thy molten crystal fill⁸ with mud.
 May thy billows roll ashore
 The beryl⁹ and the golden ore.
 May thy lofty head be crowned
 With many a tow'r and terrace round,
 And here and there thy banks upon
 With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

930

Come lady, while Heav'n lends us grace
 Let us fly this cursèd place,
 Lest the sorcerer us entice
 With some other new device.

940

¹ viscous resinlike secretions

² sticky

³ serve

⁴ Neptune's wife [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁵ Trojan prince, father of Aeneas

⁶ small, minor

⁷ small streams, brooks

⁸ headwaters

⁹ transparent pale green precious stone

Not a taste or needless sound
 Till we come to holier ground.
 I shall be your faithful guide
 Through this gloomy covert¹⁰ wide,
 And not many furlongs thence
 Is your father's residence,
 Where this night are met in state
 Many a friend to gratulate
 His wishèd presence, and beside
 All the swains that there abide,
 With jigs and rural dance resort.¹¹
 We shall catch them at their sport,
 And our sudden coming there
 Will double all their mirth and cheer.
 Come, let us haste! The stars grow high—
 But night sits monarch yet in the mid-sky.

950

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

SONG

SPIRIT. *Back, shepherds, back! Enough, your play,
 Till next sunshine holiday.
 Here be, without duck¹² or nod,
 Other trippings to be trod
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise¹³
 As Mercury did first devise¹⁴*

960

¹⁰ thicket

¹¹ come, congregate

¹² quick, abrupt lowering of head or body

¹³ customs, behavior

¹⁴ prepare, invent

*With the mincing¹⁵ Dryades,¹⁶
On the lawns and on the leas.¹⁷*

This second song presents them to their father and mother:

[SONG 2]

*Noble lord, and lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heav'n hath timely tried their youth, 970
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here, through hard assays,¹⁸
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.*

The dances ended, the spirit epiloguizes:

SPIRIT. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air 980
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd¹⁹ shades and bow'rs
Revels the spruce²⁰ and jocund spring.

¹⁵ affectedly elegant or dainty

¹⁶ tree nymphs [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

¹⁷ open ground, grassy pasture

¹⁸ tests, trials

¹⁹ rippling

²⁰ trim, dapper, neat

The Graces, and the rosy-bosomed Hours,
 Thither all their bounties bring,
 That²¹ there eternal summer dwells,
 And west winds, with musky wing,
 About the cedarn alleys²² fling 990
 Nard,²³ and cassia's balmy smells.
 Iris²⁴ there with humid bow
 Waters the odorous banks that blow²⁵
 Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purflèd²⁶ scarf can shew,
 And drenches with Elysian dew
 (List, mortals, if your ears be true)
 Beds of hyacinth and roses,
 Where young Adonis²⁷ oft reposes,
 Waxing²⁸ well of his deep wound 1000
 In slumber soft, and on the ground
 Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.²⁹
 But far above, in spangled sheen,
 Celestial Cupid, her fair son advanced,³⁰
 Holds his dear Psyche,³¹ sweet³² entranced
 After her wand'ring labors long,
 Till free consent the gods among

²¹ so that

²² walkways, passages

²³ aromatic balsam

²⁴ goddess of the rainbow

²⁵ cause to blossom/bloom

²⁶ embroidered, trimmed

²⁷ wonderfully handsome youth: one day while he was hunting, he was seen by Aphrodite/Venus, who fell in love with him—and when he was killed by a wild boar, from his blood grew the rose, and from her tears, the anemone

²⁸ growing

²⁹ Aphrodite/Venus

³⁰ raised

³¹ Cupid falls in love with Psyche, a mortal; she disobeys him and is deserted by him; thereafter she goes through trial after trial and, eventually, reclaims and is married to him [bisyllabic; the first letter is silent]

³² [adverb]

Make her his eternal bride
 And from her fair, unspotted side
 Two blissful twins are to be born,
 Youth and Joy. So Jove hath sworn.

1010

But now my task is smoothly³³ done.
 I can fly or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,
 Where the bowed welkin³⁴ slow doth bend,
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners³⁵ of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,
 Love virtue: she alone is free.
 She can teach ye how to climb
 Higher than the sphery chime—³⁶
 Or, if virtue feeble³⁷ were,
 Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

1020

ON TIME³⁸

1633–37?

*Fly, envious time, till thou run out thy race!
 Call on the lazy leaden-stepping³⁹ hours,
 Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's⁴⁰ pace,
 And glut thyself with what thy womb⁴¹ devours—*

³³ pleasantly

³⁴ sky

³⁵ ends

³⁶ the music of the spheres

³⁷ weak, infirm

³⁸ the poem was intended to be “set on a clock case”

³⁹ see footnote 40 immediately below

⁴⁰ the leaden weight that animates the clock's works

⁴¹ (1) womb, (2) stomach, belly

*Which is no more than what is false and vain
 And merely mortal dross.⁴²
 So little is our loss,
 So little is thy gain.
 For when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
 And last of all thy greedy self consumed, 10
 Then long eternity shall greet our bliss
 With an individual kiss.⁴³
 And joy shall overtake us as a flood
 When everything that is sincerely good
 And perfectly divine
 With truth, and peace, and love shall ever shine
 About the supreme throne
 Of Him t' whose happy-making sight alone,
 When once our Heav'nly-guided soul shall climb,
 Then all this earthy grossness quit,⁴⁴ 20
 Attired with stars we shall forever sit,
 Triumphing over death, and chance, and thee, O
 time!*

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION

1633–37

*Ye flaming powers⁴⁵ and wingèd warriors bright
 That erst with music and triumphant song
 First heard by happy watchful shepherd's ear,
 So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along,
 Through the soft silence of the list'ning night,*

⁴² scum, rubbish, dregs

⁴³ indivisible?

⁴⁴ left behind [adjective]

⁴⁵ sixth order in the nine ranks of the celestial hierarchy

*Now mourn, and if sad share with us to bear
 Your fiery essence can distill no tear;
 Burn in your sighs and borrow
 Seas wept from our deep sorrow.
 He who with all Heav'n's heraldry⁴⁶ whilere⁴⁷ 10
 Entered the world, now bleeds to give us ease.
 Alas, how soon our sin
 Sore⁴⁸ doth begin
 His infancy to cease!⁴⁹
 O more exceeding love or law more just?
 Just law, indeed—but more exceeding love!
 For we, by rightful doom⁵⁰ remediless,
 Were lost in death till He that dwelt above,
 High-throned in secret bliss, for us frail dust
 Emptied His glory, ev'n to nakedness, 20
 And that great cov'nant⁵¹ which we still transgress
 Entirely satisfied,
 And the full wrath beside
 Of vengeful justice bore for our excess,
 And seals obedience, first, with wounding smart
 This day, but O, ere long
 Huge pangs, and strong,
 Will pierce more near His heart.*

⁴⁶ heraldic pomp (“herald” = officer who makes state pronouncements and delivers state messages)

⁴⁷ erewhile, once

⁴⁸ [adjective, modifying “sin”]

⁴⁹ spelled in Milton’s manuscript “sease,” this word could be either “seize” or “cease”

⁵⁰ judgment, sentence

⁵¹ “And I [God] will establish my covenant between me and thee [Abraham] and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:7)

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

1637

*Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'n's joy,
Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, voice and verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce
And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure content⁵²
Aye⁵³ sung before the sapphire-colored throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row 10
Their loud up-lifted Angel trumpets blow
And the Cherubic host, in thousand choirs,
Touch their golden harps of immortal wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly,
That we on earth with undiscording⁵⁴ voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise,
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against Nature's chime and with harsh din 20
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason,⁵⁵ whilst they stood
In first⁵⁶ obedience and their state of good.
O may we soon again renew that song*

⁵² [adjective]

⁵³ always

⁵⁴ not discordant

⁵⁵ concord, harmony [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁵⁶ primal, original

*And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere-long
To His celestial consort⁵⁷ us unite
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light.*

LYCIDAS⁵⁸

1637

In this monody⁵⁹ the author bewails a learned friend,⁶⁰ unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester [in W. England] on the Irish seas, 1637. And by occasion⁶¹ foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

*Yet once more, O ye laurels,⁶² and once more,
Ye myrtles⁶³ brown, with ivy⁶⁴ never sear,⁶⁵
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude⁶⁶
And with forced⁶⁷ fingers rude⁶⁸*

⁵⁷ (1) fellowship, (2) company of musicians

⁵⁸ a generic shepherd's name—announcing, as it were, that the genre of the poem is the classic pastoral

⁵⁹ lyric ode sung by a single voice; in the pastoral tradition, an interior monologue or soliloquy

⁶⁰ Edward King, a fellow student at Cambridge

⁶¹ by occasion = the poem, written because of this fatal occasion . . .

⁶² (1) symbolic of poetry, (2) symbolic of fame: the laurel, an evergreen, is sacred to Apollo, god of poetry

⁶³ sacred to Venus

⁶⁴ sacred to Bacchus, the god of wine

⁶⁵ dry, withered

⁶⁶ unripe

⁶⁷ constrained

⁶⁸ inexperienced, unskilled

*Shatter your leaves before the mellowing⁶⁹ year.
Bitter constraint,⁷⁰ and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due,
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.*

*Who would not sing for Lycidas? He well knew 10
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his wat'ry bier
Unwept, and welter⁷¹ to the parching⁷² wind,
Without the meed⁷³ of some melodious tear.*

*Begin then, sisters of the sacred well,⁷⁴
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat⁷⁵ loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy⁷⁶ excuse!
So may⁷⁷ some gentle⁷⁸ muse
With lucky⁷⁹ words favor⁸⁰ my destined⁸¹ urn⁸² 20
And, as he passes, turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.⁸³*

*For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.⁸⁴*

⁶⁹ ripening

⁷⁰ obligation, necessity

⁷¹ roll to and fro

⁷² withering, shriveling

⁷³ recompense, reward, honor

⁷⁴ the Muses

⁷⁵ a bit

⁷⁶ disdainful

⁷⁷ so may = in the future, when Milton dies, he too may be thus mourned by "some gentle muse"

⁷⁸ noble, excellent, honorable

⁷⁹ fortunate, successful

⁸⁰ approve of, regard with kindness

⁸¹ ordained, predetermined, fated

⁸² holding funereal ashes

⁸³ black burial sheet

⁸⁴ brook, stream

*Together both, ere the high lawns⁸⁵ appeared
 Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
 We drove⁸⁶ afield, and both together heard
 What time⁸⁷ the gray-fly⁸⁸ winds⁸⁹ her sultry⁹⁰ horn,
 Batt'ning⁹¹ our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
 Oft till the star⁹² that rose at ev'ning bright
 Toward Heav'n's descent had sloped his westering
 wheel.⁹³* 30

*Meanwhile, the rural ditties were not mute,
 Tempered⁹⁴ to th' oaten⁹⁵ flute.
 Rough satyrs⁹⁶ danced, and fauns with clov'n heel
 From the glad sound would not be absent long.
 And old Damoetas⁹⁷ loved to hear our song.
 But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
 Now thou art gone and never must return!
 Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
 With wild thyme and the gadding⁹⁸ vine o'er-grown, 40
 And all their echoes mourn.
 The willows, and the hazel copses green,
 Shall now no more be seen
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.⁹⁹*

⁸⁵ meadows, glades

⁸⁶ their flocks

⁸⁷ what time = when, at the time when

⁸⁸ a brownish beetle known as a cockchafer or dorfly/dorhawk

⁸⁹ blows (strictly, "hums" or "buzzes")

⁹⁰ summertime/hot-weather heat

⁹¹ fattening? feeding? watering?

⁹² Hesperus (Venus)

⁹³ "wheel" because heavenly objects were thought to be located in "spheres"

⁹⁴ tuned, in harmony with

⁹⁵ oat stems/straws

⁹⁶ woodland gods/demons, part human, part beast

⁹⁷ a tutor at Cambridge?

⁹⁸ straggling

⁹⁹ poems, songs

*As killing as the canker¹ to the rose,
 Or taint-worm² to the weanling³ herds that graze,
 Or frost to flow'rs, that their gay wardrobe wear,
 When first the white thorn blows—⁴
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.*

*Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep 50
 Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
 For neither were ye playing on the steep,⁵
 Where your old bards,⁶ the famous Druids lie,
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona⁷ high,
 Nor yet where Deva⁸ spreads her wizard⁹ stream:
 Aye me, I fondly dream!
 Had ye been there, for what could that have done?
 What could the muse¹⁰ herself, that¹¹ Orpheus bore,¹²
 The muse herself, for her enchanting¹³ son
 Whom universal¹⁴ nature did lament, 60
 When by the rout¹⁵ that made the hideous roar
 His goary visage¹⁶ down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.*

¹ plant-disease of an ulcerous sort

² worm or crawling larva, an intestinal parasite thought to infect sheep, cattle, etc.

³ recently weaned

⁴ blossoms

⁵ slopes, hills, mountains, cliffs, etc.

⁶ Celtic minstrel-poets

⁷ the island of Anglesey, in the Irish Sea

⁸ the River Dee

⁹ magic

¹⁰ Calliope [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹¹ i.e., she who bore Orpheus

¹² was mother to

¹³ (1) performing magic, (2) entrancing, charming

¹⁴ all of

¹⁵ mob, throng, crowd, rabble, etc., all female, though it is unclear whether they were (1) Thracian women jealous of Eurydice or (2) Maenads angry that Orpheus did not properly honor their god, Dionysus

¹⁶ his head had been cut off; in some versions of the story, the severed head continued to sing

*Alas! What boots*¹⁷ *it, with incessant care*
*To tend the homely*¹⁸ *slighted shepherd's trade,*
And strictly meditate the thankless muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
*To sport*¹⁹ *with Amaryllis*²⁰ *in the shade,*
*Or with the tangles of Neaera's*²¹ *hair?*
*Fame is the spur that the clear*²² *spirit doth raise*²³ 70
(That last infirmity of noble mind!)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days.
*But the fair guerdon,*²⁴ *when we hope to find,*²⁵
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
*Comes the blind Fury*²⁶ *with th' abhorrèd shears*
And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise,
*Phoebus*²⁷ *replied, and touched my trembling ears.*
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
*Nor in the glistering*²⁸ *foil*²⁹
*Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumor*³⁰ *lies,* 80
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove,
*As he pronounces lastly*³¹ *on each deed.*
*Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.*³²

¹⁷ profits, avails

¹⁸ simple, plain

¹⁹ frolic

²⁰ generic shepherdess name

²¹ see footnote 20, immediately above

²² positive, determined, unobstructed, pure

²³ stimulate, incite

²⁴ reward

²⁵ find it

²⁶ Atropus ("irresistible")

²⁷ Phoebus Apollo, god of poetry

²⁸ glittering

²⁹ metal hammered into very thin sheets and used to set off some gem or glittering stone

³⁰ talk

³¹ ultimately

³² recompense, reward

*O fountain Arethuse,³³ and thou honored flood,³⁴
 Smooth-sliding Mincius,³⁵ crowned with vocal reeds,
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
 But now my oat³⁶ proceeds
 And listens to the herald of the sea³⁷
 That came in Neptune's plea. 90
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon³⁸ winds,
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
 And questioned every gust of rugged³⁹ wings⁴⁰
 That blows from off each beakèd⁴¹ promontory.
 They knew not of his story,
 And sage Hippotades⁴² their answer brings;
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope⁴³ with all her sisters played.
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100
 Built in⁴⁴ th' eclipse⁴⁵ and rigged with curses dark,⁴⁶
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.*

³³ the nymph Arethusa fled from a sea god, Alpheus; Diana turned her into a fountain, but he—a river—flowed under the sea and was thus united with her

³⁴ river, stream

³⁵ river running through Mantua, home of Virgil

³⁶ pastoral song

³⁷ Triton, a merman, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite, a Nereid

³⁸ cruel, terrible, wicked

³⁹ rough, stormy, strong

⁴⁰ winds represented as great birds

⁴¹ pointed, hooked

⁴² god of the winds [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁴³ water nymph [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

⁴⁴ during, subject to

⁴⁵ "Eclipses are misfortunes..." *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 337

⁴⁶ secret, foul, evil

*Next Camus,⁴⁷ reverend sire, went footing slow,
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet⁴⁸ sedge,⁴⁹
 Inwrought⁵⁰ with figures dim, and on the edge
 Like to that sanguine flower⁵¹ inscribed with woe.
 "Ah! Who hath reft⁵² (quoth he) my dearest pledge?"⁵³
 Last came, and last did go,
 The pilot of the Galilean lake.⁵⁴
 Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain, 110
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).⁵⁵
 He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:
 "How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Anow⁵⁶ of such as for their belly's sake
 Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
 Of other care they little reck'ning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast
 And shove away the worthy bidden⁵⁷ guest.
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learned ought else the least 120
 That to the faithfull herdsman's art belongs!
 What recks it them? What need they? They are⁵⁸ sped,⁵⁹*

⁴⁷ River Cam, which flows through Cambridge (and from which, of course, the town takes its name)

⁴⁸ cap

⁴⁹ made of reedlike plants

⁵⁰ worked

⁵¹ the hyacinth

⁵² robbed

⁵³ child

⁵⁴ St. Peter, wearing a bishop's miter (headdress) and carrying the keys to Heaven's gates

⁵⁵ violently

⁵⁶ enough

⁵⁷ invited

⁵⁸ the prosody is helped if "they are" is contracted: did Milton perhaps intend it to be sounded as spoken?

⁵⁹ successful, prosperous

*And when they list,⁶⁰ their lean and flashy⁶¹ songs
 Grate on their scrannel⁶² pipes of wretched straw.
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But swoll'n with wind and the rank⁶³ mist⁶⁴ they draw,⁶⁵
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion⁶⁶ spread,
 Besides what the grim⁶⁷ wolf with privy⁶⁸ paw
 Daily devours apace,⁶⁹ and nothing said!
 But that two-handed engine⁷⁰ at the door
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."*

130

*Return, Alpheus,⁷¹ the dread⁷² voice is past
 That shrunk thy streams. Return, Sicilian muse,⁷³
 And call the vales⁷⁴ and bid them hither cast
 Their bells⁷⁵ and flowrets⁷⁶ of a thousand hues.
 Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use⁷⁷
 Of shades and wanton⁷⁸ winds, and gushing brooks,*

⁶⁰ like

⁶¹ trifling, showy

⁶² feeble

⁶³ corrupt, foul, festering, virulent

⁶⁴ vapor

⁶⁵ breathe

⁶⁶ plague, pestilence, moral corruption

⁶⁷ savage, cruel

⁶⁸ secret

⁶⁹ at a rapid pace, swiftly, right away

⁷⁰ as Roy Flannagan has said, "perhaps the most famous crux in English literature"

⁷¹ see note 33 to line 85, above

⁷² revered, authoritative

⁷³ uncertain: perhaps Theocritus, pastoral poet, who may have been born in Sicily

⁷⁴ valleys

⁷⁵ as in "bluebells," "harebells," etc.

⁷⁶ small flowers

⁷⁷ are customary

⁷⁸ playful, sportive

*On whose fresh⁷⁹ lap⁸⁰ the swart star⁸¹ sparely⁸² looks,
 Throw hither all your quaint⁸³ enamelled eyes⁸⁴
 That on the green turf suck the honeyed show'rs 140
 And purple all the ground with vernal⁸⁵ flow'rs.
 Bring the rath⁸⁶ primrose that forsaken dies,
 The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,
 The white pink, and the pansy freaked⁸⁷ with jet,
 The glowing violet,
 The muskrose, and the well attired woodbine,
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head
 And every flower that sad⁸⁸ embroidery wears:
 Bid amaranthus all his beauties shed,
 And daffodillies fill their cups with tears, 150
 To strew the laureate⁸⁹ hearse⁹⁰ where Lycid' lies.
 For so to interpose⁹¹ a little ease
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
 Aye me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides⁹²
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming⁹³ tide
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous⁹⁴ world,*

⁷⁹ new, green

⁸⁰ a hollow among hills

⁸¹ the Dog Star, Sirius

⁸² frugally, abstemiously

⁸³ clever, lovely, dainty

⁸⁴ the colored center of flowers

⁸⁵ spring, springlike

⁸⁶ early

⁸⁷ flecked

⁸⁸ sober, steadfast, constant, mournful

⁸⁹ crowned with laurel

⁹⁰ wood frame to hold flowers; funeral carriage

⁹¹ introduce, put forward

⁹² islands off the Scottish coast

⁹³ engulfing, submerging

⁹⁴ the sea was thought to be full of monsters

Or whether thou to our moist⁹⁵ vows denied⁹⁶
Sleep'st, by the fable of Bellerus⁹⁷ old, 160
Where the great vision of the guarded mount⁹⁸
Looks toward Namancos⁹⁹ and Bayona's¹ hold—
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth,²
And O, ye dolphins, waft³ the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor!
So sinks the day-star⁴ in the ocean bed
And yet anon⁵ repairs⁶ his drooping head
And tricks⁷ his beams, and with new spangled ore⁸ 170
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves!
Where other groves and other streams along
With nectar pure his oozy⁹ locks he laves¹⁰
And hears the unexpressive¹¹ nuptial song
In the blest kingdoms meek, of joy and love.

⁹⁵ tear-strewn

⁹⁶ i.e., we pray for you to be returned, but our prayers (“vows”) are denied

⁹⁷ the Roman name for Land's End, in Cornwall; perhaps a reference to some Cornish giant—or perhaps (since Milton first wrote and then crossed out “Corineus”) inserted strictly for prosodic reasons

⁹⁸ Mount St. Michael's, near Land's End in Cornwall, and across the English Channel from Mont-St.-Michel, in France

⁹⁹ in Spain

¹ a fortress (“hold”) near Cape Finisterre, in Spain

² pity, compassion

³ carry, transport

⁴ i.e., the sun

⁵ soon, in a little while

⁶ to restore, renew, mend

⁷ dresses

⁸ precious metal, here clearly “gold”

⁹ muddy, damp

¹⁰ bathes, washes

¹¹ inexpressible

*There entertain him all the saints above,
 In solemn¹² troops,¹³ and sweet societies¹⁴
 That sing, and singing in their glory move,¹⁵ 180
 And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more!
 Henceforth thou art the genius¹⁶ of the shore
 In thy large¹⁷ recompense,¹⁸ and shalt be good
 To all that wander in that perilous flood.*

*Thus sang the uncouth¹⁹ swain to th' oaks and rills,²⁰
 While the still morn went out with sandals gray.
 He touched the tender stops of various quills,²¹
 With eager thought warbling his Doric²² lay.
 And now the sun had stretched out²³ all the hills, 190
 And now was dropped into the western bay.
 At last he rose and twitched²⁴ his mantle blue:
 Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.*

¹² grand, sacred, formal

¹³ companies, groups, bands

¹⁴ fellowships

¹⁵ go

¹⁶ guardian spirit

¹⁷ ample

¹⁸ reparation, compensation

¹⁹ unpolished, rough

²⁰ streams

²¹ reeds, pipes, flutes

²² pastoral

²³ extended across

²⁴ pulled around him

THE FIFTH ODE OF HORACE, BOOK ONE

1646–48?

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa, rendered almost word for word, without rhyme, according to the Latin measure,²⁵ as near as the [English] language will permit.

*What slender youth, bedewed with liquid odors,
Courts²⁶ thee on roses in some pleasant cave,*

Pyrrha? For whom bind'st thou

In wreaths thy golden hair,

Plain²⁷ in thy neatness?²⁸ O how oft shall he

On faith and changèd gods complain, and seas

Rough with black winds and storms

Unwonted²⁹ shall admire,³⁰

Who now enjoys thee credulous³¹ all gold?

Who always vacant,³² always amiable,

Hopes thee, of flattering gales

Unmindful? Hapless³³ they

To whom thou, untried,³⁴ seem'st fair. Me in my vowed³⁵

10

²⁵ prosody

²⁶ the Latin *urget*, which Horace uses here, means “presses down on”

²⁷ simple

²⁸ elegance, style

²⁹ unaccustomed

³⁰ to be surprised, astonished, to marvel at

³¹ too readily believed

³² at leisure, unoccupied

³³ luckless

³⁴ untested

³⁵ votive offering

*Picture*³⁶ *the sacred wall declares t'have hung*³⁷
*My dank and drooping weeds*³⁸
To the stern god of sea.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE, UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT

1647?

*Because you have thrown off your prelate*³⁹ *lord*
*And with stiff*⁴⁰ *vows renounced his liturgy,*⁴¹
*To seize the widowed whore, plurality*⁴²
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,
*Dare ye for this adjure*⁴³ *the civil sword*
To force our consciences that Christ set free,

³⁶ [noun: the Latin is *tabula sacer votiva*]: David Ferry's 1997 translation renders these lines "The votive tablet on the temple wall / Is witness that in tribute to the god / I have hung up my sea-soaked garment there."

³⁷ i.e., dedicated/given them to the god

³⁸ clothing

³⁹ (1) episcopacy had been formally abolished in 1643 (bishops having been members of the House of Lords); (2) in addition, the chief prelate had been the much-hated Archbishop William Laud—whose name, in British English, is virtually a homonym of "lord"

⁴⁰ resolute, inflexible

⁴¹ in 1645 the House of Commons banned either public or private use of the *Book of Common Prayer*

⁴² i.e., holding more than one clerical post at a time, as Anglicans had, was a practice being indulged in by Presbyterian clergymen as well

⁴³ swear an oath (to)

*And ride us with a classic⁴⁴ hierarchy
 Taught ye by mere A.S.⁴⁵ and Rutherford?⁴⁶
 Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
 Would have been held in high esteem with Paul 10
 Must now be named and printed heretics
 By shallow Edwards⁴⁷ and Scotch what d'ye call.⁴⁸
 But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
 Your plots and packings, worse than those of Trent,⁴⁹
 That so the Parliament
 May with their wholesome and preventive shears
 Clip your phylacteries⁵⁰ (though bauk⁵¹ your ears),
 And succor our just fears
 When they shall read this clearly in your charge:
 New presbyter is but old priest writ large. 20*

⁴⁴ presbyterian synod (unit of administration)

⁴⁵ Adam Stewart, member of Parliament and propagandist for orthodox Presbyterianism; he affixed only his initials to the pamphlets he published

⁴⁶ Samuel Rutherford, a Scot, author of *Plea for Presbytery* (1642)

⁴⁷ Thomas Edwards, author of *Gangraena: a catalogue and discovery of many of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and pernicious practices of the sectaries of this time* (1646)

⁴⁸ Robert Baillie, a Scot who attacked the Independents

⁴⁹ the Council of Trent, 1545–63, attempted but failed to effect Church reforms

⁵⁰ leather accouterments worn, at prayer, by Jews: here, a symbol of open hypocrisy

⁵¹ already cropped: William Prynne (a barrister), the onetime Puritan pamphleteer and then member of the House of Commons, had been thus punished in 1634 (and punished again, for the same offense, in 1637, at which time his cheeks were branded) for criticizing the bishops

PSALMS 1–8⁵²

August 1653

1

*Blessed is the man who hath not walked astray
In counsel of the wicked, and i' th' way
Of sinners hath not stood, and in the seat
Of scorers hath not sat. But in the great
Jehovah's Law is ever his delight,
And in His Law he studies day and night.
He shall be as a tree which, planted, grows
By wat'ry streams, and in his season knows
To yield his fruit, and his leaf shall not fall,
And what he takes in hand shall prosper all. IO
Not so the wicked, but as chaff⁵³ which fanned⁵⁴
The wind drives, so the wicked shall not stand⁵⁵
In judgment, or abide⁵⁶ their trial then,
Nor sinners in the assembly of just men.
For the Lord knows th' upright way of the just,
And the way of bad men to ruin⁵⁷ must.*

⁵² Psalms 80–88, rather dully translated in 1648—that is, five years earlier than Psalms 1–8—are here omitted; they make no significant contribution either to Milton's English poetry or to the study thereof

⁵³ grain husks, separated out by threshing or winnowing

⁵⁴ winnowed, threshed

⁵⁵ endure, withstand

⁵⁶ put up with, endure

⁵⁷ [noun]

2

*Why do the gentiles⁵⁸ tumult,⁵⁹ and the nations
 Muse⁶⁰ a vain thing? The kings of the earth upstand⁶¹
 With power, and princes in their congregations⁶²
 Lay deep their plots together; through each land,
 Against the Lord and His Messiah dear.
 Let us break off, say they, by strength of hand,
 Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear,
 Their twisted cords. He who in Heav'n doth dwell
 Shall laugh. The Lord shall scoff⁶³ them, then,
 severe,⁶⁴*

*Speak to them in His wrath, and in His fell⁶⁵ IO
 And fierce⁶⁶ ire⁶⁷ trouble⁶⁸ them. But I saith He
 Anointed hath my King (though ye rebel)
 On Sion, my holy hill. A firm decree
 I will declare. The Lord to me hath said
 Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee
 This day. Ask of me, and the grant is made.
 As thy possession I on thee bestow
 Th' heathen, and as thy conquest (to be swayed⁶⁹)
 Earth's utmost bounds. Them shalt thou bring full low,
 With iron scepters bruised,⁷⁰ and them disperse 20
 Like to a potter's vessel, shivered so.*

⁵⁸ heathen, pagans

⁵⁹ [verb]

⁶⁰ ponder

⁶¹ stand erect

⁶² meetings, assemblies

⁶³ deride, mock

⁶⁴ rigorous, unsparing

⁶⁵ fierce, terrible, dire

⁶⁶ merciless

⁶⁷ anger, wrath

⁶⁸ afflict

⁶⁹ ruled, governed

⁷⁰ crushed

*And now be wise at length,⁷¹ ye kings averse,⁷²
 Be taught, ye judges of the earth—with fear
 Jehovah serve, and let your joy converse⁷³
 With trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he appear
 In anger and ye perish in the way,⁷⁴
 If once his wrath take fire, like fuel sere.⁷⁵
 Happy all those who have him in their stay.⁷⁶*

3

When he⁷⁷ fled from Absalom.⁷⁸

*Lord, how many are my foes,
 How many those
 That in arms against me rise.
 Many are they
 That of my life distrustfully thus say:
 No help for him in God there lies.
 But thou, Lord, art my shield, my glory,
 Thee through my story⁷⁹
 Th' exalter of my head I count.
 Aloud I cried
 Unto Jehovah. He full soon⁸⁰ replied
 And heard me from His holy mount.
 I lay and slept, I waked again,
 For my sustain
 Was the Lord. Of many millions*

IO

⁷¹ (1) fully, (2) finally, at last

⁷² disinclined

⁷³ be conversant with

⁷⁴ in the way = thereby

⁷⁵ dry

⁷⁶ support, reliance

⁷⁷ King David

⁷⁸ his rebellious son

⁷⁹ life

⁸⁰ quickly

*The populous rout*⁸¹

*I fear not, though encamping round about
They pitch*⁸² *against me their pavilions.*⁸³

Rise, Lord. Save me, my God, for Thou

*Hast smote*⁸⁴ *ere now*

20

*On the cheek-bone all my foes,
Of men abhorred*

*Hast broke the teeth. This help was from the Lord,
Thy blessing on Thy people flows.*

4

*Answer me when I call,
God of my righteousness.*⁸⁵

*In straits*⁸⁶ *and in distress*

*Thou didst me disenthral*⁸⁷

*And set at large.*⁸⁸ *Now spare,*

Now pity me, and hear my earnest prayer.

Great ones, how long will ye

My glory have in scorn?

*How long be this forborn*⁸⁹

Still to love vanity,

10

To love, to seek, to prize

Things false and nothing else but lies?

Yet know the Lord hath chose,

Chose to Himself apart

The good and meek of heart

⁸¹ mob, rabble, herd

⁸² set, arrange

⁸³ tents

⁸⁴ struck

⁸⁵ righteous deeds, conformity to the requirements of divine law

⁸⁶ sore need, difficulties

⁸⁷ liberate, deliver from bondage

⁸⁸ free

⁸⁹ tolerated, endured

(For whom to choose He knows).

Jehovah from on high

Will hear my voice, what time⁹⁰ to Him I cry.

Be awed,⁹¹ and do not sin.

Speak to your hearts alone,

20

Upon your beds, each one,

And be at peace within.

Offer the offerings just⁹²

Of righteousness, and in Jehovah trust.

Many there be that say

“Who yet will show us good?”

Talking like this world’s brood!⁹³

But Lord, thus let me pray:

On us lift up the light,

Lift up the favor of Thy count’nance bright.

30

Into my heart more joy

And gladness Thou has put

Than when a year of glut⁹⁴

Their stores⁹⁵ doth over-cloy⁹⁶

And from their plenteous grounds⁹⁷

With vast increase their corn⁹⁸ and wine abounds.

In peace at once will I

Both lay me down and sleep,

For Thou alone dost keep

Me safe, where ere I lie.

40

As in a rocky cell

Thou, Lord, alone in safety mak’st me dwell.

⁹⁰ what time = when

⁹¹ terrified, filled with reverential fear

⁹² faithful, rightful, correct, appropriate [adjective]

⁹³ kind, crowd

⁹⁴ excessive quantity

⁹⁵ supplies, stocks

⁹⁶ clog

⁹⁷ lands

⁹⁸ grains

5

*Jehovah, to my words give ear,
 My meditation⁹⁹ weigh,¹
 The voice of my complaining hear,
 My King and God, for unto Thee I pray.
 Jehovah, Thou my early voice
 Shalt in the morning hear.
 I' th' morning I to Thee, with choice,²
 Will rank³ my prayers and watch till Thou appear.
 For Thou art not a God that takes
 In wickedness delight. 10
 Evil with Thee no biding⁴ makes.
 Fools or madmen stand⁵ not within Thy sight.
 All workers of iniquity⁶
 Thou hat'st, and them unblessed
 Thou wilt destroy that speak a lie.
 The bloodi' and guileful⁷ man God doth detest.
 But I will in Thy mercies dear,
 Thy numerous mercies go
 Into Thy house, I in Thy fear⁸
 Will towards Thy holy temple worship low.⁹ 20
 Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness,
 Lead me because of those
 That do observe¹⁰ if I transgress.¹¹*

⁹⁹ devotional/contemplative exercise

¹ i.e., "give weight to my meditations"

² deliberate judgment

³ arrange

⁴ tarrying, expectation

⁵ endure

⁶ wickedness

⁷ deceitful, treacherous

⁸ in Thy fear = in fear of You

⁹ humbly

¹⁰ watch, notice, inspect

¹¹ sin

*Set Thy right ways before¹² where my step goes.
 For in his¹³ falt'ring mouth unstable¹⁴
 No word is firm or sooth:¹⁵
 Their inside troubles miserable,
 An open grave their throat; their tongue they smooth.
 God, find them guilty, let them fall
 By their own counsels quelled,¹⁶ 30
 Push them in their rebellions all
 Still on, for against Thee they have rebelled.
 Then all who trust in Thee shall bring
 Their joy, while Thou from blame
 Defend'st them. They shall ever sing
 And shall triumph in Thee, who love Thy name.
 For Thou, Jehovah, wilt be found
 To bless the just man still,¹⁷
 As with a shield. Thou will surround
 Him with Thy lasting favor and good will. 40*

6

*Lord, in Thine anger do not reprehend¹⁸ me,
 Nor in Thy hot displeasure me correct.
 Pity me, Lord, for I am much dejected,
 Am very weak and faint. Heal and amend me,
 For all my bones that even with anguish ache
 Are troubled, yea, my soul is troubled sore.
 And Thou, O Lord, how long? Turn, Lord, restore¹⁹
 My soul, O save me for Thy goodness sake,*

¹² in front of (the place)

¹³ i.e., he who has a . . .

¹⁴ unreliable, vacillating

¹⁵ true

¹⁶ destroyed, crushed

¹⁷ continually, always

¹⁸ rebuke, find fault with

¹⁹ set right, repair

For in death is no remembrance of Thee.

Who in the grave can celebrate Thy praise? 10

Wearied I am with sighing out my days,

Nightly my couch²⁰ I make a kind of sea,

My bed I water with my tears, mine eye

Through grief consumes,²¹ is waxen²² old and dark

I' th' midst of all mine enemies, that mark.²³

Depart all ye that work iniquity!²⁴

Depart from me, for the voice of my weeping

The Lord hath heard, the Lord hath heard my prayer,

My supplication²⁵ with acceptance fair

The Lord will own,²⁶ and have me in His keeping. 20

Mine enemies shall be all blank²⁷ and dashed²⁸

With much confusion, then grown red with shame

They shall return in haste the way they came,

And in a moment shall be quite abashed.²⁹

7

Upon the words of Chush, the Benjamite,³⁰ against him.³¹

Lord, my God, to Thee I fly,

Save me and secure me under

Thy protection, while I cry,

²⁰ bed

²¹ wastes, burns away

²² grown

²³ watch, notice

²⁴ wickedness

²⁵ petition, entreaty

²⁶ acknowledge

²⁷ nonplussed, prostrated

²⁸ struck, destroyed, confounded, frustrated

²⁹ disconcerted

³⁰ belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel

³¹ King David, the Psalmist

*Lest as a lion (and no wonder)
He haste to tear my soul asunder—
Tearing, and no rescue nigh.*

*Lord, my God, if I have thought
Or done this, if wickedness
Be in my hands, if I have wrought³²
Ill to him that meant me peace,
Or to him have rendered³³ less
And not freed my foe for naught,³⁴*

10

*Let th' enemy pursue my soul
And overtake it, let me tread³⁵
My life down to the earth and roll
In the dust my glory dead—
In the dust, and there outspread
Lodge³⁶ it with dishonor foul.*

*Rise, Jehovah, in Thine ire,³⁷
Rouse Thyself amidst the rage
Of my foes, that urge³⁸ like fire,
And wake³⁹ for me, their furi⁴⁰ assuage.⁴¹
Judgment here⁴² thou didst engage⁴³
And command, which I desire.*

20

³² worked, done

³³ given in return

³⁴ nothing—i.e., without any fee or ransom

³⁵ crush

³⁶ deposit, place

³⁷ anger, wrath

³⁸ press forward, drive, pursue

³⁹ keep watch

⁴⁰ fury

⁴¹ appease, soften, mitigate

⁴² i.e., on earth

⁴³ pledge, promise

*So th' assemblies of each nation
Will surround Thee, seeking right.
Thence to Thy glorious habitation
Return on high, and in their sight.
Jehovah judgeth most upright
All people, from this world's foundation.*⁴⁴

30

*Judge me, Lord, be judge in this
According to my righteousness
And the innocence which is
Upon me. Cause at length to cease
Of evil men the wickedness,
And their power, that do amiss.*⁴⁵

*But the just establish*⁴⁶ *fast,*⁴⁷
*Since Thou art the just God that tries*⁴⁸
*Hearts and reins.*⁴⁹ *On God is cast
My defence, and in Him lies,
In Him who both just and wise
Saves th' upright of heart at last.*⁵⁰

40

*God is a just judge, and severe,*⁵¹
*And God is every day offended.
If th' unjust will not forbear*⁵²
*His sword He whets,*⁵³ *His bow hath bended*

⁴⁴ creation

⁴⁵ wrongly ("do" = "act")

⁴⁶ set up, place

⁴⁷ securely

⁴⁸ separates, distinguishes

⁴⁹ kidneys

⁵⁰ ultimately, in the end

⁵¹ strict, rigorous, unsparing

⁵² desist, abstain

⁵³ sharpens

*Already, and for him intended
The tools of death, that waits⁵⁴ Him near.*

*(His arrows purposely made He
For them that persecute.)⁵⁵ Behold, 50
He⁵⁶ travels big⁵⁷ with vanity,
Trouble he hath conceived of old
As in a womb, and from that mould
Hath at length brought forth a lie.*

*He digged a pit, and delved⁵⁸ it deep,
And fell into the pit he made.
His mischief that due⁵⁹ course⁶⁰ doth keep,
Turns on his head, and his ill trade⁶¹
Of violence will undelayed
Fall on his crown⁶² with ruin steep.⁶³ 60*

*Then will I Jehovah's praise
According to His justice raise,⁶⁴
And sing the name and deity
Of Jehovah, the most high.*

8

*O Jehovah, our Lord, how wondrous great
And glorious is Thy name through all the earth!*

⁵⁴ remains

⁵⁵ pursue (maliciously), hunt, harass, oppress

⁵⁶ he who (*not* God)

⁵⁷ pompous

⁵⁸ dug

⁵⁹ appropriate, fitting

⁶⁰ path

⁶¹ track, way of life

⁶² head

⁶³ precipitous, headlong

⁶⁴ stir up, incite, stimulate

*So as above the Heav'ns Thy praise to set
 Out of the tender mouths of latest birth.
 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou
 Hast founded⁶⁵ strength, because of all Thy foes,
 To stint⁶⁶ th' enemy and slack⁶⁷ th' avenger's brow
 That bends his rage Thy providence t' oppose.*

*When I behold Thy Heav'ns, Thy fingers' art,
 The moon and stars which Thou so bright hast set 10
 In the pure firmament, then saith my heart:
 O what is man, that Thou remembrest yet*

*And think'st upon him, or of man begot⁶⁸
 That him Thou visit'st and of⁶⁹ him art found.
 Scarce to be less than gods Thou mad'st his lot,
 With honor and with state⁷⁰ Thou hast him crowned.*

*O'er the works of Thy hand Thou mad'st him lord.
 Thou hast put all under his lordly feet
 All flocks, and herds, by Thy commanding word,
 All beasts that in the field or forest meet,⁷¹ 20*

*Fowl of the Heav'ns, and fish that through the wet
 Sea-paths in shoals do slide. And know no dearth.⁷²
 O Jehovah, our Lord, how wondrous great
 And glorious is Thy name through all the earth.*

⁶⁵ molded

⁶⁶ cut short, check

⁶⁷ weaken

⁶⁸ called into being

⁶⁹ by

⁷⁰ (1) high rank, power, (2) pomp, dignity

⁷¹ i.e., are met

⁷² scarcity

PARADISE LOST

1642?–1655?

THE VERSE

The measure¹ is English heroic verse² without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek and of Virgil in Latin, rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse (in longer works especially) but the invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter³ and lame meter—graced indeed, since, by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise⁴ and for the most part worse than they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself to all judicious ears trivial and of no musical delight, which [delight] consists only in apt numbers,⁵ fit⁶ quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect, then, of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect—though it may seem so, perhaps, to vulgar⁷ readers—that it rather is to be esteemed⁸ an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

¹ metric

² iambic pentameter

³ substance, content

⁴ differently

⁵ prosody

⁶ proper, appropriate

⁷ common, ordinary, uneducated

⁸ considered

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

This first Book proposes first in brief the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent, who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action past over, the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell, described here not in the center (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest⁹ called Chaos. Here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space¹⁰ recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him.

They confer of¹¹ their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan¹² and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or

⁹ most appropriately

¹⁰ time

¹¹ about

¹² ancient Israel

report in Heaven—for that Angels *were*, long before this visible Creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council.

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

1 *Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit*
 2 *Of that forbidden tree whose mortal¹³ taste*
 3 *Brought Death into the world, and all our woe,*
 4 *With loss of Eden, till one greater Man¹⁴*
 5 *Restore us and regain the blissful seat,*
 6 *Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top*
 7 *Of Oreb,¹⁵ or of Sinai, didst inspire*
 8 *That shepherd¹⁶ who first taught the chosen seed¹⁷*
 9 *In the beginning how the heavens and earth*
 10 *Rose out of Chaos. Or if Sion hill¹⁸*
 11 *Delight thee more, and Siloa's¹⁹ brook that flowed*
 12 *Fast by²⁰ the oracle of God,²¹ I thence*
 13 *Invoke thy aid to my adventurous²² song*
 14 *That with no middle flight intends to soar*
 15 *Above th' Aonian mount,²³ while it pursues*
 16 *Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.*
 17 *And chiefly thou, O Spirit,²⁴ that dost prefer*
 18 *Before²⁵ all temples th' upright heart and pure,*
 19 *Instruct me, for Thou know'st, Thou from the first*
 20 *Wast present and, with mighty wings outspread,*
 21 *Dove-like sat'st brooding²⁶ on the vast abyss,*
 22 *And mad'st it pregnant. What in me is dark²⁷*

¹³ deadly, fatal

¹⁴ Christ

¹⁵ Horeb = Sinai, in Exodus and Deuteronomy

¹⁶ Moses, who was thought to have been the author of Genesis

¹⁷ the Jews

¹⁸ site of the Temple, in Jerusalem

¹⁹ Siloam, near Jerusalem

²⁰ fast by = close, very near

²¹ the temple

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

²³ Mount Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and to the Muses

²⁴ not specified: the basic nature of the Godhead?

²⁵ in preference to, rather than

²⁶ (1) hatching eggs by sitting on them, (2) meditating

²⁷ ignorant, obscure, blind

23 *Illumine, what is low raise and support,*
 24 *That, to the height of this great argument,*
 25 *I may assert Eternal Providence*
 26 *And justify the ways of God to men.*
 27 *Say first—for Heav'n hides nothing from thy*
 view,
 28 *Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause*
 29 *Moved our grand²⁸ parents, in that happy state*
 30 *Favored of Heav'n so highly, to fall off²⁹*
 31 *From their Creator and transgress His will*
 32 *For³⁰ one restraint, lords of the world besides.*
 33 *Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?*
 34 *Th' infernal Serpent, he it was whose guile,*
 35 *Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived*
 36 *The mother of mankind, what time his pride*
 37 *Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host*
 38 *Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring*
 39 *To set himself in glory above his peers,*
 40 *He trusted to have equalled the Most High,*
 41 *If he opposed and with ambitious aim*
 42 *Against the throne and monarchy of God*
 43 *Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud,*
 44 *With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power*
 45 *Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal³¹ sky,*
 46 *With hideous³² ruin and combustion,³³ down*
 47 *To bottomless perdition,³⁴ there to dwell*
 48 *In adamant³⁵ine chains and penal³⁶ fire,*

²⁸ great, original

²⁹ move away

³⁰ on account of

³¹ celestial

³² horrible, frightful, terrific

³³ conflagration, burning

³⁴ final damnation

³⁵ unbreakable

³⁶ (1) punishing, (2) severe

49 *Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.*
 50 *Nine times the space that measures day and*
 night
 51 *To mortal men, he, with his horrid³⁷ crew,³⁸*
 52 *Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,³⁹*
 53 *Confounded,⁴⁰ though immortal. But his doom⁴¹*
 54 *Reserved⁴² him to more wrath, for now the thought*
 55 *Both of lost happiness and lasting pain*
 56 *Torments him. Round he throws his baleful⁴³ eyes,*
 57 *That witnessed⁴⁴ huge affliction and dismay,*
 58 *Mixed with obdurate⁴⁵ pride and steadfast hate.*
 59 *At once, as far as Angels ken,⁴⁶ he views*
 60 *The dismal⁴⁷ situation waste⁴⁸ and wild.⁴⁹*
 61 *A dungeon horrible, on all sides round*
 62 *As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames*
 63 *No light but rather darkness visible*
 64 *Served only to discover⁵⁰ sights of woe,*
 65 *Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace*
 66 *And rest can never dwell, hope never comes*
 67 *That comes to all, but torture without end*
 68 *Still urges,⁵¹ and a fiery deluge, fed*

³⁷ detestable, abominable

³⁸ army, band, gang, mob

³⁹ abyss

⁴⁰ brought to nought, shamed

⁴¹ sentence, judgment (punishment)

⁴² kept, retained, preserved

⁴³ (1) full of active evil, (2) full of pain and suffering

⁴⁴ attested to, were evidence of

⁴⁵ hardened to evil, unyielding

⁴⁶ power of vision

⁴⁷ disastrous, dreadful, calamitous

⁴⁸ barren

⁴⁹ (1) desolate, (2) fantastic

⁵⁰ reveal, show

⁵¹ presses forward

69 *With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.*⁵²
 70 *Such place Eternal Justice had prepared*
 71 *For those rebellious, here their prison ordained*
 72 *In utter darkness, and their portion*⁵³ *set,*
 73 *As far removed from God and light of Heav'n*
 74 *As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.*
 75 *Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!*
 76 *There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed*
 77 *With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,*
 78 *He soon discerns and, weltering*⁵⁴ *by his side,*
 79 *One next himself in power, and next in crime,*
 80 *Long after known in Palestine, and named*
 81 *Beelzebub.*⁵⁵ *To whom th' arch-enemy,*
 82 *And thence in Heav'n called Satan, with bold*
 words
 83 *Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:*
 84 *"If thou beest he—but O how fallen! how*
 changed
 85 *From him who, in the happy*⁵⁶ *realms of light*
 86 *Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst*
 outshine
 87 *Myriads,*⁵⁷ *though bright!—if he whom mutual*
 *league,*⁵⁸
 88 *United thoughts and counsels, equal hope*
 89 *And hazard in the glorious enterprise*
 90 *Joined with me once, now misery hath joined*
 91 *In equal ruin—into what pit thou seest*
 92 *From what height fall'n, so much the stronger*
 proved

⁵² never used up

⁵³ lot, destiny, fate

⁵⁴ rolling, tumbling

⁵⁵ Beëlzebub

⁵⁶ blessèd, fortunate

⁵⁷ countless numbers

⁵⁸ covenant

93 *He with His thunder. And till then who knew*
 94 *The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,*
 95 *Nor what the potent victor in His rage*
 96 *Can else inflict, do I repent, or change*
 97 *(Though changed in outward luster) that fixed*
 mind
 98 *And high disdain from sense of injured merit*
 99 *That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,*
 100 *And to the fierce contentions⁵⁹ brought along*
 101 *Innumerable⁶⁰ force of Spirits armed,*
 102 *That durst dislike His reign and, me preferring,*
 103 *His utmost power with adverse⁶¹ power opposed*
 104 *In dubious⁶² battle on the plains of Heav'n,*
 105 *And shook His throne. What though the field be*
 lost?
 106 *All is not lost—the unconquerable will,*
 107 *And study⁶³ of revenge, immortal hate,*
 108 *And courage never to submit or yield:*
 109 *And what is else not to be overcome?*
 110 *That glory never shall His wrath or might*
 111 *Extort from me. To bow and sue⁶⁴ for grace⁶⁵*
 112 *With suppliant⁶⁶ knee, and deify His power*
 113 *Who, from⁶⁷ the terror⁶⁸ of this arm, so late⁶⁹*
 114 *Doubted⁷⁰ His empire: that were low indeed,*

⁵⁹ strife

⁶⁰ [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁶¹ hostile

⁶² uncertain, undetermined

⁶³ cultivation

⁶⁴ to petition, beg

⁶⁵ favor, pardon, mercy

⁶⁶ humbly petitioning, bent

⁶⁷ because of

⁶⁸ fear

⁶⁹ recently

⁷⁰ feared for

115 *That were an ignominy and shame beneath*
 116 *This downfall, since, by fate, the strength of gods,*
 117 *And this empyreal⁷¹ substance, cannot fail;*
 118 *Since, through experience of this great event,*
 119 *In arms not worse, in foresight⁷² much advanced,⁷³*
 120 *We may with more successful hope resolve*
 121 *To wage by force or guile eternal war,*
 122 *Irreconcilable to our grand foe,*
 123 *Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy*
 124 *Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n."*
 125 *So spoke th' apostate Angel, though in pain,*
 126 *Vaunting⁷⁴ aloud, but racked with deep despair.*
 127 *And him thus answered, soon, his bold compeer:⁷⁵*
 128 *"O Prince, O chief of many thronèd Powers⁷⁶*
 129 *That led th' embattled Seraphim⁷⁷ to war*
 130 *Under thy conduct⁷⁸ and, in dreadful deeds*
 131 *Fearless, endangered Heav'n's perpetual⁷⁹ King,*
 132 *And put to proof⁸⁰ His high supremacy,*
 133 *Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate:*
 134 *Too well I see and rue⁸¹ the dire event*
 135 *That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,*
 136 *Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host*
 137 *In horrible destruction laid thus low,*
 138 *As far as gods and Heav'nly Essences⁸²*

⁷¹ heavenly, pure fire

⁷² care for/prediction of the future

⁷³ raised, moved forward

⁷⁴ boasting, bragging

⁷⁵ comrade, of equal rank

⁷⁶ sixth of the nine angelic orders

⁷⁷ first of the nine angelic orders

⁷⁸ guidance, leadership

⁷⁹ eternal, everlasting

⁸⁰ test, trial

⁸¹ regret

⁸² entities, beings

139 *Can perish—for the mind and spirit remains*
 140 *Invincible,⁸³ and vigor soon returns,*
 141 *Though all our glory extinct, and happy state*
 142 *Here swallowed up in endless misery.*
 143 *But what if He our conqueror (whom I now*
 144 *Of force⁸⁴ believe almighty, since no less*
 145 *Than such could have o'erpowered such force as*
 ours)
 146 *Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,⁸⁵*
 147 *Strongly to suffer⁸⁶ and support⁸⁷ our pains,*
 148 *That we may so suffice⁸⁸ His vengeful ire,*
 149 *Or do Him mightier service as His thralls⁸⁹*
 150 *By right of war, whate'er His business be,*
 151 *Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,*
 152 *Or do His errands in the gloomy deep?*
 153 *What can it then avail, though yet we feel*
 154 *Strength undiminished, or eternal being,*
 155 *To undergo eternal punishment?"*
 156 *Whereto with speedy words th' arch-fiend replied:*
 157 *"Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable,*
 158 *Doing or suffering. But of this be sure—*
 159 *To do aught⁹⁰ good never will be our task,*
 160 *But ever to do ill our sole delight,*
 161 *As being the contrary to His high will*
 162 *Whom we resist. If then His providence*
 163 *Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,*
 164 *Our labor must be to pervert that end*

⁸³ unconquerable

⁸⁴ perforce, of necessity

⁸⁵ whole

⁸⁶ permit, allow

⁸⁷ strengthen

⁸⁸ satisfy

⁸⁹ slaves, bondsmen

⁹⁰ anything

165 *And out of good still⁹¹ to find means of evil,*
 166 *Which oft-times may succeed so as, perhaps,*
 167 *Shall grieve Him, if I fail not, and disturb⁹²*
 168 *His inmost counsels⁹³ from their destined⁹⁴ aim.*
 169 *“But see! the angry victor hath recalled*
 170 *His ministers of vengeance and pursuit*
 171 *Back to the gates of Heav’n. The sulphurous hail,*
 172 *Shot after us in storm⁹⁵ o’erblown, hath laid⁹⁶*
 173 *The fiery surge⁹⁷ that from the precipice*
 174 *Of Heav’n received us falling, and the thunder,*
 175 *Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,*
 176 *Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now*
 177 *To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.*
 178 *Let us not slip⁹⁸ th’ occasion, whether scorn*
 179 *Or satiate⁹⁹ fury yield it from our foe.*
 180 *“Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,*
 181 *The seat of desolation, void of light,*
 182 *Save what the glimmering of these livid¹⁰⁰ flames*
 183 *Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend¹⁰¹*
 184 *From off the tossing of these fiery waves,*
 185 *There rest, if any rest can harbor¹⁰² there,*
 186 *And, re-assembling our afflicted¹⁰³ Powers,*

⁹¹ always

⁹² interfere with, interrupt

⁹³ purposes, directions

⁹⁴ intended, designed

⁹⁵ discharge

⁹⁶ caused to subside, laid to rest

⁹⁷ billows, waves

⁹⁸ waste

⁹⁹ satiated, glutted

¹⁰⁰ bluish leaden-colored

¹⁰¹ direct our course, move toward

¹⁰² lodge, take shelter, be contained

¹⁰³ mortified, troubled

187 *Consult how we may henceforth most offend*¹⁰⁴
 188 *Our enemy, our own loss how repair,*
 189 *How overcome this dire calamity,*
 190 *What reinforcement we may gain from hope,*
 191 *If not, what resolution from despair.”*
 192 *Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,*¹⁰⁵
 193 *With head uplift above the wave, and eyes*
 194 *That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides*
 195 *Prone on the flood,*¹⁰⁶ *extended long and large,*
 196 *Lay floating many a rood,*¹⁰⁷ *in bulk as huge*
 197 *As whom the fables name of monstrous size,*
 198 *Titanian*¹⁰⁸ *or earth-born,*¹⁰⁹ *that warred on Jove,*
 199 *Briareos or Typhon, whom the den*
 200 *By ancient Tarsus*¹¹⁰ *held,*¹¹¹ *or that sea-beast*
 201 *Leviathan,*¹¹² *which God of all His works*
 202 *Created hugest that swim th’ ocean-stream.*
 203 *Him, haply*¹¹³ *slumbering on the Norway foam,*¹¹⁴
 204 *The pilot of some small night-foundered*¹¹⁵ *skiff,*
 205 *Deeming*¹¹⁶ *some island, oft, as seamen tell,*
 206 *With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,*¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁴ attack, hurt, damage

¹⁰⁵ companion, associate

¹⁰⁶ water

¹⁰⁷ rod = 5½ yards

¹⁰⁸ Titans: Briareos, in the next line, is one

¹⁰⁹ giants: Typhon, in the next line, is one

¹¹⁰ biblical city in Cilicia (Asia Minor), north of Cyprus

¹¹¹ had

¹¹² (1) sea monster often analogized and linked to Satan, (2) whale

¹¹³ perhaps, by chance

¹¹⁴ foaming water, the sea

¹¹⁵ “foundered” can mean “sunk”; here, it may mean “stuck, mired”

¹¹⁶ concluding, considering, thinking that it (i.e., Leviathan)

¹¹⁷ skin, outer surface

207 *Moors by his side under the lee,¹¹⁸ while night*
 208 *Invests¹¹⁹ the sea, and wishèd morn delays.*
 209 *So stretched out huge in length the arch-fiend lay,*
 210 *Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence*
 211 *Had risen or heaved¹²⁰ his head, but that the will*
 212 *And high permission of all-ruling Heav'n*
 213 *Left him at large to his own dark designs,*
 214 *That with reiterated crimes he might*
 215 *Heap on himself damnation, while he sought*
 216 *Evil to others, and enraged might see*
 217 *How all his malice served but to bring forth*
 218 *Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown*
 219 *On man by him seduced, but on himself*
 220 *Treble confusion,¹²¹ wrath, and vengeance poured.*
 221 *Forthwith¹²² upright he rears from off the pool*
 222 *His mighty stature. On each hand the flames*
 223 *Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires and,*
 rolled
 224 *In billows, leave in th' midst a horrid vale.*
 225 *Then with expanded¹²³ wings he steers his flight*
 226 *Aloft, incumbent¹²⁴ on the dusky air,*
 227 *That felt unusual weight, till on dry land*
 228 *He lights¹²⁵—if it were land that ever burned*
 229 *With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,*
 230 *And such¹²⁶ appeared in hue¹²⁷ as when the force*
 231 *Of subterranean wind transports a hill*

¹¹⁸ on the sheltered side, the side away from the wind

¹¹⁹ covers, clothes

¹²⁰ lifted, raised

¹²¹ discomfiture, ruin, perplexity

¹²² immediately, at once

¹²³ spread out

¹²⁴ lying his weight upon

¹²⁵ descends, settles

¹²⁶ so, the like

¹²⁷ form, appearance

- 232 *Torn from Pelorus,¹²⁸ or the shattered side*
 233 *Of thundering Etna, whose combustible*
 234 *And fuellèd entrails thence conceiving fire*
 235 *Sublimed¹²⁹ with mineral fury, aid the winds*
 236 *And leave a singèd bottom¹³⁰ all involved¹³¹*
 237 *With stench and smoke. Such resting found the*
 sole
 238 *Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,*
 239 *Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian¹³²*
 flood¹³³
 240 *As¹³⁴ gods, and by their own recovered strength,*
 241 *Not by the sufferance¹³⁵ of supernal¹³⁶ power.*
 242 *“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”*
 243 *Said then the lost Archangel, “this the seat¹³⁷*
 244 *That we must change for Heav’n?—this mournful*
 gloom
 245 *For that celestial light? Be it so, since He*
 246 *Who now is sov’rign can dispose¹³⁸ and bid¹³⁹*
 247 *What shall be right. Farthest from Him is best*
 248 *Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made*
 supreme
 249 *Above His equals. Farewell, happy fields,*
 250 *Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,*

¹²⁸ Sicilian promontory, near Mount Etna (an active volcano, then and now)

¹²⁹ (1) vaporized, (2) transmuted

¹³⁰ lowland

¹³¹ wrapped, enfolded

¹³² infernal, hellish

¹³³ (1) literally, the River Styx, but metaphorically death, (2) by analogy, this particular burning lake

¹³⁴ still being

¹³⁵ consent, toleration

¹³⁶ heavenly

¹³⁷ residence

¹³⁸ regulate, control

¹³⁹ command

251 *Infernal world! and thou, profoundest*¹⁴⁰ *Hell,*
 252 *Receive thy new possessor—one who brings*
 253 *A mind not to be changed by place or time.*
 254 *The mind is its own place, and in itself*
 255 *Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.*
 256 *What matter where, if I be still the same,*
 257 *And what I should be, all but*¹⁴¹ *less than He*
 258 *Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least*
 259 *We shall be free. Th' Almighty hath not built*
 260 *Here for His envy, will not drive us hence.*
 261 *Here we may reign secure and, in my choice,*
 262 *To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:*
 263 *Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n!*
 264 *“But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,*
 265 *Th' associates and co-partners of our loss,*
 266 *Lie thus astonished*¹⁴² *on th' oblivious*¹⁴³ *pool,*
 267 *And call them not to share with us their part*
 268 *In this unhappy mansion,*¹⁴⁴ *or once more*
 269 *With rallied arms to try what may be yet*
 270 *Regained in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?”*
 271 *So Satan spoke; and him Beelzebub*
 272 *Thus answered: “Leader of those armies bright*
 273 *Which, but th' Omnipotent, none could have*
 *foiled!*¹⁴⁵
 274 *If once they hear that voice, their liveliest*
 *pledge*¹⁴⁶
 275 *Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft*
 276 *In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge*

¹⁴⁰ deepest

¹⁴¹ just barely

¹⁴² stunned, bewildered

¹⁴³ unmindful: this is not Lethe, which induces forgetting (oblivion), as Milton makes clear, later, in Book 2, lines 606–10

¹⁴⁴ abode

¹⁴⁵ defeated, overthrown, balked, frustrated

¹⁴⁶ a guarantee, security

277 *Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults*
 278 *Their surest signal—they will soon resume*
 279 *New courage and revive, though now they lie*
 280 *Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,*
 281 *As we erewhile, astounded¹⁴⁷ and amazed.¹⁴⁸*
 282 *No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious¹⁴⁹ height!"*
 283 *He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend*
 284 *Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous*
 shield,
 285 *Ethereal¹⁵⁰ temper,¹⁵¹ massy, large, and round,*
 286 *Behind him cast. The broad circumference*
 287 *Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb*
 288 *Through optic glass the Tuscan¹⁵² artist¹⁵³ views*
 289 *At evening, from the top of Fesolé,*
 290 *Or in Valdarno, to descry¹⁵⁴ new lands,*
 291 *Rivers, or mountains in her spotty¹⁵⁵ globe.*
 292 *His spear—to equal which the tallest pine*
 293 *Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast*
 294 *Of some great ammiral,¹⁵⁶ were but a wand—¹⁵⁷*
 295 *He walked with, to support uneasy¹⁵⁸ steps*
 296 *Over the burning marl,¹⁵⁹ not like those steps*
 297 *On Heaven's azure. And the torrid clime*

¹⁴⁷ stunned

¹⁴⁸ overwhelmed

¹⁴⁹ wicked, fatal

¹⁵⁰ celestial

¹⁵¹ hardness

¹⁵² Italian: Galileo

¹⁵³ practical scientist, learned man

¹⁵⁴ discover, make known

¹⁵⁵ spotted, patchy

¹⁵⁶ admiral's ship, flagship

¹⁵⁷ straight slender stick

¹⁵⁸ difficult, troublesome

¹⁵⁹ soil

- 298 *Smote*¹⁶⁰ on him sore besides, vaulted¹⁶¹ with fire.
 299 *Nathless*¹⁶² he so endured, till on the beach
 300 *Of that inflamèd*¹⁶³ sea he stood, and called
 301 *His legions, Angel forms, who lay entranced*¹⁶⁴
 302 *Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks*
 303 *In Vallombrosa,*¹⁶⁵ where th' Etrurian¹⁶⁶ shades,
 304 *High over-arched, embow'r*¹⁶⁷—or scattered
 *sedge*¹⁶⁸
 305 *Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed*¹⁶⁹
 306 *Hath vexed*¹⁷⁰ the Red-Sea coast, whose waves
 o'erthrew
 307 *Busiris*¹⁷¹ and his Memphian¹⁷² chivalry,¹⁷³
 308 *While with perfidious*¹⁷⁴ hatred they pursued
 309 *The sojourners*¹⁷⁵ of Goshen,¹⁷⁶ who beheld
 310 *From the safe shore their floating carcasses*
 311 *And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrewn,*
 312 *Abject*¹⁷⁷ and lost, lay these, covering the flood,

¹⁶⁰ beat/shone strongly

¹⁶¹ covered, roofed

¹⁶² nevertheless

¹⁶³ burning, glowing

¹⁶⁴ in a trance, overpowered

¹⁶⁵ monastery south of Florence

¹⁶⁶ Etruscan

¹⁶⁷ give shelter

¹⁶⁸ rushlike/reedlike plants

¹⁶⁹ the constellation of Orion is associated with winter storms

¹⁷⁰ troubled, agitated

¹⁷¹ Egyptian pharaoh who oppressed the captive Israelites

¹⁷² Egyptian (Memphis = city in ancient Egypt)

¹⁷³ knights, horsemen

¹⁷⁴ treacherous

¹⁷⁵ temporary residents

¹⁷⁶ where the captive Israelites lived, in Egypt

¹⁷⁷ brought low, cast down

313 *Under amazement*¹⁷⁸ *of their hideous*¹⁷⁹ *change.*
 314 *He called so loud that all the hollow deep*
 315 *Of Hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,*¹⁸⁰
 316 *Warriors, the Flow'r of Heav'n—once yours, now*
 lost,
 317 *If such astonishment*¹⁸¹ *as this can seize*
 318 *Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this place*
 319 *After the toil of battle to repose*
 320 *Your wearied virtue,*¹⁸² *for the ease you find*
 321 *To slumber here, as in the vales of Heav'n?*
 322 *Or in this abject posture have ye sworn*
 323 *To adore the conqueror, who now beholds*
 324 *Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood*
 325 *With scattered arms and ensigns,*¹⁸³ *till anon*¹⁸⁴
 326 *His swift pursuers from Heav'n-gates discern*
 327 *Th' advantage, and descending, tread us down*
 328 *Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts*
 329 *Transfix*¹⁸⁵ *us to the bottom of this gulf?*¹⁸⁶
 330 *Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!"*
 331 *They heard, and were abashed, and up they*
 sprung
 332 *Upon the wing,*¹⁸⁷ *as when men wont*¹⁸⁸ *to watch*
 333 *On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,*
 334 *Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.*
 335 *Nor did they not perceive the evil plight*
 336 *In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel,*

¹⁷⁸ stupefaction

¹⁷⁹ revolting, immense

¹⁸⁰ rulers

¹⁸¹ insensibility, mental prostration

¹⁸² power, force, strength

¹⁸³ banners, flags

¹⁸⁴ soon

¹⁸⁵ impale, pierce through

¹⁸⁶ abyss

¹⁸⁷ briskly, quickly

¹⁸⁸ accustomed

337 *Yet to their general's voice they soon obeyed*
 338 *Innumerable. As when the potent rod*
 339 *Of Amram's son,¹⁸⁹ in Egypt's evil day,*
 340 *Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy¹⁹⁰ cloud*
 341 *Of locusts, warping¹⁹¹ on the eastern wind,*
 342 *That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung*
 343 *Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile—*
 344 *So numberless were those bad Angels seen*
 345 *Hovering on wing under the cope¹⁹² of Hell*
 346 *'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires,*
 347 *Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted spear*
 348 *Of their great sultan waving to direct*
 349 *Their course, in even balance down they light¹⁹³*
 350 *On the firm¹⁹⁴ brimstone,¹⁹⁵ and fill all the plain:*
 351 *A multitude like which the populous North¹⁹⁶*
 352 *Poured never from her frozen loins to pass*
 353 *Rhine or the Danau,¹⁹⁷ when her barbarous sons*
 354 *Came like a deluge on the South and spread*
 355 *Beneath¹⁹⁸ Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.*
 356 *Forthwith,¹⁹⁹ from every squadron and each*
 band
 357 *The heads and leaders thither haste, where stood*
 358 *Their great commander—godlike shapes, and*
 forms

¹⁸⁹ Moses

¹⁹⁰ black

¹⁹¹ floating/whirling through the air

¹⁹² vault

¹⁹³ descend, settle

¹⁹⁴ solid

¹⁹⁵ burning stone, sulfur

¹⁹⁶ Goths and Vikings

¹⁹⁷ Danube

¹⁹⁸ down from

¹⁹⁹ at once

359 *Excelling*²⁰⁰ *human; princely Dignities*
 360 *And Powers that erst*²⁰¹ *in Heav'n sat on thrones,*
 361 *Though of their names in Heav'nly records now*
 362 *Be no memorial, blotted out and razed,*
 363 *By their rebellion, from the Books of Life.*²⁰²
 364 *Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve*
 365 *Got them new names, till wand'ring o'er the earth*
 366 *(Through God's high sufferance)*²⁰³ *for the trial*²⁰⁴
 of man,
 367 *By falsities and lies the greatest part*
 368 *Of mankind they corrupted to forsake*
 369 *God their Creator, and th' invisible*
 370 *Glory of Him that made them to transform*
 371 *Oft to the image of a brute, adorned*
 372 *With gay*²⁰⁵ *religions full of pomp and gold,*
 373 *And devils to adore for deities.*
 374 *Then were they known to men by various names,*
 375 *And various idols through the heathen world.*
 376 *Say, Muse, their names then known, who first,*
 who last,
 377 *Roused from their slumber on that fiery couch,*²⁰⁶
 378 *At their great emperor's call, as next in worth*
 379 *Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,*²⁰⁷
 380 *While the promiscuous*²⁰⁸ *crowd stood yet aloof?*²⁰⁹
 381 *The chief*²¹⁰ *were those who, from the pit of Hell*

²⁰⁰ surpassing

²⁰¹ at first, originally

²⁰² God's record of the righteous

²⁰³ toleration, consent

²⁰⁴ testing

²⁰⁵ showy

²⁰⁶ bed

²⁰⁷ shore

²⁰⁸ of mixed and disorderly composition

²⁰⁹ at a distance

²¹⁰ most, the bulk

382 *Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix*²¹¹
 383 *Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,*
 384 *Their altars by His altar, gods adored*
 385 *Among the nations round, and durst abide*²¹²
 386 *Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned*
 387 *Between the Cherubim, yea, often placed*
 388 *Within His sanctuary itself their shrines—*
 389 *Abominations!—and with cursèd things*
 390 *His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,*²¹³
 391 *And with their darkness durst affront*²¹⁴ *His light.*
 392 *First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with*
 blood
 393 *Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,*
 394 *Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels*²¹⁵
 loud,
 395 *Their children's cries unheard that passed through*
 fire
 396 *To his grim*²¹⁶ *idol. Him the Ammonite*²¹⁷
 397 *Worshipped in Rabba*²¹⁸ *and her wat'ry plain,*
 398 *In Argob*²¹⁹ *and in Basan,*²²⁰ *to the stream*
 399 *Of utmost Arnon.*²²¹ *Nor content with such*
 400 *Audacious*²²² *neighborhood, the wisest heart*
 401 *Of Solomon he led by fraud to build*

²¹¹ place

²¹² to face (defiantly)? await?

²¹³ desecrated, violated

²¹⁴ to insult, defy

²¹⁵ percussion instrument, tambourinelike

²¹⁶ savage, cruel, fierce, harsh

²¹⁷ a Semitic people who lived in Jordan; they were related to the Israelites but often at war with them

²¹⁸ now Amman

²¹⁹ in Bashan region; included in the sixth province of Solomon's kingdom

²²⁰ modern Bashan

²²¹ river flowing into the Dead Sea

²²² shameless, daring

402 *His²²³ temple right against the temple of God*
 403 *On that opprobrious²²⁴ hill, and made his grove*
 404 *The pleasant valley of Hinnom,²²⁵ Tophet²²⁶ thence*
 405 *And black Gehenna²²⁷ called, the type²²⁸ of Hell.*
 406 *Next Chemos,²²⁹ th' obscene²³⁰ dread²³¹ of*
 Moab's²³² sons,
 407 *From Aroar²³³ to Nebo²³⁴ and the wild*
 408 *Of southmost Abarim,²³⁵ in Hesebon²³⁶*
 409 *And Horonaim,²³⁷ Seon's²³⁸ realm, beyond*
 410 *The flow'ry dale of Sibma²³⁹ clad with vines,*
 411 *And Eléalé²⁴⁰ to th' asphaltic pool.²⁴¹*
 412 *Peor²⁴² his other name, when he enticed*
 413 *Israel in Sittim,²⁴³ on their march from Nile,²⁴⁴*

²²³ Moloch's

²²⁴ scandalous, disgraceful

²²⁵ Gehinnom, valley SW of Jerusalem

²²⁶ high place in the valley of Hinnom, where children were sacrificed to Moloch

²²⁷ place of future torment, hell

²²⁸ symbol, model

²²⁹ the Moabites' god

²³⁰ filthy

²³¹ object of fear/reverence

²³² like the Ammonites, the Moabites were located in Jordan and related to the Israelites, with whom they often warred

²³³ see Deuteronomy 3:12

²³⁴ a mountain in the Moabite region: see Isaiah 15:2

²³⁵ linked to Nebo (see footnote 219, above)

²³⁶ Hesebon = Moabite city

²³⁷ see Isaiah 15:5

²³⁸ Sehon = king of the Amorites, the pre-Israelite people of Canaan

²³⁹ Moabite town

²⁴⁰ Moabite city

²⁴¹ the Dead Sea

²⁴² Peor = Baal-Peor, Canaanite god associated with sexual orgies on Mt. Peor, in the Moabite region

²⁴³ Israelite campsite near Jericho

²⁴⁴ i.e., Egypt

414 *To do him wanton*²⁴⁵ *rites, which cost them woe.*
 415 *Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged*
 416 *Ev'n to that hill of scandal,*²⁴⁶ *by the grove*
 417 *Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by*²⁴⁷ *hate,*
 418 *Till good Josiah*²⁴⁸ *drove them thence to Hell.*
 419 *With these came they who, from the bord'ring*
 flood
 420 *Of old Euphrates*²⁴⁹ *to the brook*²⁵⁰ *that parts*
 421 *Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names*
 422 *Of Baalim*²⁵¹ *and Ashtaroth*²⁵²—*those male,*
 423 *These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,*
 424 *Can either sex assume, or both, so soft*
 425 *And uncompounded*²⁵³ *is their essence pure,*
 426 *Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,*
 427 *Nor founded*²⁵⁴ *on the brittle strength of bones,*
 428 *Like cumbrous*²⁵⁵ *flesh, but in what shape they*
 choose,
 429 *Dilated*²⁵⁶ *or condensed, bright or obscure,*
 430 *Can execute their airy purposes*
 431 *And works of love or enmity*²⁵⁷ *fulfil.*
 432 *For those the race of Israel oft forsook*
 433 *Their Living Strength, and unfrequented*²⁵⁸ *left*

²⁴⁵ lewd, lascivious

²⁴⁶ the Mount of Olives: see also line 403, above, and the footnote thereto

²⁴⁷ hard by = close to

²⁴⁸ king of Judea, 637–608 B.C., a religious reformer

²⁴⁹ a major Mesopotamian river

²⁵⁰ the River Esor

²⁵¹ plural of “Baal,” in Hebrew

²⁵² plural of “Ashtoreth,” in Hebrew

²⁵³ uncombined, unmixed

²⁵⁴ based

²⁵⁵ cumbersome: clumsy, unwieldy

²⁵⁶ expanded

²⁵⁷ ill will, hatred

²⁵⁸ unfilled, uncrowded

434 *His righteous altar, bowing lowly down*
 435 *To bestial gods, for which their heads as low*
 436 *Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear*
 437 *Of despicable²⁵⁹ foes.*

With these in troop

438 *Came Astoreth,²⁶⁰ whom the Phoenicians called*
 439 *Astarté, queen of heaven, with crescent horns,*
 440 *To whose bright image nightly by the moon*
 441 *Sidonian²⁶¹ virgins paid their vows and songs;*
 442 *In Sion²⁶² also not unsung, where stood*
 443 *Her temple on th' offensive²⁶³ mountain, built*
 444 *By that uxorious²⁶⁴ king²⁶⁵ whose heart, though*
 large,
 445 *Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell*
 446 *To idols foul.*

Thammuz²⁶⁶ came next behind,

447 *Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured*
 448 *The Syrian damsels to lament his fate*
 449 *In amorous ditties all a summer's day,*
 450 *While smooth Adonis²⁶⁷ from his native rock*
 451 *Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood*
 452 *Of Thammuz yearly wounded. The love-tale*
 453 *Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,*
 454 *Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch²⁶⁸*

²⁵⁹ vile, wretched [four syllables, first and third accented]

²⁶⁰ see line 422, above

²⁶¹ Sidon, Syrian city of the Phoenicians; now in Lebanon

²⁶² hill in Jerusalem, site of the Temple

²⁶³ displeasing

²⁶⁴ excessively fond of one's wife

²⁶⁵ Solomon

²⁶⁶ or Tammuz, Babylonian-Sumerian god (known elsewhere as Adonis, Osiris, etc.), carried off to the underworld but redeemed by Ishtar, chief Babylonian-Sumerian goddess, because life on earth had withered in his absence

²⁶⁷ the river, which originates in Lebanon

²⁶⁸ antechamber/entranceway to the temple

- 455 *Ezekiel*²⁶⁹ saw, when by the vision led
 456 *His eye surveyed the dark idolatries*
 457 *Of alienated Judah.*²⁷⁰
- Next came one*
- 458 *Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark*²⁷¹
 459 *Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped*
 off
- 460 *In his own temple,*²⁷² *on the grunsel-edge,*²⁷³
 461 *Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers:*
 462 *Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man*
 463 *And downward fish, yet*²⁷⁴ *had his temple high*
 464 *Reared in Azotus,*²⁷⁵ *dreaded through the coast*
 465 *Of Palestine, in Gath*²⁷⁶ *and Ascalon,*²⁷⁷
 466 *And Accaron*²⁷⁸ *and Gaza's*²⁷⁹ *frontier bounds.*
 467 *Him followed Rimmon,*²⁸⁰ *whose delightful seat*
 468 *Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks*
 469 *Of Abbana*²⁸¹ *and Pharphar,*²⁸² *lucid*²⁸³ *streams.*²⁸⁴

²⁶⁹ prophet of the Babylonian exile of the Israelites, sixth century B.C.

²⁷⁰ the southern of the two kingdoms into which Israel was divided, after Solomon's death; the northern kingdom retained the name Israel

²⁷¹ captured by the Philistines

²⁷² placed in Dagon's temple, overnight the ark toppled Dagon's statue, knocking off the head and both hands

²⁷³ threshold-edge

²⁷⁴ (1) still, at that time, (2) nevertheless

²⁷⁵ Ashdod, major Philistine city

²⁷⁶ a major Philistine city

²⁷⁷ a major Philistine city

²⁷⁸ Ekron: a major Philistine city

²⁷⁹ a major Philistine city

²⁸⁰ Syrian god

²⁸¹ river in Damascus [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

²⁸² river near Damascus

²⁸³ clear, pellucid, translucent, shining

²⁸⁴ rivers

470 *He also against the house of God was bold.*
 471 *A leper²⁸⁵ once he lost, and gained a king—*
 472 *Ahaz,²⁸⁶ his²⁸⁷ sottish²⁸⁸ conqueror, whom he drew²⁸⁹*
 473 *God's altar to disparage and displace*
 474 *For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn*
 475 *His odious offerings, and adore the gods*
 476 *Whom he²⁹⁰ had vanquished.*

After these appeared

477 *A crew who, under names of old renown—*
 478 *Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—²⁹¹*
 479 *With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused²⁹²*
 480 *Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek*
 481 *Their wand'ring gods disguised in brutish forms*
 482 *Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape*
 483 *Th' infection, when their borrowed gold composed²⁹³*
 484 *The calf²⁹⁴ in Oreb,²⁹⁵ and the rebel king²⁹⁶*
 485 *Doubled that sin in Bethel²⁹⁷ and in Dan,²⁹⁸*

²⁸⁵ Naaman, cured by Elisha, ninth century B.C. prophet of Israel, disciple of and successor to Elijah

²⁸⁶ Ahaz, king of Judah, eighth century B.C.

²⁸⁷ i.e., Rimmon's

²⁸⁸ stupid, foolish

²⁸⁹ induced

²⁹⁰ i.e., Ahaz

²⁹¹ Osiris was husband to Isis; Horus (Orus) was their son

²⁹² tricked, deceived, imposed upon

²⁹³ produced, made up

²⁹⁴ linked to Apis, the sacred bull of Egypt

²⁹⁵ Horeb: the mountain where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments; the Israelites waiting below demanded an idol to worship and Aaron, taking their gold jewelry, melted it and made them a golden calf

²⁹⁶ Jeroboam, king of Judah, 930–910 B.C., made not one but two golden calves for his people to worship

²⁹⁷ holy site, north of Jerusalem

²⁹⁸ holy site in far northern Palestine

486 *Lik'ning his Maker to the grazèd ox—²⁹⁹*
 487 *Jehovah, who in one night, when he³⁰⁰ passed*
 488 *From Egypt marching, equalled³⁰¹ with one*
 stroke³⁰²
 489 *Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.*
 490 *Belial³⁰³ came last, than whom a Spirit more*
 lewd
 491 *Fell not from Heaven, or more gross³⁰⁴ to love*
 492 *Vice for itself. To him no temple stood*
 493 *Or altar smoked, yet who more oft than he*
 494 *In temples and at altars, when the priest*
 495 *Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled*
 496 *With lust and violence the house of God?³⁰⁵*
 497 *In courts and palaces he also reigns,*
 498 *And in luxurious³⁰⁶ cities, where the noise*
 499 *Of riot³⁰⁷ ascends above their loftiest tow'rs,*
 500 *And injury³⁰⁸ and outrage.³⁰⁹ And when night*
 501 *Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons*
 502 *Of Belial,³¹⁰ flown³¹¹ with insolence and wine.*

²⁹⁹ "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten [golden] image./Thus they changed their glory [i.e., God] into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass." Psalm 106:19–20

³⁰⁰ by extension, the Israelites

³⁰¹ made equal

³⁰² "For I [the Lord] will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment." Exodus 12:12

³⁰³ "wickedness"

³⁰⁴ monstrous, flagrant

³⁰⁵ see I Samuel 2:12–17

³⁰⁶ (1) lecherous, unchaste, outrageous, (2) given to luxury

³⁰⁷ debauchery, dissipation, extravagance, loose living, etc.

³⁰⁸ wrongful treatment, violation of another's rights

³⁰⁹ intemperance, excess, violent/disorderly behavior

³¹⁰ a common Puritan insult, borrowed from the Hebrew *bene Belial*, "sons of Belial"

³¹¹ inflated

503 *Witness the streets of Sodom,*³¹² *and that night*
 504 *In Gibeah,*³¹³ *when the hospitable door*
 505 *Exposed*³¹⁴ *a matron,*³¹⁵ *to avoid worse rape.*³¹⁶
 506 *These were the prime*³¹⁷ *in order and in might.*
 507 *The rest were long to tell, though far*³¹⁸
 *renowned,*³¹⁹
 508 *Th' Ionian gods—of Javan's issue*³²⁰ *held*
 509 *Gods, yet confessed*³²¹ *later than Heav'n and*
 Earth,
 510 *Their boasted parents; Titan,*³²² *Heav'n's first-*
 born,
 511 *With his enormous brood, and birthright seized*
 512 *By younger Saturn. He*³²³ *from mightier Jove,*
 513 *His own and Rhea's*³²⁴ *son, like measure*³²⁵ *found:*
 514 *So Jove usurping reigned. These first in Crete*
 515 *And Ida*³²⁶ *known, thence on the snowy top*
 516 *Of cold Olympus*³²⁷ *ruled the middle air,*³²⁸

³¹² a city in the Jordan plain, destroyed by God because of its wickedness

³¹³ see Judges 19:22–30

³¹⁴ cast out

³¹⁵ married woman (though in fact the woman was a concubine)

³¹⁶ i.e., homosexual rape of a man

³¹⁷ primary

³¹⁸ widely

³¹⁹ celebrated, famous

³²⁰ Javan = Ion: his issue were the Ionian (western Asia Minor) Greeks

³²¹ admitted, acknowledged

³²² Uranus' oldest son, Saturn's older brother

³²³ Saturn, overthrown by Jove

³²⁴ Uranus' daughter, Cronus' wife

³²⁵ like measure = equal treatment

³²⁶ Mount Ida (in Crete)

³²⁷ mountain in Thessaly: the gods' home

³²⁸ true heaven is the highest; the middle air is for demons—and for the Greek gods, according to Milton; in the lower air is the earth (and Hades underneath it)

517 *Their highest heav'n, or³²⁹ on the Delphian cliff,³³⁰*
 518 *Or in Dodona,³³¹ and through all the bounds³³²*
 519 *Of Doric land,³³³ or who with Saturn old*
 520 *Fled over Adria³³⁴ to th' Hesperian³³⁵ fields*
 521 *And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.³³⁶*
 522 *All these and more came flocking, but with looks*
 523 *Downcast and damp,³³⁷ yet such wherein appeared*
 524 *Obscure³³⁸ some glimpse of joy to have found their*
 chief³³⁹
 525 *Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost*
 526 *In loss itself, which on his countenance cast*
 527 *Like³⁴⁰ doubtful³⁴¹ hue.³⁴² But he, his wonted³⁴³ pride*
 528 *Soon recollecting, with high words that bore*
 529 *Semblance³⁴⁴ of worth, not substance, gently raised*
 530 *Their fainting courage and dispelled their fears,*
 531 *Then straight³⁴⁵ commands that, at the warlike*
 sound

³²⁹ or = whether

³³⁰ the oracle of Apollo at Delphi

³³¹ the oracle of Zeus at Dodona

³³² boundaries, limits

³³³ Doric land = southern Greece

³³⁴ the Adriatic Sea

³³⁵ western, Italian

³³⁶ i.e., Britain and Ireland

³³⁷ dejected

³³⁸ hidden

³³⁹ Satan

³⁴⁰ a similar

³⁴¹ uncertain, unsettled

³⁴² appearance

³⁴³ accustomed

³⁴⁴ appearance

³⁴⁵ immediately

532 *Of trumpets loud, and clarions,³⁴⁶ be upreared³⁴⁷*
 533 *His mighty standard.³⁴⁸ That proud honor claimed*
 534 *Azazel³⁴⁹ as his right, a Cherub tall,*
 535 *Who forthwith from the glittering staff³⁵⁰ unfurled*
 536 *Th' imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,³⁵¹*
 537 *Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,*
 538 *With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,*
 539 *Seraphic arms and trophies, all the while*
 540 *Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.*
 541 *At which the universal host up-sent*
 542 *A shout that tore Hell's concave,³⁵² and beyond*
 543 *Frighted the reign³⁵³ of Chaos and old Night.*
 544 *All in a moment through the gloom were seen*
 545 *Ten thousand banners rise into the air,*
 546 *With orient³⁵⁴ colors waving. With them rose*
 547 *A forest huge of spears, and thronging helms³⁵⁵*
 548 *Appeared, and serried³⁵⁶ shields in thick array*
 549 *Of depth immeasurable. Anon³⁵⁷ they move*
 550 *In perfect phalanx³⁵⁸ to the Dorian mood³⁵⁹*
 551 *Of flutes and soft recorders³⁶⁰—such as raised*
 552 *To height of noblest temper³⁶¹ heroes old*

³⁴⁶ a form of trumpet, shrill-sounding

³⁴⁷ raised

³⁴⁸ banner, flag

³⁴⁹ in Judaism, the very personification of impurity, an archdemon

³⁵⁰ flagpole

³⁵¹ presented, put forward

³⁵² vault, hollow

³⁵³ realm

³⁵⁴ brilliant, sparkling, radiant, lustrous

³⁵⁵ helmets

³⁵⁶ pressed close together

³⁵⁷ quickly

³⁵⁸ close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans

³⁵⁹ mode, scale

³⁶⁰ wooden flutes, not held transversely, as is the flute properly so called

³⁶¹ composure, state of mind

553 *Arming to battle, and instead of rage*
 554 *Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved*
 555 *With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,*
 556 *Nor wanting³⁶² power to mitigate³⁶³ and suage³⁶⁴*
 557 *With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase*
 558 *Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain*
 559 *From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,*
 560 *Breathing united force with fixèd thought,*
 561 *Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed*
 562 *Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil.*

And now

563 *Advanced in view they stand—a horrid³⁶⁵ front³⁶⁶*
 564 *Of dreadful length³⁶⁷ and dazzling arms,³⁶⁸ in*
 guise³⁶⁹
 565 *Of warriors old, with ordered³⁷⁰ spear and shield,*
 566 *Awaiting what command their mighty chief*
 567 *Had to impose.³⁷¹ He through the armèd files³⁷²*
 568 *Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse³⁷³*
 569 *The whole battalion views—their order due,³⁷⁴*
 570 *Their visages and stature as of gods.*
 571 *Their number last he sums.³⁷⁵ And now his heart*

³⁶² lacking

³⁶³ mollify, appease

³⁶⁴ assuage: soften, pacify

³⁶⁵ bristling, frightful

³⁶⁶ battle line

³⁶⁷ fearfully/exceedingly long

³⁶⁸ weapons

³⁶⁹ semblance, external appearance

³⁷⁰ arranged

³⁷¹ lay on, give

³⁷² rows

³⁷³ passing across, side to side (in ranks) rather than front to back (in files)

³⁷⁴ proper

³⁷⁵ counts up

- 572 *Distends*³⁷⁶ *with pride and hard'ning in his*
strength
- 573 *Glories, for never since created man*
- 574 *Met such embodied*³⁷⁷ *force as, named*³⁷⁸ *with*
these,
- 575 *Could merit*³⁷⁹ *more than*³⁸⁰ *that small infantry*
- 576 *Warred on by cranes*³⁸¹—*though all the giant*
brood
- 577 *Of Phlegra*³⁸² *with th' heroic race were joined*
- 578 *That fought at Thebes*³⁸³ *and Ilium,*³⁸⁴ *on each side*
- 579 *Mixed with auxiliar*³⁸⁵ *gods, and what resounds*³⁸⁶
- 580 *In fable or romance of Uther's son,*³⁸⁷
- 581 *Begirt with*³⁸⁸ *British and Armoric*³⁸⁹ *knights,*
- 582 *And all who since, baptized or infidel,*
- 583 *Jousted*³⁹⁰ *in Aspramont,*³⁹¹ *or Montalban,*³⁹²
- 584 *Damasco,*³⁹³ *or Marocco,*³⁹⁴ *or Trebisond,*³⁹⁵

³⁷⁶ swells, expands

³⁷⁷ (1) actual, concrete, (2) joined in one group/body

³⁷⁸ mentioned (for purposes of comparison)

³⁷⁹ be entitled to, be deserving of

³⁸⁰ i.e., any more than

³⁸¹ pygmies: the battle is in Homer's *Iliad*, III:1–5; Milton returns to it in lines 780–81, below

³⁸² in Chalcidice, where the giants warred with the gods

³⁸³ part of the Oedipus story: see Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*

³⁸⁴ Troy

³⁸⁵ auxiliary

³⁸⁶ echoes, rings

³⁸⁷ King Arthur

³⁸⁸ surrounded by

³⁸⁹ of Brittany

³⁹⁰ knightly combat (pronounced “justed”)

³⁹¹ castle near Nice, where Charlemagne fought

³⁹² Rinaldo's castle: see Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*

³⁹³ Damascus, where Moslem and Christian knights jousted, in *Orlando Furioso*

³⁹⁴ Morocco (city): see footnote 396, below

³⁹⁵ on the southern coast of the Black Sea

585 *Or whom Biserta³⁹⁶ sent from Afric shore*
 586 *When Charlemain with all his peerage fell*
 587 *By Fontarabbia.³⁹⁷ Thus far these, beyond*
 588 *Compare of³⁹⁸ mortal prowess, yet observed*
 589 *Their dread³⁹⁹ commander. He, above the rest*
 590 *In shape and gesture proudly eminent,*
 591 *Stood like a tow'r. His form had yet not lost*
 592 *All her original brightness, nor appeared*
 593 *Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess*
 594 *Of glory obscured, as when the sun new-ris'n*
 595 *Looks through the horizontal misty air*
 596 *Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon,*
 597 *In dim eclipse, disastrous⁴⁰⁰ twilight sheds⁴⁰¹*
 598 *On half the nations, and with fear of change*
 599 *Perplexes⁴⁰² monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone*
 600 *Above them all th' Archangel, but his face*
 601 *Deep scars of thunder had intrenched,⁴⁰³ and care*
 602 *Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows*
 603 *Of dauntless courage, and considerate⁴⁰⁴ pride*
 604 *Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast⁴⁰⁵*
 605 *Signs of remorse and passion, to behold*
 606 *The fellows⁴⁰⁶ of his crime, the followers rather*
 607 *(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned*
 608 *For ever now to have their lot⁴⁰⁷ in pain.*

³⁹⁶ Bizerta, in Tunisia, like Morocco a famous site of knightly tournaments

³⁹⁷ in *La Chanson de Roland*, it is Roland rather than Charlemagne who dies at Roncevaux, not far from Fontarabbia

³⁹⁸ with (merely)

³⁹⁹ revered, feared

⁴⁰⁰ ominous, ill-boding

⁴⁰¹ sprinkles, lets fall on, pours out, drops

⁴⁰² confuses, makes uncertain

⁴⁰³ furrowed

⁴⁰⁴ deliberate, prudent

⁴⁰⁵ dropped

⁴⁰⁶ partners, colleagues

⁴⁰⁷ fate, destiny

609 *Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced*⁴⁰⁸
 610 *Of heav'n, and from eternal splendors flung*
 611 *For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,*
 612 *Their glory withered—as when Heaven's fire*
 613 *Hath scathed*⁴⁰⁹ *the forest oaks or mountain pines,*
 614 *With singèd top their stately*⁴¹⁰ *growth, though*
 bare,
 615 *Stands on the blasted*⁴¹¹ *heath. He now prepared*
 616 *To speak, whereat their doubled ranks they bend*
 617 *From wing to wing, and half enclose him round*
 618 *With all his peers. Attention held them mute.*
 619 *Thrice he assayed,*⁴¹² *and thrice, in spite of*⁴¹³
 scorn,
 620 *Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth. At last*
 621 *Words interwove with sighs found out their way:*
 622 *“O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers*
 623 *Matchless, but*⁴¹⁴ *with th' Almighty! And that strife*
 624 *Was not inglorious, though th' event*⁴¹⁵ *was dire,*⁴¹⁶
 625 *As this place testifies, and this dire change,*
 626 *Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,*
 627 *Foreseeing or presaging,*⁴¹⁷ *from the depth*
 628 *Of knowledge past or present, could have feared*
 629 *How such united force of gods, how such*
 630 *As stood like these, could ever know repulse?*⁴¹⁸
 631 *For who can yet believe, though after loss,*

⁴⁰⁸ punished

⁴⁰⁹ blast/scorch/sear with fire/heat

⁴¹⁰ noble, majestic, imposing

⁴¹¹ blighted, withered

⁴¹² tried, attempted

⁴¹³ in spite of = with contempt for

⁴¹⁴ except

⁴¹⁵ outcome

⁴¹⁶ dreadful, terrible

⁴¹⁷ predicting

⁴¹⁸ rebuff, being forced/driven back

632 *That all these puissant⁴¹⁹ legions,⁴²⁰ whose exile*
 633 *Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to re-ascend,*
 634 *Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?*
 635 *For me, be witness all the host of Heav'n,*
 636 *If counsels⁴²¹ different, or danger shunned*
 637 *By me, have lost our hopes. But He who reigns*
 638 *Monarch in Heav'n till then as one secure*
 639 *Sat on His throne, upheld by old repute,*
 640 *Consent or custom, and His regal state*
 641 *Put forth at full,⁴²² but still His strength*
 concealed—
 642 *Which tempted our attempt, and wrought⁴²³ our*
 fall.
 643 *Henceforth His might⁴²⁴ we know, and know our*
 own,
 644 *So as not either to provoke, or dread*
 645 *New war provoked. Our better part⁴²⁵ remains*
 646 *To work in close⁴²⁶ design,⁴²⁷ by fraud or guile,*
 647 *What force effected⁴²⁸ not, that He no less*
 648 *At length from us may find:⁴²⁹ who overcomes*
 649 *By force hath overcome but half his foe.*
 650 *Space may produce new worlds—whereof so rife⁴³⁰*
 651 *There went a fame⁴³¹ in Heav'n that He ere long*

⁴¹⁹ powerful

⁴²⁰ armies

⁴²¹ judgment, opinion, direction

⁴²² at full = completely

⁴²³ worked

⁴²⁴ “His strength”

⁴²⁵ act, business

⁴²⁶ secret, confidential

⁴²⁷ plan, scheme

⁴²⁸ brought about, accomplished

⁴²⁹ discover

⁴³⁰ common, prevalent

⁴³¹ rumor

- 652 *Intended to create, and therein plant*
 653 *A generation whom His choice⁴³² regard⁴³³*
 654 *Should favor equal to the sons of Heav'n.*
 655 *Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps*
 656 *Our first eruption⁴³⁴—thither, or elsewhere,*
 657 *For this infernal pit shall never hold*
 658 *Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' abyss*
 659 *Long under darkness cover.⁴³⁵*
- “But these thoughts*
- 660 *Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired,*
 661 *For who can think submission? War, then, war*
 662 *Open or understood, must be resolved.”*
 663 *He spoke and, to confirm his words, outflew*
 664 *Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the*
 thighs⁴³⁶
 665 *Of mighty Cherubim: the sudden blaze*
 666 *Far round illumined Hell. Highly⁴³⁷ they raged*
 667 *Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped⁴³⁸*
 arms
 668 *Clashed on their sounding⁴³⁹ shields the din of*
 war,
 669 *Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n.*
 670 *There stood a hill not far, whose grisly⁴⁴⁰ top*
 671 *Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire⁴⁴¹*
 672 *Shone with a glossy scurf⁴⁴²—undoubted sign*

⁴³² special, select [adjective]

⁴³³ attention, consideration

⁴³⁴ breaking/bursting forth

⁴³⁵ hide, wrap

⁴³⁶ i.e., from scabbards strapped to their thighs

⁴³⁷ (1) very much, (2) proudly, arrogantly

⁴³⁸ clutched and held firmly

⁴³⁹ reverberating, sonorous

⁴⁴⁰ ugly, horrible

⁴⁴¹ “the whole rest”

⁴⁴² a scale/crust (of hardened sulfur, combined with volcanic flow)

673 *That in his womb was hid metallic ore,*
 674 *The work of sulphur.⁴⁴³ Thither; winged with speed,*
 675 *A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands*
 676 *Of pioneers,⁴⁴⁴ with spade and pickaxe armed,*
 677 *Forerun⁴⁴⁵ the royal camp, to trench⁴⁴⁶ a field*
 678 *Or cast⁴⁴⁷ a rampart.⁴⁴⁸ Mammon led them on—*
 679 *Mammon, the least erected⁴⁴⁹ Spirit that fell*
 680 *From Heav'n, for even in Heav'n his looks and*
 thoughts
 681 *Were always downward bent, admiring more*
 682 *The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodden gold,*
 683 *Than aught divine or holy else⁴⁵⁰ enjoyed*
 684 *In vision beatific.⁴⁵¹ By him first*
 685 *Men also, and by his suggestion taught,*
 686 *Ransacked the center,⁴⁵² and with impious hands*
 687 *Rifled⁴⁵³ the bowels of their mother earth*
 688 *For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew*
 689 *Opened into the hill a spacious wound,*
 690 *And digged out ribs⁴⁵⁴ of gold. Let none admire⁴⁵⁵*
 691 *That riches grow in Hell: that soil may best*
 692 *Deserve the precious bane.⁴⁵⁶ And here let those*

⁴⁴³ current science taught that metals formed by mercury combining with sulfur

⁴⁴⁴ soldiers with shovels and axes

⁴⁴⁵ run in front of, precede

⁴⁴⁶ dig trenches in

⁴⁴⁷ to throw up, with shovels or spades

⁴⁴⁸ defensive mound, usually of earth

⁴⁴⁹ upright, elevated

⁴⁵⁰ aught . . . else = anyone else

⁴⁵¹ blessed

⁴⁵² (of the earth)

⁴⁵³ plundered, robbed

⁴⁵⁴ veins (of ore)

⁴⁵⁵ be surprised/amazed/astonished

⁴⁵⁶ curse

693 *Who boast in⁴⁵⁷ mortal things, and wond'ring tell*
 694 *Of Babel, and the works of Memphian⁴⁵⁸ kings,*
 695 *Learn how their greatest monuments of fame*
 696 *And strength, and art, are easily outdone*
 697 *By Spirits reprobate,⁴⁵⁹ and in an hour*
 698 *What in an age they,⁴⁶⁰ with incessant toil*
 699 *And hands innumerable, scarce perform.*
 700 *Nigh⁴⁶¹ on the plain, in many cells⁴⁶² prepared,*
 701 *That underneath had veins of liquid fire*
 702 *Sluiced⁴⁶³ from the lake, a second multitude*
 703 *With wondrous art⁴⁶⁴ founded⁴⁶⁵ the massy⁴⁶⁶ ore,*
 704 *Severing⁴⁶⁷ each kind, and scummed⁴⁶⁸ the bullion-*
 dross.⁴⁶⁹
 705 *A third as soon⁴⁷⁰ had formed within the ground*
 706 *A various⁴⁷¹ mould, and from the boiling cells*
 707 *By strange⁴⁷² conveyance filled each hollow nook,*
 708 *As in an organ, from one blast of wind,*
 709 *To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.*
 710 *Anon⁴⁷³ out of the earth a fabric⁴⁷⁴ huge*

⁴⁵⁷ (1) brag of, (2) glory in

⁴⁵⁸ Egyptian

⁴⁵⁹ condemned, depraved, rejected by God

⁴⁶⁰ i.e., Memphian kings et al.

⁴⁶¹ near

⁴⁶² pits

⁴⁶³ drawn

⁴⁶⁴ skill

⁴⁶⁵ melted

⁴⁶⁶ dense

⁴⁶⁷ separating

⁴⁶⁸ skimmed

⁴⁶⁹ golden dregs

⁴⁷⁰ as soon = quickly

⁴⁷¹ versatile

⁴⁷² unknown

⁴⁷³ soon

⁴⁷⁴ structure, building

- 711 *Rose like an exhalation with the sound*
 712 *Of dulcet⁴⁷⁵ symphonies⁴⁷⁶ and voices sweet—*
 713 *Built like a temple, where pilasters⁴⁷⁷ round*
 714 *Were set, and Doric⁴⁷⁸ pillars overlaid*
 715 *With golden architrave,⁴⁷⁹ nor did there want⁴⁸⁰*
 716 *Cornice⁴⁸¹ or frieze,⁴⁸² with bossy sculptures⁴⁸³*
 grav'n.
 717 *The roof was fretted⁴⁸⁴ gold. Not Babylon*
 718 *Nor great Alcairo⁴⁸⁵ such magnificence*
 719 *Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine*
 720 *Belus or Serapis⁴⁸⁶ their gods, or seat⁴⁸⁷*
 721 *Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove*
 722 *In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile⁴⁸⁸*
 723 *Stood fixed⁴⁸⁹ her stately height, and straight the*
 doors,
 724 *Opening their brazen⁴⁹⁰ folds, discover,⁴⁹¹ wide*
 725 *Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth*
 726 *And level pavement. From the archèd roof,*

⁴⁷⁵ sweet, pleasing

⁴⁷⁶ harmonious music

⁴⁷⁷ pillars, columns

⁴⁷⁸ a form of Greek architecture

⁴⁷⁹ support beams of various types

⁴⁸⁰ lack

⁴⁸¹ ornamental molding

⁴⁸² decoration applied between the architrave and the cornice

⁴⁸³ bossy sculptures = bas-relief sculptures

⁴⁸⁴ adorned, carved

⁴⁸⁵ ancient Memphis, near modern Cairo

⁴⁸⁶ Belus or Serapis = Baal or Osiris

⁴⁸⁷ enthrone, establish

⁴⁸⁸ lofty/large building/structure

⁴⁸⁹ (1) located, established, (2) firm, stable

⁴⁹⁰ (1) brass, (2) hardened in their effrontery

⁴⁹¹ reveal

727 *Pendant*⁴⁹² *by subtle*⁴⁹³ *magic, many a row*
 728 *Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,*⁴⁹⁴ *fed*
 729 *With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light*
 730 *As from a sky. The hasty*⁴⁹⁵ *multitude*
 731 *Admiring entered, and the work some praise,*
 732 *And some the architect. His hand was known*
 733 *In Heav'n by many a tow' red structure high,*
 734 *Where sceptered Angels held their residence*
 735 *And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King*
 736 *Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,*
 737 *Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.*
 738 *Nor was his name unheard or unadored*
 739 *In ancient Greece. And in Ausonian*⁴⁹⁶ *land*
 740 *Men called him Mulciber,*⁴⁹⁷ *and how he fell*
 741 *From Heav'n they fabled,*⁴⁹⁸ *thrown by angry Jove*
 742 *Sheer*⁴⁹⁹ *o'er the crystal battlements.*⁵⁰⁰ *From morn*
 743 *To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,*
 744 *A summer's day, and with the setting sun*
 745 *Dropt from the zenith*⁵⁰¹ *like a falling star,*
 746 *On Lemnos, th' Aegean isle. Thus they relate,*⁵⁰²
 747 *Erring, for he with this rebellious rout*⁵⁰³
 748 *Fell long before, nor aught availed him now*
 749 *To have built in Heav'n high tow'rs, nor did he*
 scape

⁴⁹² suspended, hung

⁴⁹³ intricate, delicate, skillful, expert, ingenious

⁴⁹⁴ firepots

⁴⁹⁵ swift, hurrying

⁴⁹⁶ Italian

⁴⁹⁷ Mulciber = Hephaestus/Vulcan

⁴⁹⁸ talked idly, lied about

⁴⁹⁹ steeply, perpendicularly

⁵⁰⁰ fortifications placed on top of walls

⁵⁰¹ directly overhead

⁵⁰² tell, recount

⁵⁰³ mob, rabble

750 *By all his engines,⁵⁰⁴ but was headlong sent,*
 751 *With his industrious⁵⁰⁵ crew, to build in Hell.*
 752 *Meanwhile the wingèd heralds, by command*
 753 *Of sov'reign power, with awful⁵⁰⁶ ceremony*
 754 *And trumpet's sound throughout the host⁵⁰⁷*
 proclaim
 755 *A solemn council forthwith to be held*
 756 *At Pandemonium, the high capital*
 757 *Of Satan and his peers.⁵⁰⁸ Their summons called*
 758 *From every band and squared⁵⁰⁹ regiment*
 759 *By place⁵¹⁰ or choice the worthiest. They anon⁵¹¹*
 760 *With hundreds and with thousands trooping came*
 761 *Attended.⁵¹² All access⁵¹³ was thronged, the gates*
 762 *And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall*
 763 *(Though like a covered field, where champions*
 bold
 764 *Wont⁵¹⁴ ride in armed, and at the Soldan's⁵¹⁵ chair*
 765 *Defied the best of Paynim⁵¹⁶ chivalry*
 766 *To mortal combat, or career⁵¹⁷ with lance),*
 767 *Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,*
 768 *Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees*
 769 *In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides,*

⁵⁰⁴ machines, devices

⁵⁰⁵ hardworking, skillful, ingenious

⁵⁰⁶ solemnly impressive/majestic

⁵⁰⁷ multitude

⁵⁰⁸ i.e., all the spirits/demons

⁵⁰⁹ precisely formed

⁵¹⁰ position, post, rank

⁵¹¹ soon, quickly

⁵¹² escorted

⁵¹³ approaches

⁵¹⁴ were in the habit, accustomed to

⁵¹⁵ Sultan's

⁵¹⁶ pagan

⁵¹⁷ encounter, charge

770 *Pour forth their populous youth about the hive*
 771 *In clusters, they among fresh dews and flowers*
 772 *Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,*
 773 *The suburb⁵¹⁸ of their straw-built citadel,*
 774 *New rubbed with balm, expatiate⁵¹⁹ and confer*
 775 *Their state-affairs. So thick the airy crowd*
 776 *Swarmed and were straitened,⁵²⁰ till, the signal*
 given,
 777 *Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed*
 778 *In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,*
 779 *Now less than smallest dwarfs in narrow room*
 780 *Throng numberless—like that pygmean race*
 781 *Beyond the Indian mount,⁵²¹ or faery elves,*
 782 *Whose midnight revels⁵²² by a forest-side*
 783 *Or fountain some belated⁵²³ peasant sees,*
 784 *Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon*
 785 *Sits arbitress,⁵²⁴ and nearer to the earth*
 786 *Wheels⁵²⁵ her pale course.⁵²⁶ They, on their mirth*
 and dance
 787 *Intent, with jocund⁵²⁷ music charm his⁵²⁸ ear;*
 788 *At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.*
 789 *Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms*

⁵¹⁸ outskirts

⁵¹⁹ walk and speak

⁵²⁰ closed in, compacted

⁵²¹ the Himalayas

⁵²² merrymaking

⁵²³ tardy, late-coming

⁵²⁴ person in charge

⁵²⁵ revolves, turns, rolls, moves

⁵²⁶ way, onward movement

⁵²⁷ joyful

⁵²⁸ i.e., the watching peasant

- 790 *Reduced their shapes immense, and were at
large,⁵²⁹*
- 791 *Though without number still, amidst the hall*
792 *Of that infernal court.⁵³⁰ But far within,*
793 *And in their own dimensions like themselves,*
794 *The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim*
795 *In close recess and secret conclave⁵³¹ sat,*
796 *A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,*
797 *Frequent⁵³² and full. After short silence, then,*
798 *And summons read, the great consult began.*

The End of the First Book

⁵²⁹ at large = at liberty, free

⁵³⁰ sovereign establishment

⁵³¹ assembly

⁵³² crowded

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be¹ to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven. Some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred,² mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophesy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves, about this time to be created.

Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search.

Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage, is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain³ the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell Gates, finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them, by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf⁴ between Hell and Heaven.

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

¹ is

² put forward

³ occupy

⁴ abyss

1 *High on a throne of royal state, which far*
 2 *Outshone the wealth of Ormus⁵ and of Ind,⁶*
 3 *Or where the gorgeous⁷ East with richest hand*
 4 *Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,*
 5 *Satan exalted sat, by merit raised*
 6 *To that bad eminence and, from despair*
 7 *Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires*
 8 *Beyond thus high, insatiate⁸ to pursue*
 9 *Vain war with Heav'n and, by success⁹ untaught,*
 10 *His proud imaginations thus displayed:*
 11 *“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n!—*
 12 *For since no deep within her gulf¹⁰ can hold*
 13 *Immortal vigor,¹¹ though oppressed and fall'n,*
 14 *I give not Heav'n for lost. From this descent*
 15 *Celestial Virtues¹² rising will appear*
 16 *More glorious and more dread than from no fall,*
 17 *And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—*
 18 *Me, though, just right¹³ and the fixed laws of*
 Heav'n
 19 *Did first create your leader, next free choice,*
 20 *With what besides in council or in fight*
 21 *Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,*
 22 *Thus far at least recovered,¹⁴ hath much more*
 23 *Established in a safe, unenvied throne,*
 24 *Yielded with full consent. The happier¹⁵ state*

⁵ Persian Gulf city of great wealth

⁶ India

⁷ showy, magnificent

⁸ unsatisfiable

⁹ (1) failure, misfortune, (2) result, sequel (to the first attempt)

¹⁰ abyss

¹¹ (1) strength, energy, (2) mental acuity

¹² the seventh of the nine angelic orders

¹³ “Although just right [fair law] at first created me . . .”

¹⁴ regained

¹⁵ luckier, more fortunate

25 *In Heav'n, which follows¹⁶ dignity,¹⁷ might draw*
 26 *Envy from each inferior. But who here*
 27 *Will envy whom the highest place exposes*
 28 *Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim*
 29 *Your bulwark,¹⁸ and condemns to greatest share*
 30 *Of endless pain? Where there is then no good*
 31 *For which to strive, no strife can grow up there*
 32 *From faction,¹⁹ for none sure will claim in Hell*
 33 *Precedence, none whose portion is so small*
 34 *Of present pain that with ambitious mind*
 35 *Will covet more! With this advantage, then,*
 36 *To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,*
 37 *More than can be in Heav'n, we now return*
 38 *To claim our just inheritance of old,*
 39 *Surer to prosper than prosperity*
 40 *Could have assured us. And by what best way,*
 41 *Whether of open war or covert guile,*
 42 *We now debate. Who can advise may speak."*

43 *He ceased. And next²⁰ him Moloch, sceptered*
 king,
 44 *Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit*
 45 *That fought in Heav'n, now fiercer by despair.*
 46 *His trust²¹ was with th' Eternal to be deemed*
 47 *Equal in strength, and rather than be less*
 48 *Cared not to be at all. With that care lost*
 49 *Went all his fear—of God, or Hell, or worse,*
 50 *He recked²² not—and these words thereafter*
 spoke:

¹⁶ goes along with, depends on

¹⁷ rank, worth, honor, excellence

¹⁸ defensive structure, rampart

¹⁹ political parties, intrigue, strife

²⁰ after

²¹ (1) hope, (2) confidence, confident expectation

²² cared

51 *My sentence²³ is for open war. Of wiles*
 52 *More unexpert, I boast not. Then let those*
 53 *Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.*
 54 *For while they sit contriving, shall the rest—*
 55 *Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait*
 56 *The signal to ascend—sit ling'ring here,*
 57 *Heav'n's fugitives? and for their dwelling-place*
 58 *Accept this dark opprobrious²⁴ den of shame,*
 59 *The prison of His tyranny who reigns*
 60 *By our delay? No! Let us rather choose,*
 61 *Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once*
 62 *O'er Heav'n's high tow'rs to force resistless way,*
 63 *Turning our tortures into horrid arms*
 64 *Against the Torturer! When to meet the noise*
 65 *Of His almighty engine,²⁵ He shall hear*
 66 *Infernal thunder and, for lightning, see*
 67 *Black fire and horror shot with equal rage*
 68 *Among His Angels, and His throne itself*
 69 *Mixed with Tartarean²⁶ sulphur and strange²⁷ fire,*
 70 *His own invented torments. But perhaps*
 71 *The way seems difficult, and steep to scale*
 72 *With upright wing against a higher foe?*
 73 *Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench²⁸*
 74 *Of that forgetful²⁹ lake benumb not still,*
 75 *That in our proper³⁰ motion we ascend*
 76 *Up to our native seat; descent and fall*
 77 *To us is adverse.³¹ Who but felt of late,*

²³ opinion, judgment

²⁴ injurious, abusive, disgraceful

²⁵ engine = mechanical device: God's chariot?

²⁶ the deepest region of Hades

²⁷ unknown, unfamiliar

²⁸ drug, potion

²⁹ in book 1, line 266, an "oblivious pool"

³⁰ intrinsic—i.e., that which inheres in Spirits/Angels, etc.

³¹ actively opposed (i.e., unnatural)

78 *When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear*³²
 79 *Insulting,*³³ *and pursued us through the deep,*
 80 *With what compulsion and laborious flight*
 81 *We sunk thus low? Th' ascent is easy, then;*
 82 *Th' event*³⁴ *is feared! Should we again provoke*
 83 *Our stronger, some worse way His wrath may find*
 84 *To our destruction, if there be in Hell*
 85 *Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse*
 86 *Than to dwell here, driv'n out from bliss,*
 condemned
 87 *In this abhorrèd*³⁵ *deep to utter*³⁶ *woe!*
 88 *Where pain of unextinguishable fire*
 89 *Must exercise*³⁷ *us without hope of end,*
 90 *The vassals*³⁸ *of His anger, when the scourge*
 91 *Inexorably, and the torturing hour,*
 92 *Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus*
 93 *We should be quite abolished, and expire.*
 94 *What fear we then? What doubt we to incense*³⁹
 95 *His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged,*
 96 *Will either quite consume us, and reduce*
 97 *To nothing this essential*⁴⁰ *—happier far*
 98 *Than miserable to have eternal being!—*
 99 *Or if our substance be indeed divine,*
 100 *And cannot cease to be, we are at worst*
 101 *On this side nothing. And by proof we feel*
 102 *Our power sufficient to disturb His Heav'n,*
 103 *And with perpetual inroads to alarm,*

³² the hindmost portion of their army

³³ attacking, assaulting

³⁴ result, outcome

³⁵ horrible, disgusting

³⁶ [adjective]

³⁷ harass, oppress

³⁸ slaves, serfs

³⁹ kindle, inflame

⁴⁰ essence, being

IO4 *Though inaccessible, His fatal throne—*
 IO5 *Which if not victory, is yet revenge.”*
 IO6 *He ended frowning, and his look denounced⁴¹*
 IO7 *Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous*
 IO8 *To less than gods. On th’ other side up rose*
 IO9 *Belial, in act more graceful and humane.*
 IIO *A fairer person lost not Heav’n. He seemed*
 III *For dignity composed, and high exploit.*
 I12 *But all was false and hollow, though his tongue*
 I13 *Dropped manna⁴² and could make the worse*
 appear
 I14 *The better reason, to perplex⁴³ and dash⁴⁴*
 I15 *Maturest counsels, for his thoughts were low—*
 I16 *To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds*
 I17 *Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,*
 I18 *And with persuasive accent thus began:*
 I19 *“I should be much for open war, O peers,⁴⁵*
 I20 *As not behind in hate, if what was urged,*
 I21 *Main reason to persuade immediate war,*
 I22 *Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast*
 I23 *Ominous conjecture⁴⁶ on the whole success,⁴⁷*
 I24 *When he who most excels in fact⁴⁸ of arms,*
 I25 *In what he counsels and in what excels*
 I26 *Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair*
 I27 *And utter dissolution⁴⁹ as the scope⁵⁰*

⁴¹ proclaimed, threatened

⁴² as God had dropped manna to the Israelites, in the desert, when they fled from Egypt

⁴³ complicate, confuse

⁴⁴ frustrate, destroy

⁴⁵ (1) companions, (2) high lords

⁴⁶ prognostication

⁴⁷ result

⁴⁸ feats, deeds, actions

⁴⁹ being brought to an end, death

⁵⁰ goal, purpose

I28 *Of all his aim,⁵¹ after some dire revenge.*
 I29 *First, what revenge? The tow'rs of Heav'n are*
 filled
 I30 *With armèd watch that render all access*
 I31 *Impregnable. Oft on the bordering deep*
 I32 *Encamp their legions, or with obscure⁵² wing*
 I33 *Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,*
 I34 *Scorning surprise. Or could⁵³ we break our way*
 I35 *By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise*
 I36 *With blackest insurrection to confound⁵⁴*
 I37 *Heav'n's purest light, yet our great enemy,*
 I38 *All incorruptible, would on His throne*
 I39 *Sit unpolluted, and th' ethereal⁵⁵ mould,⁵⁶*
 I40 *Incapable of stain, would soon expel*
 I41 *Her mischief,⁵⁷ and purge off the baser⁵⁸ fire,*
 I42 *Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope*
 I43 *Is flat⁵⁹ despair: we must exasperate*
 I44 *Th' Almighty victor to spend⁶⁰ all His rage;*
 I45 *And that must end us, that must be our cure—*
 I46 *To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,⁶¹*
 I47 *Though full of pain, this intellectual being,⁶²*
 I48 *Those thoughts that wander through eternity,*
 I49 *To perish rather, swallowed up and lost*
 I50 *In the wide womb of uncreated Night,*

⁵¹ object

⁵² dark, secret

⁵³ “if we could”

⁵⁴ overthrow, defeat

⁵⁵ celestial

⁵⁶ distinctive nature/shape

⁵⁷ evil, harm

⁵⁸ low, inferior, degraded

⁵⁹ absolute, lifeless, spiritless

⁶⁰ employ, exercise

⁶¹ undo, release

⁶² (1) intelligent existence, (2) superior intelligent existence

151 *Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,*
 152 *Let this be good, whether our angry foe*
 153 *Can give it, or will ever? How He can*
 154 *Is doubtful; that He never will is sure.*
 155 *Will He, so wise, let loose at once His ire,*
 156 *Belike⁶³ through impotence or unaware,*
 157 *To give His enemies their wish, and end*
 158 *Them in His anger, whom His anger saves*
 159 *To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'*
 160 *Say they who counsel war: 'we are decreed,⁶⁴*
 161 *Reserved,⁶⁵ and destined to eternal woe.*
 162 *Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,*
 163 *What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst—*
 164 *Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?*
 165 *What when we fled amain,⁶⁶ pursued and struck*
 166 *With Heav'n's afflicting thunder, and besought*
 167 *The deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed*
 168 *A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay*
 169 *Chained on the burning lake? That sure was*
 worse.
 170 *What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,*
 171 *Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,*
 172 *And plunge us in the flames? Or from above*
 173 *Should intermitted⁶⁷ vengeance arm again*
 174 *His red right hand to plague us? What if all*
 175 *Her stores were opened, and this firmament*
 176 *Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,*
 177 *Impendent⁶⁸ horrors, threat'ning hideous fall*
 178 *One day upon our heads, while we, perhaps*
 179 *Designing or exhorting glorious war,*

⁶³ possibly, probably

⁶⁴ ordained

⁶⁵ set apart

⁶⁶ in full force of numbers

⁶⁷ interrupted

⁶⁸ overhanging, near

180 *Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,*
 181 *Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey*
 182 *Of racking⁶⁹ whirlwinds, or for ever sunk*
 183 *Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains,*
 184 *There to converse with everlasting groans,*
 185 *Unrespited,⁷⁰ unpitied, unrerieved,*
 186 *Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.*
 187 *War, therefore, open or concealed, alike*
 188 *My voice dissuades. For what can force or guile*
 189 *With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye*
 190 *Views all things at one view? He from Heav'n's*
 height
 191 *All these our motions vain sees and derides,*
 192 *Not more Almighty to resist our might*
 193 *Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.*
 194 *Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heav'n*
 195 *Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here*
 196 *Chains and these torments? Better these than*
 worse,
 197 *By my advice, since fate inevitable*
 198 *Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,*
 199 *The victor's will. To suffer, as to do,*
 200 *Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust*
 201 *That so ordains. This was at first resolved,*
 202 *If we were wise, against so great a foe*
 203 *Contending,⁷¹ and so⁷² doubtful what might fall.⁷³*
 204 *I laugh when those who at the spear are bold*
 205 *And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear*
 206 *What yet they know must follow—to endure*
 207 *Exile, or ignominy,⁷⁴ or bonds, or pain,*

⁶⁹ afflicting, shaking

⁷⁰ without reprieve/delay

⁷¹ struggling, fighting

⁷² therefore

⁷³ occur, come to pass, result

⁷⁴ dishonor, disgrace

208 *The sentence of their conqueror. This is now*
 209 *Our doom,⁷⁵ which if we can sustain and bear,*
 210 *Our Supreme foe in time may much remit⁷⁶*
 211 *His anger; and perhaps, thus far removed,⁷⁷*
 212 *Not mind⁷⁸ us, not offending, satisfied*
 213 *With what is punished, whence these raging fires*
 214 *Will slacken, if His breath stir not their flames.*
 215 *Our purer essence then will overcome*
 216 *Their noxious⁷⁹ vapor or, inured,⁸⁰ not feel.*
 217 *Or, changed at length, and to the place*
 conformed⁸¹
 218 *In temper and in nature, will receive*
 219 *Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain.*
 220 *This horror will grow mild, this darkness light,*
 221 *Besides what hope the never-ending flight*
 222 *Of future days may bring, what chance, what*
 change
 223 *Worth waiting—since our present lot appears*
 224 *For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,*
 225 *If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”*
 226 *Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason’s garb,*
 227 *Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,*
 228 *Not peace. And after him thus Mammon spoke:*
 229 *“Either to disenthroned the King of Heav’n*
 230 *We war, if war be best, or to regain*
 231 *Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then*
 232 *May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield*
 233 *To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.*
 234 *The former, vain to hope, argues as vain*

⁷⁵ sentence, judgment, destiny

⁷⁶ discharge, withdraw, cancel

⁷⁷ distant

⁷⁸ remember, notice

⁷⁹ unwholesome

⁸⁰ habituated, accustomed

⁸¹ adapted

235 *The latter—for what place can be for us*
 236 *Within Heav'n's bound, unless Heav'n's Lord*
 supreme
 237 *We overpower? Suppose He should relent*
 238 *And publish⁸² grace to all, on promise made*
 239 *Of new subjection?⁸³ With what eyes could we*
 240 *Stand in His presence humble, and receive*
 241 *Strict laws imposed, to celebrate His throne*
 242 *With warbled hymns, and to His Godhead sing*
 243 *Forced hallelujahs, while He lordly sits,*
 244 *Our envied sov'reign, and His altar breathes*
 245 *Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,*
 246 *Our servile offerings? This must be our task*
 247 *In Heav'n, this our delight. How wearisome*
 248 *Eternity so spent in worship paid*
 249 *To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,*
 250 *By force impossible, by leave obtained*
 251 *Unacceptable, though in Heav'n, our state*
 252 *Of splendid vassalage, but rather seek*
 253 *Our own good from ourselves, and from our own*
 254 *Live to⁸⁴ ourselves, though in this vast recess,*
 255 *Free and to none accountable, preferring*
 256 *Hard liberty before the easy yoke*
 257 *Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear*
 258 *Then most conspicuous when great things of⁸⁵*
 small,
 259 *Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,⁸⁶*
 260 *We can create, and in what place soe'er*
 261 *Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain*
 262 *Through labor and endurance. This deep world*
 263 *Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst*

⁸² announce, proclaim

⁸³ submission, obedience, homage

⁸⁴ for/by

⁸⁵ from

⁸⁶ unfavorable

264 *Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling
Sire*
 265 *Choose to reside, His glory unobscured,*
 266 *And with the majesty of darkness round*
 267 *Covers His throne, from whence deep thunders
roar,*
 268 *Must ring⁸⁷ their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell!*
 269 *As He our darkness, cannot we His light*
 270 *Imitate when we please? This desert soil*
 271 *Wants⁸⁸ not her hidden luster, gems and gold,*
 272 *Nor want⁸⁹ we skill or art from whence to raise*
 273 *Magnificence. And what can Heav'n show more?*
 274 *Our torments also may, in length of time,*
 275 *Become our elements,⁹⁰ these piercing fires*
 276 *As soft as now severe, our temper changed*
 277 *Into their temper, which must needs remove*
 278 *The sensible⁹¹ of pain. All things invite*
 279 *To peaceful counsels, and the settled state*
 280 *Of order, how in safety best we may*
 281 *Compose⁹² our present evils, with regard*
 282 *Of what we are and where, dismissing quite*
 283 *All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."*
 284 *He scarce had finished, when such murmur
filled*
 285 *Th' assembly as when hollow rocks retain*
 286 *The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night
long*
 287 *Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull*

⁸⁷ showing, displaying, exhibiting

⁸⁸ lacks

⁸⁹ lack

⁹⁰ component parts

⁹¹ perception, awareness, feeling [noun]

⁹² arrange, adjust

288 *Seafaring men o'erwatched,⁹³ whose barque⁹⁴ by*
 chance,
 289 *Or pinnace,⁹⁵ anchors in a craggy bay*
 290 *After the tempest. Such applause was heard*
 291 *As Mammon ended, and his sentence⁹⁶ pleased,*
 292 *Advising peace, for such another field⁹⁷*
 293 *They dreaded worse than Hell, so much the fear*
 294 *Of thunder and the sword of Michael*
 295 *Wrought⁹⁸ still within them, and no less desire*
 296 *To found⁹⁹ this nether¹⁰⁰ empire, which might rise,*
 297 *By policy¹⁰¹ and long process¹⁰² of time,*
 298 *In emulation¹⁰³ opposite¹⁰⁴ to Heav'n.*
 299 *Which when Beelzebub perceived—than whom,*
 300 *Satan except, none higher sat—with grave*
 301 *Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed*
 302 *A pillar of state. Deep on his front¹⁰⁵ engrav'n*
 303 *Deliberation sat, and public care,*
 304 *And princely counsel in his face yet shone,*
 305 *Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood*
 306 *With Atlantean¹⁰⁶ shoulders, fit to bear*
 307 *The weight of mightiest monarchies. His look*
 308 *Drew audience¹⁰⁷ and attention still as night*

⁹³ exhausted after watching all night

⁹⁴ sailing vessel (usually small)

⁹⁵ small boat, schooner-rigged, often with two masts

⁹⁶ opinion, judgment

⁹⁷ battlefield

⁹⁸ worked

⁹⁹ create, begin the building of

¹⁰⁰ lower

¹⁰¹ statecraft, stratagem

¹⁰² course, lapse

¹⁰³ ambitious rivalry

¹⁰⁴ opposed, hostile

¹⁰⁵ face

¹⁰⁶ the Titan Atlas, on whose shoulders the entire world rested

¹⁰⁷ (1) the state of hearing, (2) reception

309 *Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spoke:*
 310 *“Thrones and Imperial Powers, offspring of*
 Heav'n,
 311 *Ethereal Virtues! Or these titles now*
 312 *Must we renounce and, changing style, be called*
 313 *Princes of Hell? For so the popular vote*
 314 *Inclines—here to continue, and build up here*
 315 *A growing empire. Doubtless! While we dream,*
 316 *And know not that the King of Heav'n hath*
 *doomed*¹⁰⁸
 317 *This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat*
 318 *Beyond His potent arm, to live exempt*
 319 *From Heav'n's high jurisdiction, in new league*
 320 *Banded against His throne, but to remain*
 321 *In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,*
 322 *Under th' inevitable*¹⁰⁹ *curb,*¹¹⁰ *reserved*¹¹¹
 323 *His captive multitude. For He, to be sure,*
 324 *In height or depth, still first and last will reign*
 325 *Sole king, and of His Kingdom lose no part*
 326 *By our revolt, but over Hell extend*
 327 *His empire, and with iron scepter rule*
 328 *Us here, as with His golden*¹¹² *those in Heav'n.*
 329 *What sit we then projecting peace and war?*
 330 *War hath determined*¹¹³ *us and foiled*¹¹⁴ *with loss*
 331 *Irreparable; terms of peace yet none*
 332 *Vouchsafed*¹¹⁵ *or sought. For what peace will be*
 giv'n
 333 *To us enslaved, but custody severe,*

¹⁰⁸ pronounced, judged

¹⁰⁹ [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹¹⁰ chain or strap fastened to the bit of a horse, in order to restrain it

¹¹¹ kept, stored

¹¹² golden scepter

¹¹³ settled, fixed, resolved

¹¹⁴ overthrown, defeated, repulsed

¹¹⁵ conferred, granted, allowed, permitted

334 *And stripes¹¹⁶ and arbitrary punishment*
 335 *Inflicted? And what peace can we return,¹¹⁷*
 336 *But, to our power, hostility and hate,*
 337 *Untamed reluctance,¹¹⁸ and revenge, though slow,*
 338 *Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least*
 339 *May reap¹¹⁹ His conquest, and may least rejoice*
 340 *In doing what we most in suffering feel?*
 341 *Nor will occasion¹²⁰ want,¹²¹ nor shall we need*
 342 *With dangerous expedition¹²² to invade*
 343 *Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,*
 344 *Or ambush from the deep. What if we find*
 345 *Some easier enterprise?¹²³ There is a place*
 346 *(If ancient and prophetic fame¹²⁴ in Heav'n*
 347 *Err not)—another world, the happy seat*
 348 *Of some new race, called man, about this time*
 349 *To be created like to us, though less*
 350 *In power and excellence, but favored more*
 351 *Of Him who rules above. So was His will*
 352 *Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath*
 353 *That shook Heav'n's whole circumference¹²⁵*
 confirmed.
 354 *Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn*
 355 *What creatures there inhabit, of what mould¹²⁶*

¹¹⁶ whip-strokes/lashes

¹¹⁷ exchange, give back

¹¹⁸ resistance, opposition

¹¹⁹ harvest, gain from

¹²⁰ opportunity

¹²¹ be lacking

¹²² speed, promptness

¹²³ bold/daring task

¹²⁴ report, talk

¹²⁵ [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹²⁶ form

356 *Or substance, how endued,¹²⁷ and what their
 power*
 357 *And where their weakness: how attempted best,*
 358 *By force or subtlety. Though Heav'n be shut,*
 359 *And Heav'n's high arbitrator¹²⁸ sit secure*
 360 *In His own strength, this place¹²⁹ may lie exposed,*
 361 *The utmost border of His Kingdom, left*
 362 *To their defence who hold it. Here, perhaps,*
 363 *Some advantageous act may be achieved*
 364 *By sudden onset¹³⁰—either with Hell-fire*
 365 *To waste¹³¹ His whole creation, or possess*
 366 *All as our own, and drive,¹³² as we were driven,*
 367 *The puny¹³³ habitants, or if not drive,*
 368 *Seduce them to our party, that their God*
 369 *May prove their foe, and with repenting hand*
 370 *Abolish His own works. This would surpass*
 371 *Common revenge, and interrupt His joy*
 372 *In our confusion, and our joy upraise*
 373 *In His disturbance, when His darling sons,*
 374 *Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse*
 375 *Their frail original,¹³⁴ and faded bliss—*
 376 *Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth*
 377 *Attempting, or to sit in darkness here*
 378 *Hatching vain empires." Thus Beelzebub*
 379 *Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised*
 380 *By Satan, and in part proposed, for whence*
 381 *But from the author of all ill could spring*

¹²⁷ endowed

¹²⁸ (1) judge, (2) sole and absolute ruler

¹²⁹ the world of man

¹³⁰ attack, assault

¹³¹ ruin, destroy

¹³² direct (like cattle)

¹³³ (1) inexperienced, (2) undersized

¹³⁴ i.e., the first man, Adam

382 *So deep a malice, to confound*¹³⁵ *the race*
 383 *Of mankind in one root,*¹³⁶ *and earth with Hell*
 384 *To mingle and involve, done all to spite*
 385 *The great Creator? But their spite still serves*
 386 *His glory to augment. The bold design*
 387 *Pleased highly those infernal States,*¹³⁷ *and joy*
 388 *Sparkled in all their eyes. With full assent*
 389 *They vote, whereat his speech he thus renews:*
 390 *“Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,*
 391 *Synod*¹³⁸ *of gods, and, like to what ye are,*
 392 *Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep*
 393 *Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,*
 394 *Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view*
 395 *Of those bright confines, whence, with*
 neighboring arms,
 396 *And opportune*¹³⁹ *excursion, we may chance*
 397 *Re-enter Heav’n, or else in some mild zone*
 398 *Dwell not unvisited of Heav’n’s fair light*
 399 *Secure,*¹⁴⁰ *and at the bright’ning orient*¹⁴¹ *beam*
 400 *Purge off this gloom. The soft delicious air,*
 401 *To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,*
 402 *Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we*
 send
 403 *In search of this new world? whom shall we find*
 404 *Sufficient? who shall tempt*¹⁴² *with wand’ring feet*
 405 *The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,*
 406 *And through the palpable*¹⁴³ *obscure*¹⁴⁴ *find out*

¹³⁵ overthrow, defeat

¹³⁶ Adam and Eve combined, metaphorically the root of all mankind

¹³⁷ high-ranking powers, beings of rank/status/importance

¹³⁸ assembly

¹³⁹ suitable, timely

¹⁴⁰ safe

¹⁴¹ precious, lustrous

¹⁴² test

¹⁴³ touchable, tangible, perceptible

¹⁴⁴ darkness

407 *His uncouth*¹⁴⁵ *way, or spread his airy flight,*
 408 *Upborne with indefatigable wings*
 409 *Over the vast abrupt,*¹⁴⁶ *ere he arrive*
 410 *The happy isle?*¹⁴⁷ *What strength, what art, can*
 then
 411 *Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe,*
 412 *Through the strict senteries*¹⁴⁸ *and stations thick*
 413 *Of Angels watching round? Here he had need*
 414 *All circumspection, and we now no less*
 415 *Choice in our suffrage,*¹⁴⁹ *for on whom we send*
 416 *The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.”*
 417 *This said, he sat, and expectation held*
 418 *His look suspense,*¹⁵⁰ *awaiting who appeared*
 419 *To second, or oppose, or undertake*
 420 *The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,*
 421 *Pondering the danger with deep thoughts, and*
 each
 422 *In other's count'nance read his own dismay,*
 423 *Astonished.*¹⁵¹ *None among the choice*¹⁵² *and*
 *prime*¹⁵³
 424 *Of those Heav'n-warring champions could be*
 found
 425 *So hardy*¹⁵⁴ *as to proffer or accept,*
 426 *Alone, the dreadful voyage, till at last*
 427 *Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised*
 428 *Above his fellows, with monarchal pride*

¹⁴⁵ unknown

¹⁴⁶ abyss

¹⁴⁷ (metaphorical)

¹⁴⁸ sentries [Milton's spelling = prosodically necessary]

¹⁴⁹ vote, collective decision

¹⁵⁰ cautious, doubtful, uncertain

¹⁵¹ stunned, paralyzed

¹⁵² worthy, select

¹⁵³ first in rank/degree

¹⁵⁴ bold

429 *Conscious of highest worth, unmoved¹⁵⁵ thus*
 spoke:
 430 *“O progeny¹⁵⁶ of Heaven! Empyrean¹⁵⁷ Thrones!*
 431 *With reason hath deep silence and demur¹⁵⁸*
 432 *Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way*
 433 *And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.*
 434 *Our prison strong, this huge convex¹⁵⁹ of fire,*
 435 *Outrageous¹⁶⁰ to devour, immures¹⁶¹ us round*
 436 *Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant,¹⁶²*
 437 *Barred¹⁶³ over us, prohibit all egress.¹⁶⁴*
 438 *These passed, if any pass, the void¹⁶⁵ profound¹⁶⁶*
 439 *Of unessential¹⁶⁷ Night receives him next,*
 440 *Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being*
 441 *Threatens him, plunged in that abortive¹⁶⁸ gulf.¹⁶⁹*
 442 *If thence he scape, into whatever world*
 443 *Or unknown region, what remains him less*
 444 *Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?*
 445 *But I should ill become this throne, O peers,*
 446 *And this imperial sov'reignty, adorned*
 447 *With splendor, armed with power, if aught*
 proposed

¹⁵⁵ calm, collected

¹⁵⁶ descendants

¹⁵⁷ celestial

¹⁵⁸ hesitancy

¹⁵⁹ the high vault of hell

¹⁶⁰ excessive, cruel

¹⁶¹ walls in, surrounds, imprisons

¹⁶² material of impregnable hardness

¹⁶³ shut

¹⁶⁴ exit

¹⁶⁵ emptiness, vacuum

¹⁶⁶ vast, deep

¹⁶⁷ immaterial

¹⁶⁸ miscarrying, bringing to nothing

¹⁶⁹ great depth, abyss

448 *And judged of public moment*¹⁷⁰ *in the shape*
 449 *Of difficulty or danger, could deter*
 450 *Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume*
 451 *These royalties,*¹⁷¹ *and not refuse to reign,*
 452 *Refusing to accept as great a share*
 453 *Of hazard as of honor, due alike*
 454 *To him who reigns, and so much to him due*
 455 *Of hazard more as he above the rest*
 456 *High honored sits? Go therefore, mighty Powers,*
 457 *Terror of Heav'n, though fall'n. Intend*¹⁷² *at home,*
 458 *While here shall be our home, what best may ease*
 459 *The present misery, and render Hell*
 460 *More tolerable,*¹⁷³ *if there be cure*¹⁷⁴ *or charm*¹⁷⁵
 461 *To respite,*¹⁷⁶ *or deceive, or slack*¹⁷⁷ *the pain*
 462 *Of this ill*¹⁷⁸ *mansion.*¹⁷⁹ *Intermit*¹⁸⁰ *no watch*
 463 *Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad*
 464 *Through all the coasts*¹⁸¹ *of dark destruction seek*
 465 *Deliverance for us all. This enterprise*
 466 *None shall partake*¹⁸² *with me." Thus saying, rose*
 467 *The monarch, and prevented all reply,*
 468 *Prudent, lest from*¹⁸³ *his resolution raised,*¹⁸⁴
 469 *Others among the chief might offer now,*

¹⁷⁰ weight, importance

¹⁷¹ sovereignty, pomp

¹⁷² consider assiduously, apply oneself to thinking about

¹⁷³ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁷⁴ remedy

¹⁷⁵ incantation, spell

¹⁷⁶ relieve, delay, suspend

¹⁷⁷ reduce/diminish

¹⁷⁸ wretched, difficult, troublesome

¹⁷⁹ abode

¹⁸⁰ omit

¹⁸¹ border (-lands)

¹⁸² participate in, share

¹⁸³ by

¹⁸⁴ restored, roused, stirred up, animated, stimulated

470 *Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,*
 471 *And so refused, might in opinion¹⁸⁵ stand*
 472 *His rivals, winning cheap the high repute*
 473 *Which he through hazard huge must earn. But*
 they
 474 *Dreaded not more th' adventure than his voice*
 475 *Forbidding, and at once with him they rose.*
 476 *Their rising all at once was as the sound*
 477 *Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend*
 478 *With awful¹⁸⁶ reverence prone, and as a god*
 479 *Extol him equal to the Highest in Heav'n.*
 480 *Nor failed they to express how much they praised*
 481 *That for the general safety he despised*
 482 *His own, for neither do the Spirits damned*
 483 *Lose all their virtue, lest bad men should boast*
 484 *Their specious¹⁸⁷ deeds on earth, which glory*
 excites,¹⁸⁸
 485 *Or close¹⁸⁹ ambition varnished o'er with zeal.*
 486 *Thus they their doubtful consultations dark¹⁹⁰*
 487 *Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief—*
 488 *As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds*
 489 *Ascending, while the north wind sleeps,*
 o'erspread
 490 *Heav'n's cheerful face, the lowering¹⁹¹ element¹⁹²*
 491 *Scowls o'er the darkened landscape, snow or*
 shower.
 492 *If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,*

¹⁸⁵ esteem, reputation

¹⁸⁶ profoundly respectful

¹⁸⁷ plausible but false [by A.D. 1651 the modern meaning]

¹⁸⁸ incites, sets in motion

¹⁸⁹ secret, hidden

¹⁹⁰ somber, wicked

¹⁹¹ frowning, sullen

¹⁹² atmospheric agency (the weather)

493 *Extend*¹⁹³ *his evening beam, the fields revive,*
 494 *The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds*
 495 *Attest*¹⁹⁴ *their joy, that hill and valley rings.*
 496 *O shame to men! Devil with devil damned*
 497 *Firm*¹⁹⁵ *concord*¹⁹⁶ *holds. Men only*¹⁹⁷ *disagree*
 498 *Of creatures rational, though under*¹⁹⁸ *hope*
 499 *Of Heav'nly grace. And God proclaiming peace,*
 500 *Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife*
 501 *Among themselves, and levy*¹⁹⁹ *cruel wars,*
 502 *Wasting the earth, each other to destroy,*
 503 *As if (which might induce us to accord*²⁰⁰)
 504 *Man had not hellish foes enow*²⁰¹ *besides,*
 505 *That day and night for his destruction wait!*
 506 *The Stygian*²⁰² *council thus dissolved, and forth*
 507 *In order came the grand infernal peers.*
 508 *Midst came their mighty Paramount,*²⁰³ *and seemed*
 509 *Alone th' antagonist of Heav'n, nor less*
 510 *Than Hell's dread emperor, with pomp supreme,*
 511 *And godlike imitated state. Him round*
 512 *A globe*²⁰⁴ *of fiery Seraphim enclosed*
 513 *With bright emblazonry,*²⁰⁵ *and horrent*²⁰⁶ *arms.*
 514 *Then of their session ended they bid cry,*²⁰⁷

¹⁹³ spreads out, stretches forth

¹⁹⁴ bear witness to

¹⁹⁵ settled, secure, steadfast, unwavering

¹⁹⁶ harmony, agreement, peace

¹⁹⁷ alone

¹⁹⁸ possessed of, protected by

¹⁹⁹ undertake, impose

²⁰⁰ reconciliation, agreement

²⁰¹ enough

²⁰² infernal, hellish

²⁰³ overlord

²⁰⁴ having a spherical form (or, in this case, a spherical arrangement/order)

²⁰⁵ heraldic devices

²⁰⁶ bristling

²⁰⁷ pronounce, announce

- 515 *With trumpet's regal²⁰⁸ sound, the great result.*
 516 *Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim*
 517 *Put to their mouths the sounding²⁰⁹ alchemy,²¹⁰*
 518 *By herald's voice explained. The hollow abyss*
 519 *Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell*
 520 *With deaf 'ning shout returned²¹¹ them loud*
 acclaim.
 521 *Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat*
 raised
 522 *By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd²¹² Powers*
 523 *Disband and, wand'ring, each his several way*
 524 *Pursues, as inclination or sad choice*
 525 *Leads him, perplexed,²¹³ where he may likeliest*
 find
 526 *Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain*
 527 *The irksome hours till his great chief return.*
 528 *Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,²¹⁴*
 529 *Upon the wing or in swift race contend,²¹⁵*
 530 *As at th' Olympian²¹⁶ games or Pythian²¹⁷ fields.*
 531 *Part curb²¹⁸ their fiery steeds, or shun²¹⁹ the goal²²⁰*
 532 *With rapid wheels, or fronted²²¹ brigades form—*
 533 *As when, to warn proud cities, war appears,*

²⁰⁸ kingly, magnificent

²⁰⁹ resonant, sonorous

²¹⁰ trumpet made of a composite brass-based metal, shining like gold

²¹¹ sent back, reflected

²¹² drawn up in ranks

²¹³ anxious, in doubt, troubled

²¹⁴ high up

²¹⁵ compete, strive earnestly

²¹⁶ i.e., the games held at Olympia, in Elis

²¹⁷ second most important site of Greek games, held at Pythia, in Delphi, and in honor of Apollo

²¹⁸ practice checking/managing/controlling

²¹⁹ avoid

²²⁰ column making a turn, in a chariot race

²²¹ facing

534 *Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush*
 535 *To battle in the clouds. Before each van²²²*
 536 *Prick²²³ forth the airy knights, and couch²²⁴ their*
 spears,
 537 *Till thickest²²⁵ legions close.²²⁶ With feats of arms*
 538 *From either end of Heav'n the welkin²²⁷ burns.*
 539 *Others, with vast Typhoean²²⁸ rage, more fell,²²⁹*
 540 *Rend²³⁰ up both rocks and hills, and ride the air*
 541 *In whirlwind. Hell scarce holds the wild uproar;*
 542 *As when Alcides,²³¹ from Oechalia²³² crowned*
 543 *With conquest, felt th' envenomed robe,²³³ and tore*
 544 *Through pain up by the roots Thessalian²³⁴ pines,*
 545 *And Lichas²³⁵ from the top of Oeta²³⁶ threw*
 546 *Into th' Euboic sea.²³⁷ Others, more mild,*
 547 *Retreated²³⁸ in a silent valley, sing*
 548 *With notes angelical to many a harp*
 549 *Their own heroic deeds and hapless²³⁹ fall*

²²² vanguard

²²³ spur/urge forward their horses

²²⁴ lower (into fighting position)

²²⁵ densest

²²⁶ come together, grapple

²²⁷ sky

²²⁸ Typhon/Typhoeus, a hundred-serpent-headed giant with a great voice, who fought against and was killed by Jove as soon as he was born

²²⁹ fierce, savage, cruel, terrible

²³⁰ tear

²³¹ Hercules

²³² a kingdom on the large Greek island of Euboea, ruled by Eurytus, whose daughter, Iolé, was beloved by Hercules; Hercules was married and neither the girl's father nor Hercules' wife was pleased

²³³ sent to him by his wife, Deianeira, who believed (erroneously) it would win her back his love

²³⁴ Thessaly, in NE Greece

²³⁵ the innocent messenger who had brought him the poisoned robe

²³⁶ mountain in south Thessaly

²³⁷ the southern Aegean

²³⁸ withdrawn, retired [adjective]

²³⁹ unlucky

550 *By doom*²⁴⁰ *of battle, and complain that Fate*
 551 *Free virtue should enthrall*²⁴¹ *to force or chance.*²⁴²
 552 *Their song was partial,*²⁴³ *but the harmony*
 553 *(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)*
 554 *Suspended*²⁴⁴ *Hell, and took*²⁴⁵ *with ravishment*
 555 *The thronging audience. In discourse*²⁴⁶ *more*
 sweet
 556 *(For eloquence the soul,*²⁴⁷ *song charms the sense)*
 557 *Others apart sat on a hill retired,*²⁴⁸
 558 *In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high*
 559 *Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—*
 560 *Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,*
 561 *And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.*
 562 *Of good and evil much they argued then,*
 563 *Of happiness and final misery,*
 564 *Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:*
 565 *Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy*
 566 *Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm*
 567 *Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite*
 568 *Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdurèd*²⁴⁹ *breast*
 569 *With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.*
 570 *Another part, in squadrons and gross*²⁵⁰ *bands,*
 571 *On bold*²⁵¹ *adventure to discover*²⁵² *wide*²⁵³

²⁴⁰ judgment

²⁴¹ enslave

²⁴² they complained that, at Fate's hands, free virtue was put in bondage to force or chance

²⁴³ prejudiced, biased

²⁴⁴ riveted the attention of

²⁴⁵ seized

²⁴⁶ communication of thought by speech

²⁴⁷ "eloquence charms the soul, but . . ."

²⁴⁸ secluded

²⁴⁹ unyielding, hardened in evil, insensible to moral influence

²⁵⁰ dense, compact

²⁵¹ confident, daring

²⁵² reconnoiter

²⁵³ extensively [adverb]

572 *That dismal world, if any clime perhaps*
 573 *Might yield them easier habitation, bend*
 574 *Four ways their flying²⁵⁴ march, along the banks*
 575 *Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge*
 576 *Into the burning lake their baleful²⁵⁵ streams—*
 577 *Abhorred Styx, the flood²⁵⁶ of deadly hate;*
 578 *Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;*
 579 *Cocytus,²⁵⁷ named of²⁵⁸ lamentation loud*
 580 *Heard on the rueful²⁵⁹ stream; fierce Phlegeton,²⁶⁰*
 581 *Whose waves of torrent²⁶¹ fire inflame²⁶² with*
 rage.²⁶³
 582 *Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,*
 583 *Lethe,²⁶⁴ the river of oblivion, rolls*
 584 *Her wat'ry labyrinth,²⁶⁵ whereof who drinks*
 585 *Forthwith²⁶⁶ his former state and being forgets—*
 586 *Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.*
 587 *Beyond this flood²⁶⁷ a frozen continent*
 588 *Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms*
 589 *Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land*
 590 *Thaws not, but gathers heap,²⁶⁸ and ruin seems*

²⁵⁴ swift, rapid

²⁵⁵ full of active evil

²⁵⁶ river

²⁵⁷ [trissyllabic, second accented]

²⁵⁸ for

²⁵⁹ sorrowful

²⁶⁰ [trissyllabic, first—with “ph” pronounced as “f”—and third accented]

²⁶¹ swift-flowing [adjective]

²⁶² blaze up

²⁶³ with rage = violently

²⁶⁴ [bisyllabic, first accented]

²⁶⁵ like error, the river follows “a devious or wandering course”; labyrinth = a maze

²⁶⁶ at once

²⁶⁷ river

²⁶⁸ mass, form

591 *Of ancient pile,²⁶⁹ all else deep snow and ice,*
 592 *A gulf²⁷⁰ profound²⁷¹ as that Serbonian bog²⁷²*
 593 *Betwixt Damiata²⁷³ and Mount Casius²⁷⁴ old,*
 594 *Where armies whole have sunk. The parching²⁷⁵ air*
 595 *Burns froze,²⁷⁶ and cold performs²⁷⁷ th' effect of*
 fire.
 596 *Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,²⁷⁸*
 597 *At certain revolutions²⁷⁹ all the damned*
 598 *Are brought and feel by turns the bitter change*
 599 *Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more*
 fierce,
 600 *From²⁸⁰ beds of raging fire to starve²⁸¹ in ice*
 601 *Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine²⁸²*
 602 *Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,*
 603 *Periods²⁸³ of time, thence hurried back to fire.*
 604 *They ferry over this Lethean sound*
 605 *Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,*
 606 *And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach*
 607 *The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose*
 608 *In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,*
 609 *All in one moment, and so near the brink.*

²⁶⁹ large structure, building

²⁷⁰ abyss

²⁷¹ deep

²⁷² Egyptian lake, bordered by quicksand

²⁷³ Damietta/Tamiathis: city at the mouth of the Nile

²⁷⁴ mountain range bordering on Egypt

²⁷⁵ to dry/shrivel/wither with cold

²⁷⁶ intensely cold, frostlike

²⁷⁷ brings about, works, achieves

²⁷⁸ dragged

²⁷⁹ turnings of celestial bodies, times

²⁸⁰ i.e., going from

²⁸¹ wither, perish

²⁸² suffer, languish

²⁸³ for periods

610 *But Fate withstands²⁸⁴ and, to oppose th' attempt,*
 611 *Medusa,²⁸⁵ with Gorgonian terror, guards*
 612 *The ford, and of itself the water flies²⁸⁶*
 613 *All taste of living wight,²⁸⁷ as once it fled*
 614 *The lip of Tantalus.²⁸⁸ Thus roving on*
 615 *In confused²⁸⁹ march forlorn, th' adventurous*
 bands,
 616 *With shuddering horror pale and eyes aghast,*
 617 *Viewed first their lamentable²⁹⁰ lot, and found*
 618 *No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale*
 619 *They passed, and many a region dolorous,*
 620 *O'er many a frozen, many a fiery alp,*
 621 *Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades*
 of death—
 622 *A universe of death, which God by curse*
 623 *Created evil, for evil only good,²⁹¹*
 624 *Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,*
 625 *Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious²⁹² things,*
 626 *Abominable, inutterable, and worse*
 627 *Than fables yet have feigned²⁹³ or fear conceived,*
 628 *Gorgons,²⁹⁴ and Hydras,²⁹⁵ and Chimeras²⁹⁶ dire.*
 629 *Meanwhile the adversary of God and man,*

²⁸⁴ resists, stands in the way, opposes

²⁸⁵ one of three Gorgons; there are writhing serpents all over her head; those who look at her are turned to stone

²⁸⁶ flees

²⁸⁷ creature, living being

²⁸⁸ condemned to remain in a pool filled with water that moves away whenever he attempts to drink

²⁸⁹ [first syllable accented]

²⁹⁰ [four syllables, first and third accented]

²⁹¹ for evil only good = good only for evil

²⁹² abnormal, unnatural

²⁹³ pretended, invented

²⁹⁴ see line 611, above

²⁹⁵ many-headed serpent; the heads immediately grow back if cut off

²⁹⁶ fire-breathing monster with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail

- 630 *Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,*²⁹⁷
 631 *Puts on*²⁹⁸ *swift wings, and toward the gates of*
 Hell
 632 *Explores*²⁹⁹ *his solitary flight. Sometimes*
 633 *He scours*³⁰⁰ *the right-hand coast, sometimes the*
 left,
 634 *Now shaves*³⁰¹ *with level wing the deep, then soars*
 635 *Up to the fiery concave*³⁰² *towering high.*
 636 *As when far off at sea a fleet descried*³⁰³
 637 *Hangs in the clouds, by*³⁰⁴ *equinoctial*³⁰⁵ *winds*
 638 *Close sailing*³⁰⁶ *from Bengala,*³⁰⁷ *or the isles*
 639 *Of Ternate and Tidore,*³⁰⁸ *whence merchants bring*
 640 *Their spicy drugs—they on the trading*³⁰⁹ *flood,*³¹⁰
 641 *Through the wide Ethiopian*³¹¹ *to the Cape*³¹²
 642 *Ply*³¹³ *stemming*³¹⁴ *nightly toward the pole:*³¹⁵ *so*
 seemed
 643 *Far off the flying fiend. At last appear*

²⁹⁷ purpose, intention

²⁹⁸ brings to bear (as one “puts on” speed)

²⁹⁹ conducts

³⁰⁰ moves rapidly along

³⁰¹ comes exceedingly close

³⁰² vault of hell

³⁰³ caught sight of

³⁰⁴ by means of

³⁰⁵ equatorial

³⁰⁶ i.e., close to the wind, with sail tacks hauled close

³⁰⁷ Bengal

³⁰⁸ Ternate and Tidore = Moluccan (spice) islands

³⁰⁹ winds that blow steadily in one direction are “trade winds”—i.e., useful for trading vessels

³¹⁰ moving water, “tide” (metaphorical)

³¹¹ Indian Ocean, near northeastern Africa

³¹² Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa

³¹³ steer, direct their course

³¹⁴ making headway

³¹⁵ the South Pole

644 *Hell-bounds,*³¹⁶ *high reaching to the horrid roof,*
 645 *And thrice threefold the gates. Three folds*³¹⁷ *were*
 brass,
 646 *Three iron, three of adamantine rock,*
 647 *Impenetrable, impaled*³¹⁸ *with circling fire,*
 648 *Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat*
 649 *On either side a formidable*³¹⁹ *shape.*
 650 *The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,*
 651 *But ended foul in many a scaly fold,*
 652 *Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed*
 653 *With mortal sting. About her middle round*
 654 *A cry*³²⁰ *of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked*
 655 *With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung*
 656 *A hideous peal,*³²¹ *yet when they list,*³²² *would*
 creep,
 657 *If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,*
 658 *And kennel*³²³ *there, yet there still barked and*
 howled
 659 *Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these*
 660 *Vexed*³²⁴ *Scylla,*³²⁵ *bathing in the sea that parts*
 661 *Calabria*³²⁶ *from the hoarse*³²⁷ *Trinacrian*³²⁸ *shore.*
 662 *Nor uglier follow*³²⁹ *the night-hag,*³³⁰ *when called*

³¹⁶ hell's boundaries

³¹⁷ leaves of a folding door, gates

³¹⁸ enclosed

³¹⁹ alarming

³²⁰ pack

³²¹ outburst of sound

³²² wanted to

³²³ [verb]

³²⁴ grieved, distressed, agitated

³²⁵ six-headed monster, each head having triple rows of teeth

³²⁶ the extreme south of Italy

³²⁷ rough

³²⁸ Sicilian

³²⁹ is ("comes after")

³³⁰ Hecate [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

- 663 *In secret, riding through the air she comes,*
 664 *Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance*
 665 *With Lapland³³¹ witches, while the laboring*
 moon³³²
 666 *Eclipses at³³³ their charms. The other shape—*
 667 *If shape it might be called, that shape had none*
 668 *Distinguishable in member;³³⁴ joint, or limb,*
 669 *Or substance might be called that shadow*
 seemed,³³⁵
 670 *For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,*
 671 *Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,*
 672 *And shook a dreadful dart.³³⁶ What seemed his*
 head
 673 *The likeness of a kingly crown had on.*
 674 *Satan was now at hand, and from his seat*
 675 *The monster moving onward came as fast³³⁷*
 676 *With horrid strides. Hell trembled as he strode.*
 677 *Th'undaunted fiend what this might be*
 admired—³³⁸
 678 *Admired, not feared (God and His Son except,*
 679 *Created thing naught valued³³⁹ he nor shunned),³⁴⁰*
 680 *And with disdainful look thus first began:*
 681 *“Whence and what art thou, execrable³⁴¹ shape,*

³³¹ extreme north of Scandinavia, associated with storm-causing witches and wizards

³³² *labores lunæ* (Latin) = the moon in eclipse

³³³ because of

³³⁴ part (of the body)

³³⁵ “or might be called a substance: it seemed a shadow”

³³⁶ spear

³³⁷ i.e., as fast as Satan

³³⁸ wondered

³³⁹ took account of, heeded, was worried about

³⁴⁰ fled from, avoided

³⁴¹ detestable

682 *That dar'st, though grim³⁴² and terrible, advance*
 683 *Thy miscreated³⁴³ front³⁴⁴ athwart³⁴⁵ my way*
 684 *To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,*
 685 *That be assured, without leave asked of thee.*
 686 *Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,*
 687 *Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav'n."*
 688 *To whom the goblin,³⁴⁶ full of wrath, replied:*
 689 *"Art thou that traitor Angel? Art thou he*
 690 *Who first broke peace in Heav'n, and faith, till*
 then
 691 *Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms*
 692 *Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's sons,*
 693 *Conjured³⁴⁷ against the Highest—for which both*
 thou
 694 *And they, outcast from God, are here condemned*
 695 *To waste³⁴⁸ eternal days in woe and pain?*
 696 *And reckon'st³⁴⁹ thou thyself with Spirits of*
 Heav'n,
 697 *Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and*
 scorn,
 698 *Where I reign king and, to enrage thee more,*
 699 *Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,*
 700 *False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,*
 701 *Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue*
 702 *Thy ling'ring, or with one stroke of this dart*
 703 *Strange³⁵⁰ horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt*
 before."

³⁴² fierce, cruel, savage

³⁴³ misshapen

³⁴⁴ (1) impudence, effrontery, (2) face

³⁴⁵ across

³⁴⁶ ugly demon

³⁴⁷ sworn, conspiring

³⁴⁸ spend, use up, consume

³⁴⁹ count, consider

³⁵⁰ unknown, unfamiliar, never experienced

704 *So spoke the grisly terror, and in shape,*
 705 *So speaking and so threat'ning, grew tenfold*
 706 *More dreadful and deform. On th' other side,*
 707 *Incensed with indignation, Satan stood*
 708 *Unterrified, and like a comet burned,*
 709 *That fires the length of Ophiuchus³⁵¹ huge*
 710 *In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair*
 711 *Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head*
 712 *Levelled his deadly aim. Their fatal³⁵² hands*
 713 *No second stroke intend. And such a frown*
 714 *Each cast at th' other as when two black clouds,*
 715 *With Heav'n's artillery fraught,³⁵³ come rattling on*
 716 *Over the Caspian,³⁵⁴ then stand front to front,*
 717 *Hov'ring a space,³⁵⁵ till winds the signal blow*
 718 *To join³⁵⁶ their dark encounter in mid-air.*
 719 *So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell*
 720 *Grew darker at their frown. So matched they stood,*
 721 *For never but once more was either like*
 722 *To meet so great a foe.³⁵⁷ And now great deeds*
 723 *Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,*
 724 *Had not the snaky sorceress, that sat*
 725 *Fast by³⁵⁸ Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,*
 726 *Ris'n, and with hideous outcry rushed between.*
 727 *“O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,*
 728 *“Against thy only son? What fury, O son,*
 729 *Possesses thee to bend³⁵⁹ that mortal³⁶⁰ dart*

³⁵¹ Ophiuchus = “serpent-bearer,” a vast northern constellation

³⁵² deadly

³⁵³ filled

³⁵⁴ the Caspian Sea, between Iran and Turkestan

³⁵⁵ a space = a time, a while

³⁵⁶ engage in

³⁵⁷ i.e., Christ

³⁵⁸ fast by = close, very near

³⁵⁹ aim, direct

³⁶⁰ fatal

730 *Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom?*
 731 *For Him who sits above, and laughs the while*
 732 *At thee, ordained His drudge to execute*
 733 *Whate'er His wrath, which He calls justice, bids—*
 734 *His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!"*
 735 *She spoke, and at her words the hellish pest*³⁶¹
 736 *Forbore.*³⁶² *Then these*³⁶³ *to her Satan returned:*
 737 *"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so*
 strange
 738 *Thou interposest,*³⁶⁴ *that my sudden*³⁶⁵ *hand,*
 739 *Prevented, spares*³⁶⁶ *to tell thee yet by deeds*
 740 *What it intends, till first I know of thee*
 741 *What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,*
 742 *In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st*
 743 *Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son?*
 744 *I know thee not, nor ever saw till now*
 745 *Sight more detestable than him and thee."*
 746 *T'whom thus the portress*³⁶⁷ *of Hell-gate*
 replied:—
 747 *"Hast thou forgot me, then? and do I seem*
 748 *Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair*
 749 *In Heav'n when at th' assembly, and in sight*
 750 *Of all the Seraphim with thee combined*
 751 *In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,*
 752 *All on a sudden miserable pain*
 753 *Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum*
 754 *In darkness, while thy head flames*³⁶⁸ *thick and fast*

³⁶¹ scourge, plague ("pestilence")

³⁶² desisted

³⁶³ these = these words

³⁶⁴ puts forth, interrupts with

³⁶⁵ quick, speedy

³⁶⁶ refrains, abstains

³⁶⁷ female porter, gatekeeper

³⁶⁸ [noun]

755 *Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,*
 756 *Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,*
 757 *Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,*
 758 *Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized*
 759 *All th' host of Heav'n. Back they recoiled, afraid*
 760 *At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign*
 761 *Portentous³⁶⁹ held me. But, familiar grown,*
 762 *I pleased, and with attractive graces won*
 763 *The most averse—thee chiefly, who full oft*
 764 *Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,*
 765 *Becam'st enamored, and such joy thou took'st*
 766 *With me in secret that my womb conceived*
 767 *A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,*
 768 *And fields were fought in Heav'n, wherein*
 remained
 769 *(For what could else?) to our Almighty foe*
 770 *Clear victory, to our part loss and rout³⁷⁰*
 771 *Through all the Empyrean.³⁷¹ Down they fell,*
 772 *Driv'n headlong from the pitch³⁷² of Heaven, down*
 773 *Into this deep, and in the general fall*
 774 *I also, at which time this powerful key*
 775 *Into my hands was giv'n, with charge to keep*
 776 *These gates forever shut, which none can pass*
 777 *Without my op'ning. Pensive³⁷³ here I sat*
 778 *Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb,*
 779 *Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,*

³⁶⁹ ominous, warning

³⁷⁰ complete overthrow, disorderly retreat

³⁷¹ heaven

³⁷² highest point

³⁷³ (1) melancholy, sorrowful, (2) reflective

780 *Prodigious*³⁷⁴ *motion felt and rueful*³⁷⁵ *throes.*³⁷⁶
 781 *At last this odious*³⁷⁷ *offspring whom thou seest,*
 782 *Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,*³⁷⁸
 783 *Tore through my entrails that,*³⁷⁹ *with fear and pain*
 784 *Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew*
 785 *Transformed. But he my inbred enemy*
 786 *Forth issued, brandishing*³⁸⁰ *his fatal dart,*
 787 *Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out 'Death!'*
 788 *Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed*
 789 *From all her caves, and back resounded 'Death!'*
 790 *I fled, but he pursued (though more, it seems,*
 791 *Inflamed with lust than rage), and swifter far,*
 792 *Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,*³⁸¹
 793 *And in embraces forcible and foul*
 794 *Engend'ring*³⁸² *with me, of that rape begot*
 795 *These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry*
 796 *Surround me, as thou saw'st—hourly conceived*
 797 *And hourly born, with sorrow infinite*
 798 *To me, for when they list*³⁸³ *into the womb*
 799 *That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw*
 800 *My bowels, their repast.*³⁸⁴ *Then bursting forth*
 801 *Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,*
 802 *That rest or intermission none I find.*
 803 *Before mine eyes in opposition*³⁸⁵ *sits*

³⁷⁴ vast, enormous, powerful

³⁷⁵ dismal, pitiable

³⁷⁶ labor pangs

³⁷⁷ repulsive, hateful

³⁷⁸ path

³⁷⁹ so that

³⁸⁰ waving, flourishing

³⁸¹ paralyzed with fear

³⁸² copulating

³⁸³ wish

³⁸⁴ food, meal

³⁸⁵ in opposition = placed opposite

- 804 *Grim Death, my son and foe, who set them on,*
 805 *And me, his parent, would full soon devour*
 806 *For want of other prey, but that he knows*
 807 *His end with mine involved, and knows that I*
 808 *Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,³⁸⁶*
 809 *Whenever that shall be. So Fate pronounced.*
 810 *But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun*
 811 *His deadly arrow. Neither³⁸⁷ vainly hope*
 812 *To be invulnerable in those bright arms,³⁸⁸*
 813 *Though tempered³⁸⁹ Heav'nly, for that mortal*
 dint,³⁹⁰
 814 *Save He who reigns above, none can resist."*
 815 *She finished, and the subtle fiend, his lore³⁹¹*
 816 *Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered*
 smooth:
 817 *"Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for*
 thy sire,
 818 *And my fair son here show'st me, the dear*
 pledge³⁹²
 819 *Of dalliance³⁹³ had with thee in Heav'n, and joys*
 820 *Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire*
 change
 821 *Befall'n us unforeseen, unthought-of—know*
 822 *I come no enemy, but to set free*
 823 *From out this dark and dismal house of pain*
 824 *Both him and thee, and all the Heav'nly host*
 825 *Of Spirits that, in our just pretences³⁹⁴ armed,*

³⁸⁶ destruction, ruin, death

³⁸⁷ nor

³⁸⁸ those bright arms = that bright armor

³⁸⁹ constituted, endowed

³⁹⁰ violence, force

³⁹¹ lesson

³⁹² (1) love token, (2) hostage given to fortune

³⁹³ amorous play

³⁹⁴ claims

- 826 *Fell with us from on high. From them I go*
 827 *This uncouth³⁹⁵ errand sole,³⁹⁶ and one for all*
 828 *Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread*
 829 *Th' unfounded³⁹⁷ deep, and through the void*
 immense
 830 *To search, with wand'ring quest, a place foretold*
 831 *Should be—and by concurring signs, ere now*
 832 *Created vast and round—a place of bliss*
 833 *In the purlieus³⁹⁸ of Heav'n, and therein placed*
 834 *A race of upstart creatures, to supply*
 835 *Perhaps our vacant room,³⁹⁹ though more*
 removed,⁴⁰⁰
 836 *Lest Heav'n, surcharged⁴⁰¹ with potent⁴⁰²*
 multitude,
 837 *Might hap to move⁴⁰³ new broils.⁴⁰⁴ Be this, or*
 ought
 838 *Than this more secret, now designed,⁴⁰⁵ I haste*
 839 *To know, and this once known shall soon return*
 840 *And bring ye to the place where thou and Death*
 841 *Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen*
 842 *Wing silently the buxom⁴⁰⁶ air, embalmed*
 843 *With odors. There ye shall be fed and filled*
 844 *Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."*

³⁹⁵ unknown, strange

³⁹⁶ alone

³⁹⁷ bottomless

³⁹⁸ outskirts

³⁹⁹ place

⁴⁰⁰ distant

⁴⁰¹ overstocked, overpopulated

⁴⁰² mighty, powerful

⁴⁰³ actuate

⁴⁰⁴ quarrels, tumults

⁴⁰⁵ intended

⁴⁰⁶ unresisting

845 *He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased, and*
 Death
 846 *Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear*
 847 *His famine⁴⁰⁷ should be filled, and blessed his*
 maw⁴⁰⁸
 848 *Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced*
 849 *His mother bad, and thus bespoke⁴⁰⁹ her sire:*
 850 *“The key of this infernal pit, by due⁴¹⁰*
 851 *And by command of Heav’n’s all-powerful King,*
 852 *I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock*
 853 *These adamantine gates. Against all force*
 854 *Death ready stands to interpose⁴¹¹ his dart,⁴¹²*
 855 *Fearless to be o’ermatched by living might.*
 856 *But what owe I to His commands above,*
 857 *Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down*
 858 *Into this gloom of Tartarus⁴¹³ profound,⁴¹⁴*
 859 *To sit in hateful office here confined,*
 860 *Inhabitant of Heav’n and Heav’nly born—*
 861 *Here in perpetual agony and pain,*
 862 *With terrors and with clamors compassed round⁴¹⁵*
 863 *Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?*
 864 *Thou art my father, thou my author, thou*
 865 *My being gav’st me. Whom should I obey*
 866 *But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon*
 867 *To that new world of light and bliss, among*
 868 *The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign*

⁴⁰⁷ extreme scarcity of food, hunger

⁴⁰⁸ throat, stomach

⁴⁰⁹ said to

⁴¹⁰ right

⁴¹¹ put forward

⁴¹² spear

⁴¹³ underworld place of punishment for the sinful

⁴¹⁴ deep

⁴¹⁵ compassed round = surrounded

869 *At thy right hand voluptuous,⁴¹⁶ as beseems⁴¹⁷*
 870 *Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.”*
 871 *Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,*
 872 *Sad instrument of all our woe, she took,*
 873 *And towards the gate rolling her bestial train,⁴¹⁸*
 874 *Forthwith the huge portcullis⁴¹⁹ high up-drew,*
 875 *Which, but herself, not all the Stygian⁴²⁰ Powers*
 876 *Could once have moved, then in the key-hole turns*
 877 *Th’ intricate wards,⁴²¹ and every bolt and bar*
 878 *Of massy iron or solid rock with ease*
 879 *Unfastens. On a sudden, open fly*
 880 *(With impetuous⁴²² recoil and jarring sound)*
 881 *Th’ infernal doors, and on their hinges grate*
 882 *Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook*
 883 *Of Erebus.⁴²³ She opened—but to shut*
 884 *Exceeded⁴²⁴ her power. The gates wide open stood,*
 885 *That with extended wings a bannered host,*
 886 *Under spread ensigns marching, might pass*
 through
 887 *With horse and chariots ranked in loose array.*
 888 *So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth*
 889 *Cast forth redounding⁴²⁵ smoke and ruddy flame.*
 890 *Before their eyes in sudden view appear*
 891 *The secrets of the hoary deep—a dark*
 892 *Illimitable ocean, without bound,*
 893 *Without dimension, where length, breadth, and*
 height,

⁴¹⁶ luxuriously sensuous

⁴¹⁷ suits, becomes, fits

⁴¹⁸ as per lines 651–53, above, she has a serpentine tail

⁴¹⁹ lattice gate

⁴²⁰ infernal, hellish

⁴²¹ notches cut in the key

⁴²² rapid, violent

⁴²³ Hell

⁴²⁴ surpassed

⁴²⁵ surging, overflowing

894 *And time, and place, are lost, where eldest Night*
 895 *And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold*
 896 *Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise*
 897 *Of endless wars, and by confusion⁴²⁶ stand.*
 898 *For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions*
 fierce,
 899 *Strive here for mast'ry, and to battle bring*
 900 *Their embryo⁴²⁷ atoms. They around the flag*
 901 *Of each his faction, in their several clans,*
 902 *Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or*
 slow,
 903 *Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands*
 904 *Of Barca⁴²⁸ or Cyrene's⁴²⁹ torrid soil,*
 905 *Levied⁴³⁰ to side with warring winds, and poise⁴³¹*
 906 *Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,⁴³²*
 907 *He rules a moment. Chaos umpire sits,*
 908 *And by decision more embroils⁴³³ the fray*
 909 *By which he reigns. Next him, high arbiter,*
 910 *Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,*
 911 *The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,*
 912 *Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,*
 913 *But all these in their pregnant causes mixed*
 914 *Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,*
 915 *Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain⁴³⁴*
 916 *His dark materials to create more worlds—*

⁴²⁶ tumult, civil commotion

⁴²⁷ embryonic, not yet created

⁴²⁸ Egyptian/Tunisian desert

⁴²⁹ city located near modern Tripoli [trisyllabic, second accented]

⁴³⁰ enlisted, enrolled

⁴³¹ to add weight to (“*avoir du poids*” = to have weight)

⁴³² follow, side with, cleave/cling to

⁴³³ heats up, adds discord/hostility/dissension to

⁴³⁴ decree, order [verb]

917 *Into this wild abyss the wary*⁴³⁵ *fiend*
 918 *Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,*
 919 *Pondering his voyage, for no narrow frith*⁴³⁶
 920 *He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed*⁴³⁷
 921 *With noises loud and ruinous*⁴³⁸ *(to compare*
 922 *Great things with small) than when Bellona*⁴³⁹
 storms
 923 *With all her battering engines,*⁴⁴⁰ *bent*⁴⁴¹ *to raze*⁴⁴²
 924 *Some capital city; or less than if this frame*
 925 *Of Heav'n were falling, and these elements*
 926 *In mutiny had from her axle torn*
 927 *The steadfast earth. At last his sail-broad vans*⁴⁴³
 928 *He spread for flight and, in the surging smoke*
 929 *Uplifted, spurns*⁴⁴⁴ *the ground, thence many a*
 league,
 930 *As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides*
 931 *Audacious,*⁴⁴⁵ *but that seat soon failing, meets*
 932 *A vast vacuity. All unawares,*
 933 *Flutt'ring his pennons*⁴⁴⁶ *vain,*⁴⁴⁷ *plumb-down he*
 drops
 934 *Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour*
 935 *Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,*

⁴³⁵ cautious

⁴³⁶ estuary, arm of the sea

⁴³⁷ assailed

⁴³⁸ crashing

⁴³⁹ Roman goddess of war

⁴⁴⁰ contrivances, machines

⁴⁴¹ leveled, wound up

⁴⁴² destroy

⁴⁴³ wings

⁴⁴⁴ kicks off from

⁴⁴⁵ daring, confident

⁴⁴⁶ wings

⁴⁴⁷ [adjective]

936 *The strong rebuff⁴⁴⁸ of some tumultuous cloud,*
 937 *Instinct⁴⁴⁹ with fire and niter,⁴⁵⁰ hurried him*
 938 *As many miles aloft. That fury⁴⁵¹ stayed—⁴⁵²*
 939 *Quenched in a boggy Syrtis,⁴⁵³ neither sea,*
 940 *Nor good dry land—nigh⁴⁵⁴ foundered,⁴⁵⁵ on he*
 fares,
 941 *Treading the crude⁴⁵⁶ consistence,⁴⁵⁷ half on foot,*
 942 *Half flying. Behoves him now⁴⁵⁸ both oar and sail.*
 943 *As when a gryphon⁴⁵⁹ through the wilderness*
 944 *With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,*
 945 *Pursues the Arimaspians,⁴⁶⁰ who by stealth*
 946 *Had from his⁴⁶¹ wakeful⁴⁶² custody purloined⁴⁶³*
 947 *The guarded gold, so eagerly the fiend*
 948 *O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or*
 rare,
 949 *With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,*
 950 *And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.*
 951 *At length a universal hubbub wild*
 952 *Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,*
 953 *Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear*

⁴⁴⁸ blow

⁴⁴⁹ imbued, charged

⁴⁵⁰ saltpeter, potassium nitrate

⁴⁵¹ infernal spirit (Satan)

⁴⁵² checked

⁴⁵³ stretch of sandbanks off North Africa

⁴⁵⁴ almost

⁴⁵⁵ sent to the bottom, sunk

⁴⁵⁶ not fully developed

⁴⁵⁷ material coherence

⁴⁵⁸ behoves him now = now he needed

⁴⁵⁹ half lion, half eagle

⁴⁶⁰ Scythian

⁴⁶¹ the gryphon's

⁴⁶² vigilant

⁴⁶³ stolen

- 954 *With loudest vehemence.*⁴⁶⁴ *Thither he plies*⁴⁶⁵
 955 *Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power*
 956 *Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss*
 957 *Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask*
 958 *Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies,*
 959 *Bord'ring on light. When straight behold the*
 throne
 960 *Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread*
 961 *Wide on the wasteful deep! With him enthroned*
 962 *Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,*
 963 *The consort*⁴⁶⁶ *of his reign; and by them stood*
 964 *Orcus and Adès,*⁴⁶⁷ *and the dreaded name*
 965 *Of Demogorgon,*⁴⁶⁸ *Rumor next, and Chance,*
 966 *And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,*⁴⁶⁹
 967 *And Discord with a thousand various*⁴⁷⁰ *mouths.*
 968 *T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye*
 Powers
 969 *And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,*
 970 *Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy*
 971 *With purpose to explore or to disturb*
 972 *The secrets of your realm, but by constraint*
 973 *Wand'ring this darksome desert, as my way*
 974 *Lies through your spacious empire up to light,*
 975 *Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek*
 976 *What readiest path leads where your gloomy*
 bounds
 977 *Confine*⁴⁷¹ *with Heav'n, or if some other place*

⁴⁶⁴ intensity, strength

⁴⁶⁵ steers

⁴⁶⁶ partner

⁴⁶⁷ Orcus = Pluto/Hades, Adès = Pluto/Hades

⁴⁶⁸ ancestor of all the gods

⁴⁶⁹ entangled in disorder

⁴⁷⁰ changing, unstable

⁴⁷¹ have a border with

978 *From your dominion won,⁴⁷² th' Ethereal King*
 979 *Possesses lately, thither to arrive*
 980 *I travel this profound,⁴⁷³ direct⁴⁷⁴ my course:*
 981 *Directed, no mean⁴⁷⁵ recompense it brings*
 982 *To your behoof,⁴⁷⁶ if I that region lost,⁴⁷⁷*
 983 *All usurpation⁴⁷⁸ thence expelled, reduce*
 984 *To her original darkness, and your sway*
 985 *(Which is my present journey), and once more*
 986 *Erect the standard⁴⁷⁹ there of ancient Night.*
 987 *Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge!"*
 988 *Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch⁴⁸⁰ old,*
 989 *With falt'ring speech and visage incomposed,⁴⁸¹*
 990 *Answered: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art—*
 991 *That mighty leading Angel, who of late*
 992 *Made head⁴⁸² against Heav'n's King, though*
 overthrown.
 993 *I saw and heard, for such a numerous host*
 994 *Fled not in silence through the frightened deep,*
 995 *With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,⁴⁸³*
 996 *Confusion worse confounded.⁴⁸⁴ And Heav'n-gates*
 997 *Poured out by millions her victorious bands,*
 998 *Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here*

⁴⁷² reached

⁴⁷³ depth [noun]

⁴⁷⁴ "guide (if you would/please)"

⁴⁷⁵ small, petty

⁴⁷⁶ benefit

⁴⁷⁷ loosed, freed [adjective]

⁴⁷⁸ unlawful seizure

⁴⁷⁹ flag

⁴⁸⁰ author of anarchy

⁴⁸¹ agitated

⁴⁸² insurrection

⁴⁸³ fleeing bands

⁴⁸⁴ mixed up

- 999 *Keep residence; if all I can⁴⁸⁵ will serve*
 1000 *That little which is left so⁴⁸⁶ to defend,*
 1001 *Encroached on still through our intestine⁴⁸⁷*
 broils,⁴⁸⁸
 1002 *Weakening the scepter of old Night. First Hell,*
 1003 *Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;*
 1004 *Now lately Heav'n and earth, another world*
 1005 *Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain*
 1006 *To that side Heav'n from whence your legions fell!*
 1007 *If that way be your walk, you have not far;*
 1008 *So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;⁴⁸⁹*
 1009 *Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."*
 1010 *He ceased, and Satan stayed not to reply,*
 1011 *But glad that now his sea should find a shore,*
 1012 *With fresh alacrity and force renewed*
 1013 *Springs upward like a pyramid of fire,*
 1014 *Into the wild expanse, and through the shock⁴⁹⁰*
 1015 *Of fighting elements, on all sides round*
 1016 *Environed,⁴⁹¹ wins his way, harder beset⁴⁹²*
 1017 *And more endangered than when Argo⁴⁹³ passed*
 1018 *Through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling rocks,*
 1019 *Or when Ulysses on the larboard⁴⁹⁴ shunned*
 1020 *Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steered.*
 1021 *So he⁴⁹⁵ with difficulty and labor hard*

⁴⁸⁵ can do

⁴⁸⁶ thus

⁴⁸⁷ internal, inner

⁴⁸⁸ quarrels

⁴⁸⁹ be successful

⁴⁹⁰ clashing

⁴⁹¹ surrounded

⁴⁹² closed round, hemmed in

⁴⁹³ ship of Jason and the Argonauts

⁴⁹⁴ the left side of a ship, when looking forward

⁴⁹⁵ Ulysses

- IO22 *Moved on, with difficulty and labor he.*⁴⁹⁶
 IO23 *But he once passed,*⁴⁹⁷ *soon after, when man fell,*
 IO24 *Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain*⁴⁹⁸
 IO25 *Following his track (such was the will of Heav'n)*
 IO26 *Paved after him a broad and beaten way*
 IO27 *Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf*
 IO28 *Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,*
 IO29 *From Hell continued, reaching th' utmost orb*⁴⁹⁹
 IO30 *Of this frail world, by which the Spirits perverse*⁵⁰⁰
 IO31 *With easy intercourse pass to and fro*
 IO32 *To tempt or punish mortals, except whom*
 IO33 *God and good Angels guard by special grace.*
 IO34 *But now at last the sacred influence*⁵⁰¹
 IO35 *Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n*
 IO36 *Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night*
 IO37 *A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins*
 IO38 *Her farthest verge,*⁵⁰² *and Chaos to retire*⁵⁰³
 IO39 *As from her outmost works, a broken foe,*
 IO40 *With tumult less and with less hostile din,*
 IO41 *That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,*
 IO42 *Wafts*⁵⁰⁴ *on the calmer wave by dubious*⁵⁰⁵ *light,*
 IO43 *And like a weather-beaten vessel holds*

⁴⁹⁶ Satan

⁴⁹⁷ having passed

⁴⁹⁸ rapidly

⁴⁹⁹ sphere, circle

⁵⁰⁰ wicked

⁵⁰¹ emanation

⁵⁰² rim, edge, border

⁵⁰³ to retire = begins to retire

⁵⁰⁴ sails, floats

⁵⁰⁵ vague, uncertain

- 1044 *Gladly the port, though shrouds⁵⁰⁶ and tackle⁵⁰⁷*
torn,
- 1045 *Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,*
- 1046 *Weighs⁵⁰⁸ his spread wings, at leisure to behold*
- 1047 *Far off th' empyreal Heav'n, extended wide*
- 1048 *In circuit, undetermined⁵⁰⁹ square or round,*
- 1049 *With opal towers and battlements adorned*
- 1050 *Of living sapphire, once his native seat,*
- 1051 *And fast by,⁵¹⁰ hanging in a golden chain,*
- 1052 *This pendant world, in bigness as a star*
- 1053 *Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.*
- 1054 *Thither, full fraught⁵¹¹ with mischievous revenge,*
- 1055 *Accursed, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.⁵¹²*

The End of the Second Book

⁵⁰⁶ mainmast ropes

⁵⁰⁷ rigging

⁵⁰⁸ balances

⁵⁰⁹ not fixed, not settled

⁵¹⁰ fast by = close by

⁵¹¹ filled

⁵¹² hastens

BOOK III

THE ARGUMENT

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

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

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

Meanwhile Satan alights upon the bare convex of this world's outermost orb, where wandring he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither. Thence [Satan] comes to the Gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence

to the orb of the sun; he finds there Uriel the Regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new creation, and man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.

1 *Hail holy light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,*
 2 *Or of the Eternal Coeternal beam*
 3 *May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,*
 4 *And never but in unapproachèd light*
 5 *Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee*
 6 *Bright effluence¹ of bright essence increate.²*
 7 *Or hear'st³ thou rather pure ethereal stream,*
 8 *Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,*
 9 *Before the Heav'ns thou wert, and at the voice*
 10 *Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest⁴*
 11 *The rising world of waters dark and deep,*
 12 *Won from the void and formless infinite.*
 13 *Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,*
 14 *Escaped the Stygian⁵ pool, though long detained*
 15 *In that obscure sojourn,⁶ while in my flight*
 16 *Through utter and through middle darkness borne,*
 17 *With other notes than to the Orphean⁷ lyre⁸*
 18 *I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,*
 19 *Taught by the Heav'nly Muse to venture down*
 20 *The dark descent, and up to re-ascend,*
 21 *Though hard and rare.⁹ Thee I re-visit safe,*
 22 *And feel thy sov'reign vital lamp,¹⁰ but thou*
 23 *Re-visit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain*
 24 *To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn,*

¹ a flowing out, emanation

² uncreated

³ "would you rather hear"

⁴ cover

⁵ infernal, hellish

⁶ visit

⁷ Orphean = belonging to Orpheus

⁸ harplike musical instrument used to accompany poetry

⁹ unusual, uncommon

¹⁰ the sun

25 *So thick a drop serene¹¹ hath quenched¹² their
 orbs,*
 26 *Or dim suffusion¹³ veiled.¹⁴ Yet not the more*
 27 *Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,*
 28 *Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,*
 29 *Smit¹⁵ with the love of sacred song. But chief*
 30 *Thee, Sion,¹⁶ and the flow'ry brooks beneath*
 31 *That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,*
 32 *Nightly I visit, nor sometimes forget*
 33 *Those other two, equaled with¹⁷ me in fate*
 34 *(So were I equaled with them in renown),*
 35 *Blind Thamyris,¹⁸ and blind Maeonides,¹⁹*
 36 *And Tiresias,²⁰ and Phineus,²¹ prophets old.*
 37 *Then feed²² on thoughts, that voluntary move*
 38 *Harmonious numbers,²³ as the wakeful bird²⁴*
 39 *Sings darkling,²⁵ and in shadiest covert²⁶ hid*
 40 *Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year*
 41 *Seasons return, but not to me returns*
 42 *Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,*
 43 *Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,*
 44 *Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine,*

¹¹ pure, clear

¹² extinguished, killed

¹³ a fluid that spreads over some part of the body

¹⁴ i.e., veiled them (his eyes)

¹⁵ struck, impressed, inspired

¹⁶ site of the Temple, in Jerusalem

¹⁷ equaled with = the same as

¹⁸ legendary Thracian poet

¹⁹ Homer

²⁰ blind seer of Thebes

²¹ Thracian king and prophet

²² "I feed"

²³ poetry

²⁴ the nightingale, which does not sleep at night

²⁵ in the dark [adverb]

²⁶ cover

45 *But cloud instead, and ever-during²⁷ dark*
 46 *Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men*
 47 *Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair*
 48 *Presented with a universal blank*
 49 *Of Nature's works to me expunged²⁸ and razed,²⁹*
 50 *And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.*
 51 *So much the rather thou, celestial light,*
 52 *Shine inward, and the mind through all her*
 powers
 53 *Irradiate.³⁰ There plant³¹ eyes, all mist from thence*
 54 *Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell*
 55 *Of things invisible to mortal sight.*
 56 *Now had the Almighty Father from above,*
 57 *From the pure empyrean where He sits*
 58 *High throned above all height, bent down His eye,*
 59 *His own works and their works at once to view.*
 60 *About Him all the Sanctities of Heav'n*
 61 *Stood thick as stars, and from His sight received*
 62 *Beatitude³² past utterance.³³ On His right*
 63 *The radiant image of His glory sat,*
 64 *His only Son. On earth He first beheld*
 65 *Our two first parents, yet³⁴ the only two*
 66 *Of mankind in the happy garden placed,*
 67 *Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,*
 68 *Uninterrupted joy, unrivaled love,*
 69 *In blissful solitude. He then surveyed*
 70 *Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there*
 71 *Coasting the wall of Heav'n on this side Night*

²⁷ during = lasting, continuing

²⁸ blotted out, erased

²⁹ destroyed

³⁰ illuminate, shine light upon [three syllables, second accented]

³¹ [verb]

³² supreme blessing/happiness

³³ [bisyllabic, first accented]

³⁴ as yet, still

72 *In the dun³⁵ air sublime,³⁶ and ready now*
 73 *To stoop with wearied wings and willing feet*
 74 *On the bare outside of this world, that seemed*
 75 *Firm land embosomed,³⁷ without firmament,³⁸*
 76 *Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.*
 77 *Him God beholding, from His prospect³⁹ high,*
 78 *Wherein past, present, future, He beholds,*
 79 *Thus to His only Son foreseeing spoke:*
 8 *“Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage*
 81 *Transports⁴⁰ our adversary? whom no bounds*
 82 *Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains*
 83 *Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss*
 84 *Wide interrupt,⁴¹ can hold, so bent he seems*
 85 *On desperate revenge, that shall redound*
 86 *Upon his own rebellious head. And now,*
 87 *Through all restraint broke⁴² loose, he wings his*
 way
 88 *Not far off Heav’n, in the precincts⁴³ of light,*
 89 *Directly towards the new created world,*
 90 *And man there placed, with purpose to assay⁴⁴*
 91 *If him by force he can destroy or, worse,*
 92 *By some false guile pervert. And shall pervert,*
 93 *For man will hearken to his glozing⁴⁵ lies,*
 94 *And easily transgress⁴⁶ the sole command,*

³⁵ dark, dusky, murky

³⁶ high up

³⁷ enclosed

³⁸ substratum, support

³⁹ a place affording an open view

⁴⁰ carries away

⁴¹ broken open

⁴² having broken

⁴³ environs, neighborhoods, districts

⁴⁴ try, attempt

⁴⁵ specious, flattering

⁴⁶ violate, break

95 *Sole pledge⁴⁷ of his obedience: So will fall*
 96 *He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?*
 97 *Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me*
 98 *All he could have. I made him just and right,*
 99 *Sufficient to have stood,⁴⁸ though free to fall.*
 100 *Such I created all the ethereal Powers*
 101 *And Spirits, both them who stood and them who*
 failed.
 102 *Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.*
 103 *Not free, what proof could they have given sincere*
 104 *Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,*
 105 *Where only what they needs must do appeared,*
 106 *Not what they would? What praise could they*
 receive?
 107 *What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,*
 108 *When will and reason (reason also is choice)*
 109 *Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,⁴⁹*
 110 *Made passive both, had served necessity,*
 111 *Not me? They therefore, as to right belonged,*
 112 *So were created, nor can justly accuse*
 113 *Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,*
 114 *As if predestination over-ruled*
 115 *Their will, disposed⁵⁰ by absolute decree*
 116 *Or high foreknowledge. They themselves decreed*
 117 *Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,*
 118 *Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,*
 119 *Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.*
 120 *So without least impulse or shadow of Fate,*
 121 *Or aught by me immutably⁵¹ foreseen,*
 122 *They trespass, authors⁵² to themselves in all*

⁴⁷ (1) vow, promise, (2) surety

⁴⁸ stayed erect, endured

⁴⁹ plundered, robbed

⁵⁰ controlled

⁵¹ unalterably

⁵² founder, instigator, father, ancestor

- 123 *Both what they judge and what they choose. For*
 so
 124 *I formed them free, and free they must remain,*
 125 *Till they enthrall⁵³ themselves. I else must change*
 126 *Their nature, and revoke the high decree*
 127 *Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained*
 128 *Their freedom. They themselves ordained their*
 fall.
 129 *The first sort⁵⁴ by their own suggestion fell,*
 130 *Self-tempted, self-depraved. Man falls deceived*
 131 *By the other first. Man therefore shall find grace,*
 132 *The other none. In mercy and justice both,*
 133 *Through Heav'n and earth, so shall my glory*
 excel,
 134 *But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine."*
 135 *Thus while God spoke,⁵⁵ ambrosial fragrance*
 filled
 136 *All Heav'n, and in the blessèd Spirits elect*
 137 *Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.*
 138 *Beyond compare, the Son of God was seen*
 139 *Most glorious. In him all His Father shone,*
 140 *Substantially⁵⁶ expressed, and in his face*
 141 *Divine compassion visibly appeared,*
 142 *Love without end, and without measure grace,*
 143 *Which uttering thus he to his Father spoke:*
 144 *"O Father, gracious was that word which*
 closed
 145 *Thy sov'reign⁵⁷ sentence,⁵⁸ that man should find*
 grace.
 146 *For which both Heav'n and earth shall high extol*

⁵³ enslave

⁵⁴ Satan and his followers

⁵⁵ "while God spoke thus"

⁵⁶ (1) not imaginary, (2) real, (3) amply

⁵⁷ paramount, supreme

⁵⁸ authoritative decision

147 *Thy praises, with th' innumerable sound*
 148 *Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith Thy throne*
 149 *Encompassed⁵⁹ shall resound⁶⁰ Thee ever blessed.*
 150 *For should man finally be lost? Should man,*
 151 *Thy creature late so loved, Thy youngest son,*
 152 *Fall circumvented⁶¹ thus by fraud, though joined*
 153 *With his own folly? That be from Thee far,*
 154 *That far be from Thee, Father, who art judge*
 155 *Of all things made, and judgest only right.*
 156 *Or shall the adversary⁶² thus obtain*
 157 *His end, and frustrate Thine? Shall he fulfill*
 158 *His malice, and Thy goodness bring to nought?*
 159 *Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,⁶³*
 160 *Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell*
 161 *Draw after him the whole race of mankind,*
 162 *By him corrupted? Or wilt Thou Thyself*
 163 *Abolish Thy creation, and unmake*
 164 *For him, what for Thy glory Thou hast made?*
 165 *So should Thy goodness and Thy greatness both*
 166 *Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.”*
 167 *To whom the great Creator thus replied:*
 168 *“O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,*
 169 *Son of my bosom, Son who art alone*
 170 *My word, my wisdom, and effectual⁶⁴ might,*
 171 *All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all*
 172 *As my eternal purpose hath decreed.*
 173 *Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,*
 174 *Yet not of will in him, but grace in me*
 175 *Freely vouchsafed.⁶⁵ Once more I will renew*

⁵⁹ encircled

⁶⁰ proclaim, celebrate

⁶¹ surrounded

⁶² Satan

⁶³ sentence, final fate

⁶⁴ conclusive

⁶⁵ conferred, bestowed

176 *His lapsèd⁶⁶ powers, though forfeit⁶⁷ and
 enthralled*
 177 *By Sin to foul exorbitant desires.*
 178 *Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand*
 179 *On even ground against his mortal foe,*
 180 *By me upheld, that he may know how frail*
 181 *His fall'n condition is, and to me owe*
 182 *All his deliverance, and to none but me.*
 183 *Some I have chosen of peculiar⁶⁸ grace,*
 184 *Elect⁶⁹ above the rest; so is my will.*
 185 *The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned*
 186 *Their sinful state, and to appease betimes⁷⁰*
 187 *The incensed⁷¹ Deity, while offered⁷² grace*
 188 *Invites, for I will clear their senses dark,*
 189 *What may suffice, and soften stony hearts*
 190 *To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.⁷³*
 191 *To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,*
 192 *Though but endeavored with sincere intent,*
 193 *Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.*
 194 *And I will place within them as a guide*
 195 *My umpire⁷⁴ Conscience, whom if they will hear,*
 196 *Light⁷⁵ after light, well used, they shall attain,*
 197 *And to the end, persisting, safe arrive.*
 198 *This my long sufferance,⁷⁶ and my day of grace,*
 199 *They who neglect and scorn shall never taste,*

⁶⁶ fallen

⁶⁷ lost by misconduct

⁶⁸ particular, special

⁶⁹ chosen

⁷⁰ (1) in good time, (2) at an early time, speedily

⁷¹ inflamed, angered

⁷² [adjective]

⁷³ proper, fitting, right

⁷⁴ arbitrator

⁷⁵ enlightenment, the brightness of Heaven

⁷⁶ patient endurance/toleration

200 *But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,*
 201 *That they may stumble on, and deeper fall.*
 202 *And none but such from mercy I exclude.*
 203 *“But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,*
 204 *Disloyal, breaks his fealty⁷⁷ and sins*
 205 *Against the high supremacy of Heav’n,*
 206 *Affecting⁷⁸ God-head and, so losing all,*
 207 *To expiate his treason hath nought left,*
 208 *But to destruction sacred⁷⁹ and devote,*
 209 *He, with his whole posterity, must die.*
 210 *Die he or justice must; unless for him*
 211 *Some other able, and as willing, pay*
 212 *The rigid⁸⁰ satisfaction,⁸¹ death for death.*
 213 *Say, Heav’nly Powers, where shall we find such*
 love?
 214 *Which of you will be mortal, to redeem*
 215 *Man’s mortal crime and, just, the unjust to save?*
 216 *Dwells in all Heav’n charity⁸² so dear?”*
 217 *He asked, but all the Heav’nly choir⁸³ stood*
 mute,
 218 *And silence was in Heav’n: on man’s behalf*
 219 *Patron⁸⁴ or intercessor⁸⁵ none appeared,*
 220 *Much less that durst upon his own head draw*
 221 *The deadly forfeiture and ransom set.*
 222 *And now without redemption all mankind*
 223 *Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell*

⁷⁷ sworn fidelity

⁷⁸ loving

⁷⁹ consecrated

⁸⁰ unyielding, strict, firm

⁸¹ payment of a debt [legal/theological]

⁸² love, spontaneous goodness, benevolence

⁸³ company

⁸⁴ protector, advocate

⁸⁵ mediator

224 *By doom⁸⁶ severe, had not the Son of God,*
 225 *In whom the fullness dwells of love divine,*
 226 *His dearest mediation thus renewed:*
 227 *“Father, Thy word is past, man shall find grace;*
 228 *And shall grace not find means? that finds her*
 way,
 229 *The speediest of Thy wingèd messengers,*
 230 *To visit all Thy creatures, and to all*
 231 *Comes unprevented,⁸⁷ unimplored, unsought?*
 232 *Happy for man, so coming. He her aid*
 233 *Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost:*
 234 *Atonement for himself, or offering meet,⁸⁸*
 235 *Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.*
 236 *Behold me, then: me for him, life for life*
 237 *I offer. On me let Thine anger fall;*
 238 *Account⁸⁹ me man. I for his sake will leave*
 239 *Thy bosom, and this glory next to Thee*
 240 *Freely put off, and for him lastly⁹⁰ die*
 241 *Well pleased. On me let Death wreak⁹¹ all his rage.*
 242 *Under his gloomy power I shall not long*
 243 *Lie vanquished. Thou hast giv’n me to possess*
 244 *Life in myself forever. By Thee I live,*
 245 *Though now to Death I yield, and am his due⁹²*
 246 *(All that of me can die), yet that debt paid,*
 247 *Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave*
 248 *His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul*
 249 *Forever with corruption there to dwell,*
 250 *But I shall rise victorious, and subdue*

⁸⁶ sentence, judgment

⁸⁷ not anticipated, not won by prayer

⁸⁸ fit, suitable, appropriate [adjective]

⁸⁹ hold, reckon

⁹⁰ ultimately

⁹¹ give vent to

⁹² tribute, right

251 *My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted⁹³ spoil.*
 252 *Death his Death's wound shall then receive, and*
 stoop⁹⁴
 253 *Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed.*
 254 *I through the ample⁹⁵ air in triumph high*
 255 *Shall lead Hell captive maugre⁹⁶ Hell, and show⁹⁷*
 256 *The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight*
 257 *Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,*
 258 *While, by Thee raised, I ruin⁹⁸ all my foes,*
 259 *Death last, and with his carcass glut⁹⁹ the grave.*
 260 *Then with the multitude of my redeemed*
 261 *Shall enter Heav'n, long absent, and return,*
 262 *Father, to see Thy face, wherein no cloud*
 263 *Of anger shall remain, but peace assured*
 264 *And reconcilment. Wrath shall be no more,*
 265 *Thenceforth, but in Thy presence joy entire."¹⁰⁰*
 266 *His words here ended, but his meek aspect,*
 267 *Silent, yet spoke, and breathed immortal love*
 268 *To mortal men, above which only shone*
 269 *Filial obedience. As a sacrifice*
 270 *Glad to be offered, he attends the will*
 271 *Of his great Father. Admiration¹⁰¹ seized*
 272 *All Heav'n, what this might mean, and whither*
 tend,¹⁰²
 273 *Wond'ring. But soon¹⁰³ th' Almighty thus replied:*

⁹³ boasted of

⁹⁴ bow, submit

⁹⁵ broad, spacious

⁹⁶ in spite of

⁹⁷ exhibit, display

⁹⁸ destroy

⁹⁹ overfill, surfeit

¹⁰⁰ complete

¹⁰¹ wonder mixed with reverence

¹⁰² to lead, result

¹⁰³ quickly, at once

274 *“O thou, in Heav’n and earth the only peace*
 275 *Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou*
 276 *My sole complacence!¹⁰⁴ Well thou know’st how*
 dear
 277 *To me are all my works, nor man the least,*
 278 *Though last created, that for him I spare*
 279 *Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,*
 280 *By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.*
 281 *Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,¹⁰⁵*
 282 *Their nature also to thy nature join,*
 283 *And be thyself man among men on earth,*
 284 *Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,*
 285 *By wondrous birth. Be thou in Adam’s room¹⁰⁶*
 286 *The head of all mankind, though Adam’s son.*
 287 *As in him perish all men, so in thee,*
 288 *As from a second root, shall be restored*
 289 *As many as are restored, without thee none.*
 290 *His crime makes guilty all his sons: thy merit,*
 291 *Imputed,¹⁰⁷ shall absolve them¹⁰⁸ who renounce*
 292 *Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,*
 293 *And live in thee transplanted, and from thee*
 294 *Receive new life. So man, as is most just,*
 295 *Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die,*
 296 *And dying rise, and rising with him raise*
 297 *His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.*
 298 *So Heav’nly love shall outdo hellish hate,*
 299 *Giving to death, and dying to redeem,*
 300 *So dearly¹⁰⁹ to redeem what hellish hate*

¹⁰⁴ pleasure, delight

¹⁰⁵ ransom

¹⁰⁶ place

¹⁰⁷ transferred

¹⁰⁸ those among them

¹⁰⁹ expensively, at such a high price

301 *So easily destroyed, and still destroys*
 302 *In those who, when they may, accept not grace.*
 303 *Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume*
 304 *Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.*
 305 *Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss*
 306 *Equal to God, and equally enjoying*
 307 *Godlike fruition,¹¹⁰ quitted¹¹¹ all, to save*
 308 *A world from utter loss, and hast been found*
 309 *By merit more than birthright Son of God,*
 310 *Found worthiest to be so by being good,*
 311 *Far more than great or high—because in thee*
 312 *Love hath abounded more than glory abounds.*
 313 *Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt*
 314 *With thee thy manhood also to this throne.*
 315 *Here shalt thou sit incarnate,¹¹² here shalt reign*
 316 *Both God and man, Son both of God and man,*
 317 *Anointed universal King. All power*
 318 *I give thee: reign forever, and assume*
 319 *Thy merits.¹¹³ Under thee, as head supreme,*
 320 *Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions, I*
 reduce.¹¹⁴
 321 *All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide¹¹⁵*
 322 *In Heav'n, or earth, or under earth in Hell.*
 323 *When thou, attended gloriously from Heav'n*
 324 *Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send*
 325 *The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaim*
 326 *Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds*
 327 *The living, and forthwith the cited¹¹⁶ dead*

¹¹⁰ pleasurable possession

¹¹¹ renounced, given up

¹¹² embodied

¹¹³ reward

¹¹⁴ make subject, subdue, constrain, lower

¹¹⁵ dwell

¹¹⁶ summoned

328 *Of all past ages, to the general doom*¹¹⁷
 329 *Shall hasten. Such a peal*¹¹⁸ *shall rouse their sleep.*
 330 *Then all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge*
 331 *Bad men and Angels. They, arraigned,*¹¹⁹ *shall sink*
 332 *Beneath thy sentence. Hell, her numbers full,*
 333 *Thenceforth shall be forever shut. Meanwhile*
 334 *The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring*
 335 *New Heav'n and earth, wherein the just shall dwell*
 336 *And after all their tribulations long*
 337 *See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,*
 338 *With joy and peace triumphing, and fair truth.*
 339 *Then thou thy regal scepter shalt lay by,*
 340 *For regal scepter then no more shall need:*
 341 *God shall be all in all. But all ye gods,*
 342 *Adore him, who to compass*¹²⁰ *all this dies,*
 343 *Adore the Son, and honor him as me."*
 344 *No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all*
 345 *The multitude of Angels, with a shout*
 346 *Loud as from numbers without number, sweet*
 347 *As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav'n rung*
 348 *With jubilee,*¹²¹ *and loud hosannas*¹²² *filled*
 349 *The eternal regions. Lowly reverent*
 350 *Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground*
 351 *With solemn adoration down they cast*
 352 *Their crowns inwove with amarant*¹²³ *and gold,*
 353 *Immortal amarant, a flower which once*
 354 *In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,*
 355 *Began to bloom, but soon for man's offence*

¹¹⁷ judgment

¹¹⁸ outburst/volley of sound

¹¹⁹ called to account

¹²⁰ accomplish

¹²¹ wild cries, shouts

¹²² cries of praise to God

¹²³ mythical flower that never fades

356 *To Heav'n removed, where first it grew, there*
 grows,
 357 *And flow'rs aloft, shading the Fount of Life,*
 358 *And where the river of bliss through midst of*
 Heav'n
 359 *Rolls o'er Elysian flow'rs her amber stream.*
 360 *With these that never fade the Spirits elect¹²⁴*
 361 *Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with*
 beams,
 362 *Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright*
 363 *Pavement,¹²⁵ that like a sea of jasper shone,*
 364 *Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.*
 365 *Then, crowned again, their golden harps they*
 took,
 366 *Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side*
 367 *Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet*
 368 *Of charming symphony¹²⁶ they introduce*
 369 *Their sacred song, and waken raptures high.*
 370 *No voice exempt, no voice but well could join*
 371 *Melodious part, such concord¹²⁷ is in Heav'n.*
 372 *Thee, Father; first they sung Omnipotent,*
 373 *Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,*
 374 *Eternal King, Thee Author of all being,*
 375 *Fountain of light, Thyself invisible*
 376 *Amidst the glorious brightness where Thou sit'st*
 377 *Throned inaccessible, but¹²⁸ when Thou shad'st*
 378 *The full blaze of thy beams and, through a cloud*
 379 *Drawn round about Thee like a radiant shrine,*
 380 *Dark with excessive bright Thy skirts¹²⁹ appear,*

¹²⁴ [adjective]

¹²⁵ floor [noun, and grammatical subject; the verb is "smiled," at the end of the next line]

¹²⁶ harmony, music in parts

¹²⁷ harmoniousness

¹²⁸ except

¹²⁹ lower part of a robe

381 *Yet¹³⁰ dazzle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim*
 382 *Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.*
 383 *Thee¹³¹ next they sang of all creation first,*
 384 *Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,*
 385 *In whose conspicuous¹³² count'nance, without*
 cloud
 386 *Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,*
 387 *Whom else no creature can behold. On thee*
 388 *Impressed¹³³ the effulgence¹³⁴ of His glory abides,*
 389 *Transfused on thee His ample¹³⁵ Spirit rests.*
 390 *He Heav'n of Heav'ns and all the Powers therein*
 391 *By thee created; and by thee threw down*
 392 *Th' aspiring Dominations.¹³⁶ Thou that day*
 393 *Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,*
 394 *Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook*
 395 *Heav'n's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks*
 396 *Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.*
 397 *Back from pursuit, thy Powers¹³⁷ with loud acclaim*
 398 *Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,*
 399 *To execute fierce vengeance on His foes,*
 400 *Not so on man. Him through their¹³⁸ malice fallen,*
 401 *Father of mercy and grace, Thou didst not doom¹³⁹*
 402 *So strictly, but much more to pity inclined.*
 403 *No sooner did Thy dear and only Son*
 404 *Perceive Thee purposed not to doom frail man*
 405 *So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,*

¹³⁰ still

¹³¹ Christ

¹³² eminent

¹³³ stamped

¹³⁴ splendid radiance

¹³⁵ full whole

¹³⁶ fourth of the nine orders of angels

¹³⁷ sixth of the nine orders of angels

¹³⁸ the fallen angels

¹³⁹ sentence, judge

406 *He to appease Thy wrath, and end the strife*
 407 *Of mercy and justice in Thy face discerned,*
 408 *Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat*
 409 *Second to Thee, offered himself to die*
 410 *For man's offence. O unexampled love,*
 411 *Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!*
 412 *Hail, Son of God, Savior of men! Thy name*
 413 *Shall be the copious matter of my song*
 414 *Henceforth, and never shall my heart thy praise*
 415 *Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.¹⁴⁰*
 416 *Thus they in Heav'n, above the starry sphere,*
 417 *Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.*
 418 *Meanwhile, upon the firm opacious¹⁴¹ globe*
 419 *Of this round world, whose first convex¹⁴² divides*
 420 *The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed¹⁴³*
 421 *From Chaos and th' inroad¹⁴⁴ of Darkness old,*
 422 *Satan alighted walks. A globe far off*
 423 *It seemed, now seems a boundless continent*
 424 *Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night*
 425 *Starless exposed, and ever-threat'ning storms*
 426 *Of Chaos blust'ring round, inclement¹⁴⁵ sky,*
 427 *Save on that side which from the wall of Heav'n,*
 428 *Though distant far, some small reflection gains*
 429 *Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud.*
 430 *Here walked the fiend at large¹⁴⁶ in spacious field.*
 431 *As when a vulture on Imaus¹⁴⁷ bred,*
 432 *Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,¹⁴⁸*

¹⁴⁰ separate

¹⁴¹ opaque

¹⁴² curved surface

¹⁴³ fenced in

¹⁴⁴ (1) sudden incursion, raid, (2) a road in, entranceway

¹⁴⁵ harsh, severe, pitiless

¹⁴⁶ at large = unconfined, at liberty

¹⁴⁷ Himalayan mountain

¹⁴⁸ leaps, often on horseback [verb]

433 *Dislodging*¹⁴⁹ *from a region scarce of prey*
 434 *To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling*¹⁵⁰ *kids,*
 435 *On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the*
 *springs*¹⁵¹
 436 *Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,*
 437 *But in*¹⁵² *his way lights*¹⁵³ *on the barren plains*
 438 *Of Sericana,*¹⁵⁴ *where Chinese drive*
 439 *With sails and wind their cany*¹⁵⁵ *waggon's light.*¹⁵⁶
 440 *So on this windy sea of land, the fiend*
 441 *Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey—*
 442 *Alone, for other creature in this place,*
 443 *Living or lifeless, to be found was none,*
 444 *None yet, but store*¹⁵⁷ *hereafter from the earth*
 445 *Up hither like aerial vapors flew*
 446 *Of all things transitory and vain, when Sin*
 447 *With vanity had filled the works of men:*
 448 *Both all things vain, and all who in vain things*
 449 *Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,*
 450 *Or*¹⁵⁸ *happiness in this or th' other life,*
 451 *All who have their reward on earth, the fruits*
 452 *Of painful superstition and blind zeal,*
 453 *Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find*
 454 *Fit retribution, empty as their deeds.*
 455 *All th' unaccomplished*¹⁵⁹ *works of Nature's hand,*
 456 *Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly*¹⁶⁰ *mixed,*

¹⁴⁹ leaving his usual surroundings, shifting

¹⁵⁰ springtime

¹⁵¹ origins, sources

¹⁵² on, along

¹⁵³ descends

¹⁵⁴ partly in China, partly in Tibet

¹⁵⁵ cane, bamboo

¹⁵⁶ [adjective]

¹⁵⁷ plenty, abundance

¹⁵⁸ whether

¹⁵⁹ incomplete

¹⁶⁰ unnaturally

- 457 *Dissolved on earth, fleet¹⁶¹ hither, and in vain,*
 458 *Till final dissolution, wander here,*
 459 *Not in the neighboring moon, as some have*
 dreamed.
- 460 *Those argent¹⁶² fields' more likely habitants,*
 461 *Translated¹⁶³ Saints,¹⁶⁴ or middle Spirits hold*
 462 *Betwixt th' angelical and human kind.*
 463 *Hither of ill-joined sons and daughters born*
 464 *First from the ancient world those giants came,*
 465 *With many a vain exploit, though then renowned.*
 466 *The builders next of Babel on the plain*
 467 *Of Sennaär,¹⁶⁵ and still with vain design,*
 468 *New Babels, had¹⁶⁶ they wherewithal,¹⁶⁷ would*
 build.
- 469 *Others came single:¹⁶⁸ he,¹⁶⁹ who to be deemed¹⁷⁰*
 470 *A god, leaped fondly¹⁷¹ into Aetna's flames,*
 471 *Empedocles; and he,¹⁷² who to enjoy*
 472 *Plato's Elysium,¹⁷³ leaped into the sea,*
 473 *Cleombrotus; and many more too long,¹⁷⁴*
 474 *Embryos and idiots, eremites,¹⁷⁵ and friars*

¹⁶¹ hurry [verb]

¹⁶² silvery

¹⁶³ transported

¹⁶⁴ Enoch and Elijah: see Genesis 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11

¹⁶⁵ Shinar, in Babylonia

¹⁶⁶ if they had

¹⁶⁷ means, resources

¹⁶⁸ singly, one by one

¹⁶⁹ he = as per line 471, below: Empedocles

¹⁷⁰ considered, judged, thought

¹⁷¹ foolishly credulous/sanguine

¹⁷² he = as per line 473, below: Cleombrotus

¹⁷³ as described in Plato's *Phaedo*, which he had just read

¹⁷⁴ too long to tell of

¹⁷⁵ hermits

- 475 *White,¹⁷⁶ black,¹⁷⁷ and gray,¹⁷⁸ with all their
trumpery.¹⁷⁹*
- 476 *Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek*
477 *In Golgotha¹⁸⁰ him dead who lives in Heav'n,*
478 *And they who to be sure of Paradise,*
479 *Dying, put on the weeds¹⁸¹ of Dominick,¹⁸²*
480 *Or in Franciscan¹⁸³ think to pass disguised.*
481 *They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,*
482 *And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs*
483 *The trepidation talked,¹⁸⁴ and that first moved.¹⁸⁵*
484 *And now Saint Peter at Heav'n's wicket¹⁸⁶ seems*
485 *To wait¹⁸⁷ them with his keys, and now at foot*
486 *Of Heav'n's ascent they lift their feet, when lo!*
487 *A violent¹⁸⁸ cross wind from either coast*
488 *Blows them transverse,¹⁸⁹ ten thousand leagues¹⁹⁰*
awry¹⁹¹
- 489 *Into the devious¹⁹² air. Then might ye see*
490 *Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers,*
tossed
- 491 *And fluttered into rags, then relics, beads,*

¹⁷⁶ Carmelite

¹⁷⁷ Dominican

¹⁷⁸ Franciscan

¹⁷⁹ frauds, trash

¹⁸⁰ where Christ was crucified

¹⁸¹ clothes, habits

¹⁸² Dominicans

¹⁸³ i.e., in Franciscan garments

¹⁸⁴ i.e., "or so they said," proposed, prated

¹⁸⁵ all as in Ptolemaic astronomy: the "trepidation" was the shaking of the spheres

¹⁸⁶ small door/gate

¹⁸⁷ await

¹⁸⁸ [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

¹⁸⁹ sideways, across

¹⁹⁰ one league = ca. three miles

¹⁹¹ askew, out of the right course

¹⁹² remote

492 *Indulgences, dispenses,¹⁹³ pardons, bulls,*
 493 *The sport of winds. All these, upwhirled aloft,*
 494 *Fly o'er the backside¹⁹⁴ of the world far off*
 495 *Into a limbo large and broad, since called*
 496 *The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown*
 497 *Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.*
 498 *All this dark globe the fiend found as he passed,*
 499 *And long he wandered, till at last a gleam*
 500 *Of dawning light¹⁹⁵ turned thitherward in haste*
 501 *His travelled steps. Far distant he descries,¹⁹⁶*
 502 *Ascending by degrees¹⁹⁷ magnificent*
 503 *Up to the wall of Heav'n, a structure high*
 504 *At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared*
 505 *The work as of a kingly palace-gate,*
 506 *With frontispiece¹⁹⁸ of diamond and gold*
 507 *Embellished. Thick with sparkling orient¹⁹⁹ gems*
 508 *The portal²⁰⁰ shone, inimitable on earth*
 509 *By model or by shading²⁰¹ pencil drawn.*
 510 *These stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw*
 511 *Angels ascending and descending, bands*
 512 *Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled*
 513 *To Padan-Aram,²⁰² in the field of Luz,²⁰³*
 514 *Dreaming by night under the open sky*

¹⁹³ dispensations

¹⁹⁴ [the pun is surely deliberate]

¹⁹⁵ [noun, and subject of the verb "turned," immediately following]

¹⁹⁶ sees

¹⁹⁷ steps

¹⁹⁸ the decorated entrance of a building

¹⁹⁹ lustrous

²⁰⁰ gateway

²⁰¹ i.e., making the distinctions of dark and light that indicate depth, color, etc.

²⁰² [both bisyllabic, first accented]

²⁰³ see Genesis 28

515 *And waking cried, "This is the gate of Heav'n!"*
 516 *Each stair mysteriously²⁰⁴ was meant, nor stood*
 517 *There always, but drawn up²⁰⁵ to Heav'n*
 sometimes,
 518 *Viewless.²⁰⁶ And underneath a bright sea flowed*
 519 *Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon*
 520 *Who after came from earth, sailing arrived,*
 521 *Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake*
 522 *Rapt²⁰⁷ in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.*
 523 *The stairs were then let down, whether to dare*
 524 *The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate²⁰⁸*
 525 *His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss,*
 526 *Direct against which opened from beneath,*
 527 *Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,*
 528 *A passage down to th' earth, a passage wide,*
 529 *Wider by far than that of after-times*
 530 *Over Mount Sion and, though that were large,*
 531 *Over the Promised Land, to God so dear,*
 532 *By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,*
 533 *On high behests²⁰⁹ His Angels to and fro*
 534 *Passed frequent, and His eye with choice regard²¹⁰*
 535 *From Paneas,²¹¹ the fount²¹² of Jordan's flood,²¹³*
 536 *To Beersaba,²¹⁴ where the Holy Land*
 537 *Borders on Egypt and th' Arabian shore.*

²⁰⁴ mystically, allegorically

²⁰⁵ i.e., this is Jacob's "ladder"

²⁰⁶ invisible

²⁰⁷ carried

²⁰⁸ worsen

²⁰⁹ commands, injunctions

²¹⁰ (1) choice regard = well-chosen/careful attention *or* (less likely) (2) choice regard = deliberately observed

²¹¹ Paneas = "spring of Dan"; a city near Mt. Hermon, in northern Palestine, at a spring of the River Jordan; now Banias

²¹² source

²¹³ river

²¹⁴ Beersheba, in southern Palestine

538 *So wide the op'ning seemed, where bounds were*
 set
 539 *To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.*
 540 *Satan from hence, now on the lower stair*
 541 *That scaled by steps of gold to Heav'n-gate,*
 542 *Looks down with wonder at the sudden view*
 543 *Of all this world at once. As when a scout,²¹⁵*
 544 *Through dark and desert ways with peril gone*
 545 *All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn*
 546 *Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,*
 547 *Which to his eye discovers²¹⁶ unaware*
 548 *The goodly²¹⁷ prospect²¹⁸ of some foreign land*
 549 *First seen, or some renowned metropolis*
 550 *With glistering spires and pinnacles adorned,*
 551 *Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams,*
 552 *Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,*
 553 *The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,*
 554 *At sight of all this world beheld so fair.*
 555 *Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood*
 556 *So high above the circling canopy*
 557 *Of Night's extended shade), from eastern point*
 558 *Of Libra²¹⁹ to the fleecy star²²⁰ that bears*
 559 *Andromeda²²¹ far off Atlantic seas*
 560 *Beyond th' horizon. Then from pole to pole*
 561 *He views in breadth, and without longer pause*
 562 *Down right into the world's first region throws*
 563 *His flight precipitant,²²² and winds²²³ with ease*

²¹⁵ spy

²¹⁶ reveals

²¹⁷ (1) of good appearance, (2) large

²¹⁸ view

²¹⁹ constellation, the Scales

²²⁰ Aries, the Ram

²²¹ nebula

²²² headlong

²²³ [verb; rhymes with "finds, minds, binds," etc.]

564 *Through the pure marble²²⁴ air his oblique way*
 565 *Amongst innumerable stars, that shone*
 566 *Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other*
 worlds—
 567 *Or²²⁵ other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,*
 568 *Like those Hesperian gardens²²⁶ famed of old,*
 569 *Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales,*
 570 *Thrice happy isles. But who dwelt happy there*
 571 *He stayed²²⁷ not to inquire. Above them all*
 572 *The golden sun, in splendor likest Heav'n,*
 573 *Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends*
 574 *Through the calm firmament, but up or down,*
 575 *By center, or eccentric,²²⁸ hard to tell,²²⁹*
 576 *Or longitude, where the great luminary²³⁰*
 577 *Aloof²³¹ the vulgar²³² constellations thick,²³³*
 578 *That from his²³⁴ lordly eye keep distance due,²³⁵*
 579 *Dispenses light from far. They as they move*
 580 *Their starry dance in numbers that compute*
 581 *Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering*
 lamp
 582 *Turn swift their various²³⁶ motions, or are turned*
 583 *By his magnetic beam, that gently warms*
 584 *The universe, and to each inward part*

²²⁴ smooth as marble

²²⁵ either

²²⁶ in which the Hesperides, daughters of Night and Darkness, guarded a tree that bore golden apples

²²⁷ stopped

²²⁸ “away from the center,” which in this astronomy = the earth

²²⁹ i.e., whether Ptolemaic or Copernican

²³⁰ the sun

²³¹ at a distance from

²³² common

²³³ dense

²³⁴ the sun's

²³⁵ proper, fitting

²³⁶ changing

585 *With gentle penetration, though unseen,*
 586 *Shoots invisible virtue²³⁷ ev'n to the deep,*
 587 *So wondrously was set his station bright.*
 588 *There lands the fiend, a spot like which perhaps*
 589 *Astronomer in the sun's lucent²³⁸ orb*
 590 *Through his glazed²³⁹ optic tube²⁴⁰ yet never saw.*
 591 *The place he found beyond expression²⁴¹ bright,*
 592 *Compared with aught on earth, metal or stone,*
 593 *Not all parts like, but all alike informed²⁴²*
 594 *With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.*
 595 *If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;*
 596 *If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,*
 597 *Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone*
 598 *In Aaron's breast-plate,²⁴³ and a stone besides*
 599 *Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen,²⁴⁴*
 600 *That stone, or like to that which here below*
 601 *Philosophers in vain so long have sought—*
 602 *In vain, though by their powerful art they bind*
 603 *Volatile Hermes,²⁴⁵ and call up unbound*
 604 *In various shapes old Proteus²⁴⁶ from the sea,*
 605 *Drained through a limbic²⁴⁷ to his native form.*
 606 *What wonder then if fields and regions here*
 607 *Breathe forth elixir²⁴⁸ pure, and rivers run*

²³⁷ powers, qualities

²³⁸ luminous

²³⁹ made of glass

²⁴⁰ telescope: Milton had visited Galileo and looked through his telescope

²⁴¹ utterance

²⁴² stamped, impressed

²⁴³ see Exodus 28:17–20

²⁴⁴ i.e., the so-called philosopher's stone

²⁴⁵ the god also known as Mercury, "volatile" because fond of trickery and furtiveness

²⁴⁶ sea god, a shape-shifter

²⁴⁷ glass vessel with a beak, used by alchemists for distilling operations

²⁴⁸ mythical essence

608 *Potable*²⁴⁹ *gold? when with one virtuous*²⁵⁰ *touch*
 609 *The arch-chemic*²⁵¹ *sun, so far from us remote,*²⁵²
 610 *Produces, with terrestrial humor*²⁵³ *mixed,*
 611 *Here in the dark so many precious things*
 612 *Of color glorious, and effect so rare?*
 613 *Here matter new to gaze the Devil met,*
 614 *Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands,*
 615 *For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,*
 616 *But all sun-shine, as when his beams at noon*
 617 *Culminate*²⁵⁴ *from th'equator, as they now*
 618 *Shot upward still direct, whence no way round*
 619 *Shadow from body opaque can fall, and the air,*
 620 *Nowhere so clear, sharpened his*²⁵⁵ *visual ray*²⁵⁶
 621 *To objects distant far, whereby he soon*
 622 *Saw within ken*²⁵⁷ *a glorious Angel stand,*
 623 *The same whom John saw also in the sun.*²⁵⁸
 624 *His back was turned, but not his brightness hid.*
 625 *Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar*²⁵⁹
 626 *Circled his head, nor less his locks behind*
 627 *Illustrious*²⁶⁰ *on his shoulders fledg*²⁶¹ *with wings*
 628 *Lay waving round. On some great charge*²⁶²
 employed

²⁴⁹ liquid, drinkable

²⁵⁰ powerful

²⁵¹ master chemist (or alchemist)

²⁵² distant

²⁵³ fluid

²⁵⁴ reach

²⁵⁵ Satan's

²⁵⁶ line (of sight)

²⁵⁷ identifiable distance

²⁵⁸ see Revelation 19:17

²⁵⁹ tiara, headdress

²⁶⁰ luminous, shining brightly

²⁶¹ furnished

²⁶² commission, mandate, responsibility

629 *He seemed, or fixed in cogitation*²⁶³ *deep.*
 630 *Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope*
 631 *To find who might direct his wandering flight*
 632 *To Paradise, the happy seat of man,*
 633 *His journey's end and our beginning woe.*
 634 *But first he casts*²⁶⁴ *to change his proper shape,*
 635 *Which else might work him danger or delay.*
 636 *And now a stripling*²⁶⁵ *Cherub he appears,*
 637 *Not of the prime,*²⁶⁶ *yet such as in his face*
 638 *Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb*
 639 *Suitable grace diffused,*²⁶⁷ *so well he feigned.*
 640 *Under a coronet*²⁶⁸ *his flowing hair*
 641 *In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore*
 642 *Of many a colored plume,*²⁶⁹ *sprinkled with gold;*
 643 *His habit fit for speed succinct,*²⁷⁰ *and held*
 644 *Before his decent*²⁷¹ *steps a silver wand.*
 645 *He drew not nigh unheard. The Angel bright,*
 646 *Ere he*²⁷² *drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,*
 647 *Admonished by his ear, and straight was known*
 648 *The Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the seven*
 649 *Who in God's presence, nearest to His throne,*
 650 *Stand ready at command, and are His eyes*
 651 *That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th'*
 earth
 652 *Bear His swift errands over moist and dry,*

²⁶³ thought, reflection

²⁶⁴ contrives

²⁶⁵ youthful

²⁶⁶ fully grown, mature

²⁶⁷ spread, shed [verb]

²⁶⁸ a small, inferior crown

²⁶⁹ feather

²⁷⁰ not cut full, close-fitting

²⁷¹ respectable

²⁷² Satan

653 *O'er sea and land. Him Satan thus accosts:*²⁷³
 654 *“Uriel, for thou of those sev'n Spirits that stand*
 655 *In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,*
 656 *The first art wont*²⁷⁴ *His great authentic*²⁷⁵ *will*
 657 *Interpreter*²⁷⁶ *through highest Heav'n to bring,*
 658 *Where all His sons thy embassy*²⁷⁷ *attend,*
 659 *And here art likeliest by supreme decree*
 660 *Like honor to obtain, and as His eye*
 661 *To visit oft this new creation round.*
 662 *Unspeakable desire to see,*²⁷⁸ *and know*
 663 *All these His wondrous works, but chiefly man,*
 664 *His chief delight and favor, him for whom*
 665 *All these His works so wondrous He ordained,*
 666 *Hath brought me from the choirs*²⁷⁹ *of Cherubim*
 667 *Alone thus wand'ring. Brightest Seraph, tell*
 668 *In which of all these shining orbs hath man*
 669 *His fixèd seat, or fixèd seat hath none,*
 670 *But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell,*
 671 *That I may find him, and with secret gaze*
 672 *Or open admiration*²⁸⁰ *him behold,*
 673 *On whom the great Creator hath bestowed*
 674 *Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured,*
 675 *That both in him and all things, as is meet,*²⁸¹
 676 *The universal Maker we may praise,*
 677 *Who justly hath driven out His rebel foes*
 678 *To deepest Hell and, to repair that loss,*

²⁷³ addresses

²⁷⁴ usually

²⁷⁵ authoritative

²⁷⁶ one who makes another's will known, a messenger

²⁷⁷ message, business

²⁷⁸ “unspeakable desire to see” = subject; the verb is “hath brought me,” in line 666, below

²⁷⁹ companies

²⁸⁰ wonder, marveling

²⁸¹ proper

679 *Created this new happy race of men*
 680 *To serve Him better. Wise are all His ways.”*
 681 *So spoke the false dissembler unperceived,*
 682 *For neither man nor Angel can discern*
 683 *Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks*
 684 *Invisible, except to God alone,*
 685 *By His permissive will, through Heav'n and earth,*
 686 *And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps*
 687 *At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity²⁸²*
 688 *Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill*
 689 *Where no ill seems. Which now for once beguiled*
 690 *Uriel, though regent²⁸³ of the sun, and held²⁸⁴*
 691 *The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heav'n,*
 692 *Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,*
 693 *In his²⁸⁵ uprightness,²⁸⁶ answer thus returned:*
 694 *“Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know*
 695 *The works of God, thereby to glorify*
 696 *The great work-master, leads to no excess*
 697 *That reaches²⁸⁷ blame, but rather merits praise*
 698 *The more it seems excess, that led thee hither*
 699 *From thy empyreal²⁸⁸ mansion²⁸⁹ thus alone,*
 700 *To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,*
 701 *Contented with report, hear only in Heav'n.*
 702 *For wonderful indeed are all His works,*
 703 *Pleasant²⁹⁰ to know, and worthiest to be all*
 704 *Had in remembrance always with delight.*
 705 *But what created mind can comprehend*

²⁸² sincerity, innocence, ignorance

²⁸³ controller

²⁸⁴ considered

²⁸⁵ Uriel's

²⁸⁶ integrity

²⁸⁷ attains to, brings

²⁸⁸ celestial

²⁸⁹ home, residence

²⁹⁰ pleasing

706 *Their number, or the wisdom infinite*
 707 *That brought them forth, but hid their causes*
 deep?
 708 *I saw when at His word the formless mass,*
 709 *This world's material mould, came to a heap.²⁹¹*
 710 *Confusion heard His voice, and wild uproar*
 711 *Stood²⁹² ruled,²⁹³ stood vast infinitude confined,*
 712 *Till at His second bidding darkness fled,*
 713 *Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.*
 714 *Swift to their several quarters hasted then*
 715 *The cumbrous²⁹⁴ elements, earth, flood, air, fire,*
 716 *And this ethereal²⁹⁵ quintessence²⁹⁶ of Heav'n*
 717 *Flew upward, spirited²⁹⁷ with various forms,*
 718 *That rolled orbicular,²⁹⁸ and turned to stars*
 719 *Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move.*
 720 *Each had his place appointed, each his course.*
 721 *The rest, in circuit, walls²⁹⁹ this universe.*
 722 *Look downward on that globe, whose hither side*
 723 *With light from hence, though but reflected, shines.*
 724 *That place is earth, the seat of man, that light*
 725 *His day, which else, as th' other hemisphere,*
 726 *Night would invade, but there the neighboring*
 moon
 727 *(So call that opposite fair star) her aid*
 728 *Timely interposes,³⁰⁰ and her monthly round*

²⁹¹ collected into a form

²⁹² stopped in its tracks

²⁹³ controlled

²⁹⁴ cumbersome

²⁹⁵ airy, impalpable

²⁹⁶ the fifth essence, of which substance the heavenly bodies were thought to be composed

²⁹⁷ infused, animated

²⁹⁸ in a circle

²⁹⁹ furnishes walls for [verb]

³⁰⁰ puts forth, introduces

729 *Still ending, still renewing, through mid Heav'n,*
 730 *With borrowed light her countenance triform³⁰¹*
 731 *Hence fills and empties to enlighten³⁰² th' earth,*
 732 *And in her pale dominion³⁰³ checks³⁰⁴ the night.*
 733 *That spot, to which I point, is Paradise,*
 734 *Adam's abode; those lofty shades, his bow'r.*
 735 *Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires."*
 736 *Thus said, he turned, and Satan, bowing low,*
 737 *As to superior Spirits is wont³⁰⁵ in Heav'n,*
 738 *Where honor due³⁰⁶ and reverence none neglects,*
 739 *Took leave, and toward the coast of earth beneath,*
 740 *Down from th' ecliptic,³⁰⁷ sped with hoped success,*
 741 *Throws³⁰⁸ his steep flight in many an airy wheel,³⁰⁹*
 742 *Nor stayed,³¹⁰ till on Niphates³¹¹ top he lights.*

The End of the Third Book

³⁰¹ the goddess of the moon, Diana, had three distinct shapes ("triform"), representing the moon's three phases: Luna, Diana, and Hecate/Proserpine

³⁰² to give light to

³⁰³ control, rule

³⁰⁴ holds back, retards

³⁰⁵ customary

³⁰⁶ (1) appropriate, (2) owed

³⁰⁷ the orbit of the sun around the earth; earth's great circle

³⁰⁸ twists

³⁰⁹ circular movement

³¹⁰ stopped

³¹¹ Armenian mountain, near the Assyrian/Mesopotamian border; it is the source of the River Tigris

BOOK IV

THE ARGUMENT

Satan now in prospect¹ of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprize which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair, but at length confirms himself in evil. Journey[ing] on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described, [he] overleaps the bounds² [and] sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, [in order] to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; [he] overhears their discourse, thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress. Then [he] leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means.

Meanwhile Uriel descending on a Sun-beam warns Gabriel, who had in charge the Gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at Noon, by his sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, [as] discovered³ after[wards] by his⁴ furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him out ere morning.

¹ expectation, looking forward to

² boundary markers

³ shown, disclosed

⁴ i.e., Satan's

Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest; their bower describ'd; their evening worship. Gabriel drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints⁵ two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping. There they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel, by whom questioned, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

⁵ orders

1 *O, for that warning voice, which he, who saw*
 2 *The Apocalypse, heard cry in Heaven aloud,*
 3 *Then when the dragon, put to second rout,*
 4 *Came furious down to be revenged on men,*
 5 *“Woe to the inhabitants on earth!”⁶ that⁷ now,*
 6 *While time was,⁸ our first parents had been*
 warned
 7 *The coming of their secret foe, and ’scaped,*
 8 *Haply⁹ so ’scaped, his mortal snare. For now*
 9 *Satan, now first inflamed with rage, came down,*
 10 *The tempter ere¹⁰ the accuser of mankind,*
 11 *To wreak¹¹ on innocent frail man his¹² loss*
 12 *Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell.*
 13 *Yet, not rejoicing in his speed, though bold,*
 14 *Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,*
 15 *Begins his dire attempt, which night the birth*
 16 *Now rolling,¹³ boils in his tumultuous breast,*
 17 *And like a devilish engine¹⁴ back recoils*
 18 *Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract*
 19 *His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir*
 20 *The Hell within him, for within him Hell*
 21 *He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell*
 22 *One step, no more than from himself, can fly*
 23 *By change of place. Now conscience wakes*
 despair
 24 *That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory*
 25 *Of what he was, what is, and what must be*

⁶ see Revelation 12:10–12

⁷ so that

⁸ while there was still time

⁹ perhaps

¹⁰ before he became

¹¹ (1) give vent to, (2) take revenge on

¹² Satan’s

¹³ moving, forming, advancing, sweeping upward

¹⁴ a cannon

26 *Worse: of¹⁵ worse deeds, worse sufferings must
 ensue.¹⁶*
 27 *Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view*
 28 *Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad,*
 29 *Sometimes towards Heav'n and the full-blazing
 sun,*
 30 *Which now sat high in his¹⁷ meridian¹⁸ tower:*
 31 *Then much¹⁹ revolving,²⁰ thus in sighs began:*
 32 *“O thou,²¹ that with surpassing glory crowned,*
 33 *Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god*
 34 *Of this new world, at whose sight all the stars*
 35 *Hide their diminished heads, to thee I call,*
 36 *But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,*
 37 *O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,*
 38 *That bring to my remembrance from what state*
 39 *I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,²²*
 40 *Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,*
 41 *Warring in Heav'n against Heav'n's matchless
 King.*
 42 *Ah, wherefore! He deserved no such return*
 43 *From me, whom He created what I was*
 44 *In that bright eminence,²³ and with His good*
 45 *Upbraided²⁴ none. Nor was His service hard.*
 46 *What could be less than to afford²⁵ Him praise,*

¹⁵ from

¹⁶ result, follow

¹⁷ the sun's

¹⁸ noontime

¹⁹ many things/thoughts

²⁰ turning over in his mind

²¹ the sun

²² above thy sphere = (1) above your position/status, (2) literally, in Heaven above the sphere which you are in

²³ (1) height, (2) distinction

²⁴ He (God) reproached/scolded/censured

²⁵ to give/yield

47 *The easiest recompence,²⁶ and pay Him thanks—*
 48 *How due!²⁷ Yet all His good proved ill in me,*
 49 *And wrought²⁸ but malice. Lifted up so high*
 50 *I 'sdained²⁹ subjection,³⁰ and thought one step*
 higher
 51 *Would set me highest, and in a moment quit³¹*
 52 *The debt immense of endless gratitude,*
 53 *So burdensome still³² paying, still to owe,*
 54 *Forgetful what from Him I still received,*
 55 *And understood not that a grateful mind*
 56 *By owing owes not, but still pays, at once*
 57 *Indebted and discharged. What burden then?*
 58 *O, had His powerful destiny ordained*
 59 *Me some inferior Angel, I had stood³³*
 60 *Then happy: no unbounded³⁴ hope had raised*
 61 *Ambition! Yet why not? Some other Power³⁵*
 62 *As great might have aspired, and me, though*
 mean,³⁶
 63 *Drawn³⁷ to his part.³⁸ But other Powers as great*
 64 *Fell not, but stand unshaken from within*
 65 *Or from without, to all temptations armed.³⁹*

²⁶ repayment

²⁷ (1) owed, (2) right, proper

²⁸ worked

²⁹ disdained [probably from the Italian *sdegnare*, “to disdain/despise/scorn”]

³⁰ submission, obedience

³¹ get rid of, release

³² (1) yet, (2) always

³³ remained

³⁴ unlimited, uncontrolled

³⁵ sixth of the nine angelic orders

³⁶ lowly

³⁷ might have been drawn

³⁸ side, cause

³⁹ (1) having weapons, (2) having protective qualities/characteristics

66 *Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?*⁴⁰
 67 *Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what t'*
 accuse,
 68 *But Heav'n's free*⁴¹ *love dealt equally to all?*
 69 *Be then His love accursed, since love or hate,*
 70 *To me alike, it deals*⁴² *eternal woe.*
 71 *Nay, cursed be thou,*⁴³ *since against His thy will*
 72 *Chose freely what it now so justly*⁴⁴ *rues!*⁴⁵
 73 *"Me miserable!"*⁴⁶ *Which way shall I fly*⁴⁷
 74 *Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?*
 75 *Which*⁴⁸ *way I fly is Hell. Myself am Hell,*
 76 *And in the lowest deep a lower deep*
 77 *Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,*
 78 *To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.*
 79 *O then, at last relent!*⁴⁹ *Is there no place*
 80 *Left for repentance, none for pardon left?*
 81 *None left but by submission, and that word*
 82 *Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame*
 83 *Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced*
 84 *With other promises and other vaunts*⁵⁰
 85 *Than to submit, boasting I could subdue*
 86 *The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know*
 87 *How dearly*⁵¹ *I abide*⁵² *that boast so vain,*

⁴⁰ to remain steadfast/firm

⁴¹ honorable, generous

⁴² gives, brings

⁴³ himself

⁴⁴ rightfully, properly

⁴⁵ regrets

⁴⁶ i.e., "O how miserable I am!" [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁴⁷ flee

⁴⁸ whichever

⁴⁹ yield

⁵⁰ boasts

⁵¹ at a high price

⁵² face, put up with

88 *Under what torments inwardly I groan,*
 89 *While they adore me on the throne of Hell!*
 90 *With diadem and scepter high advanced*⁵³
 91 *The lower still I fall, only supreme*
 92 *In misery. Such joy ambition finds!*⁵⁴
 93 *But say I could repent, and could obtain,*
 94 *By act of grace, my former state, how soon*
 95 *Would height recall high thoughts, how soon*
 unsay
 96 *What feigned*⁵⁵ *submission swore? Ease would*
 *recant*⁵⁶
 97 *Vows made in pain, as violent*⁵⁷ *and void.*
 98 *For never can true reconcilment grow*
 99 *Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so*
 deep,
 100 *Which would but lead me to a worse relapse*
 101 *And heavier fall. So should I purchase dear*⁵⁸
 102 *Short intermission, bought with double smart.*⁵⁹
 103 *This knows my punisher, therefore as far*
 104 *From granting He, as I from begging, peace.*
 105 *All hope excluded thus, behold, instead*
 106 *Of us*⁶⁰ *out-cast, exiled, his new delight,*
 107 *Mankind created, and for him*⁶¹ *this world.*
 108 *So farewell hope and, with hope, farewell fear,*
 109 *Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost.*
 110 *Evil, be thou my good: by thee at least*
 111 *Divided empire with Heav'n's King I hold—*

⁵³ raised

⁵⁴ obtains, gains

⁵⁵ pretended

⁵⁶ withdraw, disavow, retract

⁵⁷ forced

⁵⁸ at high cost, great expense

⁵⁹ pain, suffering

⁶⁰ instead of us = replacing us

⁶¹ man

II2 *By thee, and more than half⁶² perhaps will reign,*
 II3 *As man ere long, and this new world, shall know.”*
 II4 *Thus while he spoke, each passion dimmed his*
 face
 II5 *Thrice changed with pale,⁶³ ire,⁶⁴ envy, and*
 despair,
 II6 *Which marred⁶⁵ his borrowed visage, and betrayed*
 II7 *Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.*
 II8 *For Heav'nly minds from such distempers⁶⁶ foul*
 II9 *Are ever clear.⁶⁷ Whereof he soon aware,*
 I20 *Each perturbation⁶⁸ smoothed with outward calm,*
 I21 *Artificer⁶⁹ of fraud, and⁷⁰ was the first*
 I22 *That practised falsehood under saintly show,*
 I23 *Deep malice to conceal, couched⁷¹ with revenge.*
 I24 *Yet not enough had practised⁷² to deceive*
 I25 *Uriel, once warned, whose eye pursued him down*
 I26 *The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount*
 I27 *Saw him disfigured, more than could befall⁷³*
 I28 *Spirit of happy sort. His gestures fierce*
 I29 *He marked, and mad demeanor,⁷⁴ then alone,*
 I30 *As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.*
 I31 *So on he fares,⁷⁵ and to the border comes*

⁶² more than half of the empire

⁶³ pallor

⁶⁴ anger

⁶⁵ spoiled, disfigured

⁶⁶ ill tempers, ill humors, disorders, derangements

⁶⁷ innocent

⁶⁸ agitation

⁶⁹ mechanic-inventor

⁷⁰ i.e., “who”

⁷¹ hidden, joined in concealment

⁷² put into practice

⁷³ happen to

⁷⁴ conduct, behavior

⁷⁵ travels

132 *Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,*
 133 *Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,*
 134 *As with a rural mound, the champaign⁷⁶ head⁷⁷*
 135 *Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides*
 136 *With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,*
 137 *Access denied.⁷⁸ And overhead up grew*
 138 *Insurmountable⁷⁹ height of loftiest shade,*
 139 *Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,*
 140 *A sylvan⁸⁰ scene, and as the ranks⁸¹ ascend,*
 141 *Shade above shade, a woody theater⁸²*
 142 *Of stateliest⁸³ view. Yet higher than their tops*
 143 *The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung,*
 144 *Which to our general⁸⁴ sire gave prospect large⁸⁵*
 145 *Into his⁸⁶ nether⁸⁷ empire neighboring round.*
 146 *And higher than that wall a circling row*
 147 *Of goodliest⁸⁸ trees, loaden with fairest fruit,*
 148 *Blossoms and fruits at once⁸⁹ of golden hue*
 149 *Appeared, with gay enamelled⁹⁰ colors mixed,*
 150 *On which the sun more glad impressed⁹¹ his beams*
 151 *Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,⁹²*

⁷⁶ expanse of open land

⁷⁷ top

⁷⁸ access denied to him (Satan)

⁷⁹ impossible to overcome/surmount

⁸⁰ rustic

⁸¹ rows

⁸² place where action occurs

⁸³ noble, majestic

⁸⁴ common

⁸⁵ prospect large = extensive view

⁸⁶ Adam's

⁸⁷ lower

⁸⁸ handsome, large

⁸⁹ at the same time, simultaneously

⁹⁰ any smooth, lustrous surface

⁹¹ imprinted, stamped

⁹² rainbow

- 152 *When God hath show'ed the earth. So lovely
 seemed*
 153 *That landscape. And of pure now purer⁹³ air*
 154 *Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires*
 155 *Vernal⁹⁴ delight and joy, able to drive⁹⁵*
 156 *All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,⁹⁶*
 157 *Fanning their odoriferous⁹⁷ wings, dispense⁹⁸*
 158 *Native⁹⁹ perfumes, and whisper whence they stole*
 159 *Those balmy spoils.¹⁰⁰ As when to them who sail*
 160 *Beyond the Cape of Hope,¹⁰¹ and now are past*
 161 *Mozambique,¹⁰² off at sea north-east winds blow*
 162 *Sabean¹⁰³ odors from the spicy shore*
 163 *Of Araby the blest,¹⁰⁴ with such delay*
 164 *Well pleased they slack¹⁰⁵ their course,¹⁰⁶ and many*
 a league¹⁰⁷
 165 *Cheered with the grateful¹⁰⁸ smell old ocean*
 smiles.
 166 *So entertained¹⁰⁹ those odorous sweets the fiend,*

⁹³ of pure now purer = purer still

⁹⁴ springlike

⁹⁵ chase, expel

⁹⁶ a wind not much stronger than a breeze

⁹⁷ fragrant

⁹⁸ bestow, distribute

⁹⁹ natural

¹⁰⁰ loot, plunder, booty

¹⁰¹ Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa

¹⁰² [trissyllabic, second accented]

¹⁰³ Saba, in modern Yemen

¹⁰⁴ Arabia, called at the time, in Latin, *Arabia felix*, “happy/blessed Arabia”

¹⁰⁵ abate, let slacken

¹⁰⁶ onward movement

¹⁰⁷ one league = ca. three miles

¹⁰⁸ pleasing, agreeable

¹⁰⁹ experienced with pleasure

167 *Who came their bane,¹¹⁰ though with them better
 pleased*
 168 *Than Asmodeus¹¹¹ with the fishy fume¹¹²*
 169 *That drove him, though enamored, from the
 spouse*
 170 *Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent¹¹³*
 171 *From Media post¹¹⁴ to Egypt, there fast bound.¹¹⁵*
 172 *Now to the ascent of that steep savage¹¹⁶ hill*
 173 *Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow,*
 174 *But further way found none, so thick entwined,*
 175 *As one continued brake,¹¹⁷ the undergrowth*
 176 *Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed¹¹⁸*
 177 *All path of man or beast that passed that way.*
 178 *One gate there only was, and that looked east*
 179 *On th' other side. Which when the arch-felon saw,*
 180 *Due entrance he disdained and, in contempt,*
 181 *At one slight¹¹⁹ bound high over-leaped all bound*
 182 *Of hill or highest wall, and sheer¹²⁰ within*
 183 *Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,*
 184 *Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,*
 185 *Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve*
 186 *In hurdled¹²¹ cotes¹²² amid the field secure,*

¹¹⁰ slayer

¹¹¹ evil demon in Apocryphal book of the Bible, Tobit, who has seven times killed the husbands of Sarah, daughter of Tobit's relative, with whom the demon is in love; he is finally driven off by fish smells

¹¹² vapor

¹¹³ sent him, the demon, away from Media, where Tobit, his son, and his wife lived

¹¹⁴ hurriedly

¹¹⁵ by the Angel Raphael, sent by God

¹¹⁶ wild, uncultivated

¹¹⁷ thicket

¹¹⁸ troubled, entangled

¹¹⁹ easy

¹²⁰ completely

¹²¹ made of interwoven branches

¹²² stalls, pens

187 *Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold—*
 188 *Or as a thief, bent to unhoard¹²³ the cash*
 189 *Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,*
 190 *Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,*
 191 *In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles,¹²⁴*
 192 *So clomb¹²⁵ this first grand thief into God's fold.*
 193 *So since into His church lewd hirelings climb.*
 194 *Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,*
 195 *The middle tree and highest there that grew,*
 196 *Sat like a cormorant, yet not true life*
 197 *Thereby regained, but sat devising death*
 198 *To them who lived, nor on the virtue thought*
 199 *Of that life-giving plant, but only used*
 200 *For prospect,¹²⁶ what well-used had been¹²⁷ the*
 pledge¹²⁸
 201 *Of immortality. So little knows*
 202 *Any, but God alone, to value right*
 203 *The good before him, but perverts best things*
 204 *To worst abuse, or to their meanest¹²⁹ use.*
 205 *Beneath him with new wonder now he views,*
 206 *To all delight of human sense exposed*
 207 *In narrow room,¹³⁰ Nature's whole wealth, yea*
 more,
 208 *A Heav'n on earth. For blissful Paradise*
 209 *Of God the garden was, by Him in th' east*
 210 *Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line¹³¹*

¹²³ reduce the store of money

¹²⁴ of the roof

¹²⁵ climbed

¹²⁶ the view it afforded him

¹²⁷ had been = would have been

¹²⁸ guarantee, promise

¹²⁹ lowest

¹³⁰ space

¹³¹ contours

211 *From Auran*¹³² *eastward to the royal tow'rs*
 212 *Of great Seleucia,*¹³³ *built by Grecian kings,*
 213 *Or where the sons of Eden long before*
 214 *Dwelt in Telassar.*¹³⁴ *In this pleasant soil*
 215 *His far more pleasant garden God ordained.*
 216 *Out of the fertile ground He caused to grow*
 217 *All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste,*
 218 *And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,*
 219 *High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit*
 220 *Of vegetable*¹³⁵ *gold. And next to life*
 221 *Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,*
 222 *Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.*
 223 *Southward through Eden went a river large,*
 224 *Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy*¹³⁶
 hill
 225 *Passed underneath engulfed,*¹³⁷ *for God had*
 *thrown*¹³⁸
 226 *That mountain as His garden-mold*¹³⁹ *high raised*
 227 *Upon the rapid current, which through veins*
 228 *Of porous earth with kindly*¹⁴⁰ *thirst up-drawn,*
 229 *Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill*¹⁴¹
 230 *Watered the garden, thence united fell*
 231 *Down the steep glade, and met the nether*¹⁴²
 *flood,*¹⁴³

¹³² Haran, city on the River Euphrates, in Mesopotamia

¹³³ city near Babylon, on the River Tigris

¹³⁴ city in Eden

¹³⁵ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹³⁶ tangled, heavily wooded

¹³⁷ swallowed up

¹³⁸ formed, fashioned (as a potter “throws” a pot)

¹³⁹ garden topsoil

¹⁴⁰ natural

¹⁴¹ brook

¹⁴² underground

¹⁴³ river

- 232 *Which from his darksome passage now appears,*
 233 *And now, divided into four main streams,*
 234 *Runs diverse,¹⁴⁴ wand'ring many a famous realm*
 235 *And country, whereof here needs no account,*
 236 *But rather to tell how, if art¹⁴⁵ could tell,*
 237 *How from that sapphire fount the crispèd¹⁴⁶*
 brooks,
 238 *Rolling on orient¹⁴⁷ pearl and sands of gold,*
 239 *With mazy¹⁴⁸ error¹⁴⁹ under pendant shades*
 240 *Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed*
 241 *Flow'rs worthy of Paradise, which not nice¹⁵⁰ art*
 242 *In beds and curious¹⁵¹ knots, but Nature boon¹⁵²*
 243 *Poured forth profuse on hill and dale and plain,*
 244 *Both where the morning sun first warmly smote*
 245 *The open field, and where the unpierced shade*
 246 *Imbrowned¹⁵³ the noontide bow'rs. Thus was*
 this place
 247 *A happy rural seat of various view,*
 248 *Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and*
 balm,
 249 *Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,*
 250 *Hung amiable,¹⁵⁴ Hesperian¹⁵⁵ fables true,*
 251 *If true, here only, and of delicious taste.*

¹⁴⁴ in different directions [bisyllabic, first accented]

¹⁴⁵ skill

¹⁴⁶ rippling

¹⁴⁷ gleaming

¹⁴⁸ winding, labyrinthine

¹⁴⁹ wandering

¹⁵⁰ fussy, fastidious

¹⁵¹ skillful, choice, exquisite

¹⁵² gracious, bountiful, jolly

¹⁵³ i.e., darkened

¹⁵⁴ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁵⁵ legendary garden in which the Hesperides, daughters of Night and Darkness, guarded a tree that bore golden apples

252 *Betwixt them lawns, or level downs,¹⁵⁶ and flocks*
 253 *Grazing the tender herb,¹⁵⁷ were interposed,*
 254 *Or palmy¹⁵⁸ hillock, or the flowery lap¹⁵⁹*
 255 *Of some irriguous¹⁶⁰ valley spread her store,*
 256 *Flow'rs of all hue, and without thorn the rose.*
 257 *Another side, umbrageous¹⁶¹ grotts and caves*
 258 *Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling¹⁶² vine*
 259 *Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps*
 260 *Luxuriant. Meanwhile murmuring waters fall*
 261 *Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,*
 262 *That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned*
 263 *Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.*
 264 *The birds their choir¹⁶³ apply,¹⁶⁴ airs, vernal airs,*
 265 *Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune¹⁶⁵*
 266 *The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,*
 267 *Knit¹⁶⁶ with the Graces¹⁶⁷ and the Hours¹⁶⁸ in dance,*
 268 *Led on th' eternal Spring. Not that fair field*
 269 *Of Enna,¹⁶⁹ where Proserpine, gath'ring flow'rs,*
 270 *Herself a fairer flow'r by gloomy Dis¹⁷⁰*
 271 *Was gathered, which cost Ceres¹⁷¹ all that pain*

¹⁵⁶ open expanse of treeless pastureland

¹⁵⁷ grass

¹⁵⁸ bearing palm trees

¹⁵⁹ a hollow among hills

¹⁶⁰ irrigated [probably trisyllabic, second accented]

¹⁶¹ shady

¹⁶² covering

¹⁶³ chorus

¹⁶⁴ bring into operation

¹⁶⁵ make tuneful/harmonious

¹⁶⁶ joined

¹⁶⁷ Aglaia (brilliance), Euphrosyne (joy), Thalia (blossoming)

¹⁶⁸ female divinities presiding over seasonal changes

¹⁶⁹ in Sicily

¹⁷⁰ Dis = Pluto = Hades

¹⁷¹ Nature/earth goddess, later Demeter; mother of Proserpine/Persephone

272 *To seek her through the world. Nor that sweet*
 grove
 273 *Of Daphne*¹⁷² *by Orontes,*¹⁷³ *and the inspired*¹⁷⁴
 274 *Castalian spring,*¹⁷⁵ *might with this Paradise*
 275 *Of Eden strive,*¹⁷⁶ *nor that Nyseian*¹⁷⁷ *isle*
 276 *Girt*¹⁷⁸ *with the river Triton, where old Cham,*¹⁷⁹
 277 *Whom gentiles Ammon call, and Libyan Jove,*
 278 *Hid Amalthea*¹⁸⁰ *and her florid*¹⁸¹ *son*
 279 *Young Bacchus from his stepdame Rhea's eye,*
 280 *Nor where Abassin*¹⁸² *kings their issue*¹⁸³ *guard,*
 281 *Mount Amara,*¹⁸⁴ *though this by some supposed*
 282 *True Paradise under the Ethiop line*¹⁸⁵
 283 *By Nilus*¹⁸⁶ *head,*¹⁸⁷ *enclosed with shining rock,*
 284 *A whole day's journey high, but wide remote*
 285 *From this Assyrian garden, where the fiend*
 286 *Saw, undelighted, all delight, all kind*
 287 *Of living creatures, new to sight, and strange.*
 288 *Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,*
 289 *Godlike erect, with native honor clad*
 290 *In naked majesty, seemed lords of all.*
 291 *And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine*

¹⁷² like Proserpine, pursued by lustful gods

¹⁷³ river in Syria

¹⁷⁴ the grove of Daphne contained an oracle dedicated to Apollo

¹⁷⁵ named after the spring at the oracle in Delphi, also dedicated to Apollo

¹⁷⁶ compete

¹⁷⁷ the island of Nysa, in the River Triton in Tunisia

¹⁷⁸ encircled, surrounded

¹⁷⁹ Ammon

¹⁸⁰ Zeus' nurse, mother of Bacchus by Ammon

¹⁸¹ red-faced (from wine)

¹⁸² Abyssinian/Ethiopian

¹⁸³ offspring, children

¹⁸⁴ in Abyssinia

¹⁸⁵ contours

¹⁸⁶ River Nile

¹⁸⁷ source

292 *The image of their glorious Maker shone,*
 293 *Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure*
 294 *(Severe, but in true filial freedom placed),*
 295 *Whence true authority in men. Though both*
 296 *Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed:*
 297 *For contemplation he, and valor, formed;*
 298 *For softness she and sweet attractive grace;*
 299 *He for God only, she for God in him.*
 300 *His fair large front¹⁸⁸ and eye sublime¹⁸⁹ declared¹⁹⁰*
 301 *Absolute rule, and hyacinthine¹⁹¹ locks*
 302 *Round from his parted forelock¹⁹² manly hung*
 303 *Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad.*
 304 *She as a veil down to the slender waist*
 305 *Her unadornèd golden tresses wore*
 306 *Dishevelled,¹⁹³ but in wanton¹⁹⁴ ringlets waved*
 307 *As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied*
 308 *Subjection, but required¹⁹⁵ with gentle sway,¹⁹⁶*
 309 *And by her yielded, by him best received,*
 310 *Yielded with coy¹⁹⁷ submission, modest pride,*
 311 *And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.*
 312 *Nor those mysterious parts¹⁹⁸ were then concealed.*
 313 *Then was not guilty shame, dishonest¹⁹⁹ shame*
 314 *Of Nature's works. Honor dishonorable,*
 315 *Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind*

¹⁸⁸ forehead

¹⁸⁹ exalted, lofty

¹⁹⁰ manifested, made plain/clear

¹⁹¹ (1) curled, *or* (2) scented, *or* (3) dark-colored

¹⁹² lock of hair in front

¹⁹³ loosened

¹⁹⁴ frisky, sportive

¹⁹⁵ requested, demanded

¹⁹⁶ authority, rule

¹⁹⁷ shy, modest

¹⁹⁸ mysterious parts = genitalia

¹⁹⁹ i.e., unchaste

316 *With shows²⁰⁰ instead, mere shows of seeming*
 pure,
 317 *And banished from man's life his happiest life,*
 318 *Simplicity and spotless innocence!*
 319 *So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight*
 320 *Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:*
 321 *So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair*
 322 *That ever since in love's embraces met,*
 323 *Adam the goodliest man of men, since born*
 324 *His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.*
 325 *Under a tuft²⁰¹ of shade that on a green²⁰²*
 326 *Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side*
 327 *They sat them down and, after no more toil*
 328 *Of their sweet gardening labor than sufficed*
 329 *To recommend²⁰³ cool Zephyr,²⁰⁴ and made ease*
 330 *More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite*
 331 *More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell,*
 332 *Nectarine²⁰⁵ fruits which the compliant²⁰⁶ boughs*
 333 *Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline*
 334 *On the soft downy bank, damasked²⁰⁷ with flow'rs.*
 335 *The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind,*
 336 *Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream,*
 337 *Nor gentle purpose,²⁰⁸ nor endearing smiles*
 338 *Wanted,²⁰⁹ nor youthful dalliance, as beseems*
 339 *Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league,*
 340 *Alone as they. About them frisking played*

²⁰⁰ externals, displays

²⁰¹ patch

²⁰² grassy spot

²⁰³ commend

²⁰⁴ the west wind

²⁰⁵ sweet as nectar [adjective]

²⁰⁶ obliging, yielding

²⁰⁷ variegated

²⁰⁸ discourse, speech

²⁰⁹ lacked

- 341 *All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase*²¹⁰
 342 *In wood or wilderness, forest or den.*
 343 *Sporting,*²¹¹ *the lion ramped,*²¹² *and in his paw*
 344 *Dandled*²¹³ *the kid; bears, tigers, ounces,*²¹⁴
 *pards,*²¹⁵
 345 *Gambolled*²¹⁶ *before them; the unwieldy elephant,*
 346 *To make them mirth, used all his might, and*
 *wreathed*²¹⁷
 347 *His lithe*²¹⁸ *proboscis;*²¹⁹ *close,*²²⁰ *the serpent sly*
 348 *Insinuating*²²¹ *wove with Gordian*²²² *twine*²²³
 349 *His braided*²²⁴ *train,*²²⁵ *and of his fatal*²²⁶ *guile*
 350 *Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass*
 351 *Couched,*²²⁷ *and now filled with pasture*²²⁸ *gazing*
 sat,
 352 *Or bedward ruminating,*²²⁹ *for the sun,*

²¹⁰ animals that are hunted [noun]

²¹¹ playing

²¹² bounded

²¹³ moving lightly up and down

²¹⁴ (1) lynx, (2) panther

²¹⁵ leopards

²¹⁶ capered, danced

²¹⁷ coiled, twisted

²¹⁸ flexible, pliant, supple

²¹⁹ trunk, nose

²²⁰ close by

²²¹ sinuously

²²² intricate

²²³ rope, twine, knots

²²⁴ intertwined, braided

²²⁵ tail, long dragging body

²²⁶ destined, fated

²²⁷ lay

²²⁸ i.e., with eating the grass that grows on pastureland

²²⁹ (1) digesting, as ruminants do, (2) reflecting

353 *Declined,*²³⁰ *was hasting now with prone*²³¹ *career*²³²
 354 *To th' ocean isles,*²³³ *and in the ascending scale*²³⁴
 355 *Of Heav'n the stars that usher evening rose.*
 356 *When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,*
 357 *Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered, sad:*
 358 *“O Hell! What do mine eyes with grief behold!*
 359 *Into our room*²³⁵ *of bliss thus high advanced*
 360 *Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,*
 361 *Not Spirits, yet to Heav'nly Spirits bright*
 362 *Little inferior, whom my thoughts pursue*
 363 *With wonder, and could love, so lively shines*
 364 *In them divine resemblance, and such grace*
 365 *The hand that formed them on their shape hath*
 *poured.*²³⁶
 366 *Ah! gentle*²³⁷ *pair, ye little think how nigh*²³⁸
 367 *Your change approaches, when all these delights*
 368 *Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,*
 369 *More woe, the more your taste is now of joy,*
 370 *Happy, but for so happy ill secured*²³⁹
 371 *Long to continue, and this high seat your Heav'n*
 372 *Ill fenced for Heav'n to keep out such a foe*
 373 *As now is entered. Yet no purposed*²⁴⁰ *foe*
 374 *To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,*²⁴¹

²³⁰ slanting down

²³¹ steeply downward

²³² racelike, galloping speed

²³³ the Azores, to the west

²³⁴ with a scale having two weighing pans, when one (lighter) goes up the other (heavier) necessarily goes down

²³⁵ place, position

²³⁶ “hath poured on their shape”

²³⁷ noble, excellent

²³⁸ close

²³⁹ firmly fixed, safe

²⁴⁰ deliberate

²⁴¹ abandoned, lost, doomed

375 *Though I²⁴² unpitied. League²⁴³ with you I seek,*
 376 *And mutual amity, so straight,²⁴⁴ so close,*
 377 *That I with you must dwell, or you with me*
 378 *Henceforth. My dwelling haply²⁴⁵ may not please*
 379 *(Like this fair Paradise) your sense, yet such*
 380 *Accept your Maker's work. He gave it me,*
 381 *Which I as freely give: Hell shall unfold,*
 382 *To entertain²⁴⁶ you two, her widest-gates,*
 383 *And send forth all her kings. There will be room,*
 384 *Not like these narrow limits, to receive*
 385 *Your numerous offspring. If no better place,*
 386 *Thank Him who puts me, loath, to this revenge*
 387 *On you (who wrong me not), for Him who*
 wronged.²⁴⁷
 388 *And should I at your harmless innocence*
 389 *Melt,²⁴⁸ as I do, yet public²⁴⁹ reason just,*
 390 *Honor and empire with revenge enlarged,*
 391 *By conquering this new world, compels me now*
 392 *To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.”*
 393 *So spoke the fiend, and with necessity*
 394 *(The tyrant's plea) excused his devilish deeds.*
 395 *Then from his lofty stand on that high tree*
 396 *Down he alights among the sportful²⁵⁰ herd*
 397 *Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,*
 398 *Now other, as their shape served best his end*
 399 *Nearer to view his prey, and unespied*

²⁴² I am myself

²⁴³ alliance

²⁴⁴ direct, honest

²⁴⁵ perhaps

²⁴⁶ hold, keep

²⁴⁷ did wrong me

²⁴⁸ soften

²⁴⁹ common, community, patriotic

²⁵⁰ frolicking

400 *To mark what of their state*²⁵¹ *he more might learn,*
 401 *By word or action marked.*²⁵² *About them round*
 402 *A lion*²⁵³ *now he stalks with fiery glare,*
 403 *Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied*
 404 *In some purlieu*²⁵⁴ *two gentle fawns at play,*
 405 *Straight couches*²⁵⁵ *close, then rising, changes oft*
 406 *His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,*
 407 *Whence rushing, he might surest seize them both,*
 408 *Gripped in each paw: When Adam, first of men,*
 409 *To first of women Eve, thus moving*²⁵⁶ *speech,*
 410 *Turned him*²⁵⁷ *all ear*²⁵⁸ *to hear new utterance flow:*
 411 *“Sole partner, and sole part,*²⁵⁹ *of all these joys,*
 412 *Dearer thyself than all! Needs must the Power*
 413 *That made us, and for us this ample world,*
 414 *Be infinitely good, and of His good*
 415 *As liberal and free as infinite,*
 416 *That raised us from the dust, and placed us here*
 417 *In all this happiness, who at His hand*
 418 *Have nothing merited,*²⁶⁰ *nor can perform*
 419 *Aught whereof He hath need, He who requires*
 420 *From us no other service than to keep*
 421 *This one, this easy charge.*²⁶¹ *of all the trees*
 422 *In Paradise that bear delicious fruit*
 423 *So various, not to taste that only Tree*
 424 *Of Knowledge, planted by*²⁶² *the Tree of Life.*

²⁵¹ condition, circumstances

²⁵² noted, observed

²⁵³ as a lion

²⁵⁴ rangeland

²⁵⁵ lies

²⁵⁶ uttering

²⁵⁷ Satan

²⁵⁸ all ear = eagerly attentive

²⁵⁹ participant

²⁶⁰ deserved

²⁶¹ mandate, order, instruction, admonition

²⁶² near, alongside

425 *So near grows death to life, whate'er death is,*
 426 *Some dreadful thing no doubt, for well thou*
 know'st
 427 *God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,*
 428 *The only sign of our obedience left*
 429 *Among so many signs of power and rule*
 430 *Conferred upon us, and dominion²⁶³ giv'n*
 431 *Over all other creatures that possess*
 432 *Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard*
 433 *One easy prohibition, who enjoy*
 434 *Free leave so large to all things else, and choice*
 435 *Unlimited of manifold delights,*
 436 *But let us ever praise Him, and extol*
 437 *His bounty, following our delightful task,*
 438 *To prune these growing plants, and tend these*
 flow'rs,
 439 *Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."*
 440 *To whom thus Eve replied: "O thou for whom*
 441 *And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh,*
 442 *And without whom am to no end,²⁶⁴ my guide*
 443 *And head! What thou hast said is just and right.*
 444 *For we to Him indeed all praises owe,*
 445 *And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy*
 446 *So far the happier lot, enjoying thee*
 447 *Pre-eminent by so much odds,²⁶⁵ while thou*
 448 *Like²⁶⁶ consort²⁶⁷ to thyself canst nowhere find.*
 449 *That day I oft remember, when from sleep*
 450 *I first awaked, and found myself reposed*
 451 *Under a shade²⁶⁸ on flow'rs, much wond'ring*
 where

²⁶³ rule, control, government

²⁶⁴ purpose

²⁶⁵ preeminent by so much odds = superior by such a high percentage/amount

²⁶⁶ similar

²⁶⁷ companion

²⁶⁸ shady cover (from the sun)

452 *And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.*
 453 *Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound*
 454 *Of waters issued from a cave, and spread*
 455 *Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved,²⁶⁹*
 456 *Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n. I thither²⁷⁰ went*
 457 *With unexperienced²⁷¹ thought, and laid me down*
 458 *On the green bank, to look into the clear*
 459 *Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.*
 460 *As I bent down to look, just opposite*
 461 *A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared,*
 462 *Bending to look on me. I started back—*
 463 *It started back—but pleased I soon returned,*
 464 *Pleased it returned as soon, with answering looks*
 465 *Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed*
 466 *Mine eyes till now, and pined²⁷² with vain desire,*
 467 *Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou*
 see'st,
 468 *What there thou see'st, fair creature, is thyself.*
 469 *With thee it came and goes. But follow me*
 470 *And I will bring thee where no shadow stays²⁷³*
 471 *Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he*
 472 *Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy*
 473 *Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear*
 474 *Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called*
 475 *Mother of human race.' What could I do,*
 476 *But follow straight,²⁷⁴ invisibly thus led?*
 477 *Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,*
 478 *Under a platane,²⁷⁵ yet methought less fair,*
 479 *Less winning soft, less amiably mild,*

²⁶⁹ unmoving, fixed

²⁷⁰ i.e., to the pool

²⁷¹ inexperienced

²⁷² languished

²⁷³ awaits

²⁷⁴ at once

²⁷⁵ plane tree (e.g., the sycamore)

480 *Than that smooth wat'ry image. Back I turned.*
 481 *Thou following cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve.*
 482 *Whom fly'st²⁷⁶ thou? Whom thou fly'st, of him thou*
 art,
 483 *His flesh, his bone. To give thee being I lent*
 484 *Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,*
 485 *Substantial²⁷⁷ life, to²⁷⁸ have thee by my side*
 486 *Henceforth an individual²⁷⁹ solace²⁸⁰ dear.*
 487 *Part of my soul, I seek thee! and thee claim²⁸¹*
 488 *My other half.' With that thy gentle hand*
 489 *Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see*
 490 *How beauty is excelled by manly grace,*
 491 *And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."*
 492 *So spoke our general²⁸² mother; and with eyes*
 493 *Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,*
 494 *And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned*
 495 *On our first father. Half her swelling breast*
 496 *Naked met his, under the flowing gold*
 497 *Of her loose tresses hid. He in delight*
 498 *Both of her beauty and submissive charms,*
 499 *Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter*
 500 *On Juno smiles, when he impregns²⁸³ the clouds*
 501 *That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron*
 lip
 502 *With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned*
 503 *For envy, yet with jealous leer malign*
 504 *Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:²⁸⁴*

²⁷⁶ flee

²⁷⁷ solid, true, real

²⁷⁸ in order to

²⁷⁹ inseparable, indivisible, special

²⁸⁰ (1) comfort, pleasure, delight, (2) entertainment, recreation, amusement

²⁸¹ claim as

²⁸² universal, common

²⁸³ impregnates

²⁸⁴ complained

505 *“Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,*
 506 *Imparadised in one another’s arms,*
 507 *The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill*
 508 *Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,*
 509 *Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,*
 510 *Among our other torments not the least,*
 511 *Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.²⁸⁵*
 512 *Yet let me not forget what I have gained*
 513 *From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems.*
 514 *One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called,*
 515 *Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?*
 516 *Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord*
 517 *Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?*
 518 *Can it be death? And do they only stand²⁸⁶*
 519 *By ignorance? Is that their happy state,*
 520 *The proof of their obedience and their faith?*
 521 *O fair foundation laid whereon to build*
 522 *Their ruin! Hence I will excite²⁸⁷ their minds*
 523 *With more desire to know, and to reject*
 524 *Envious commands, invented with design*
 525 *To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt*
 526 *Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,*
 527 *They taste and die. What likelier can ensue?*
 528 *But first with narrow²⁸⁸ search I must walk round*
 529 *This garden, and no corner leave unspied.*
 530 *A chance (but chance)²⁸⁹ may lead where I may*
 meet
 531 *Some wand’ring Spirit of Heav’n by fountain side,*
 532 *Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw*
 533 *What further would be learned. Live while ye may,*
 534 *Yet happy pair—enjoy, till I return,*

²⁸⁵ wastes away

²⁸⁶ endure

²⁸⁷ rouse/stir up

²⁸⁸ close, careful

²⁸⁹ but only a chance

535 *Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed!*"²⁹⁰
 536 *So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,*
 537 *But with sly circumspection,²⁹¹ and began*
 538 *Through wood, through waste,²⁹² o'er hill, o'er*
 dale, his roam.²⁹³
 539 *Meanwhile in utmost longitude,²⁹⁴ where Heav'n*
 540 *With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun*
 541 *Slowly descended, and with right aspect²⁹⁵*
 542 *Against the eastern gate of Paradise*
 543 *Leveled his evening rays. It was a rock*
 544 *Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,*
 545 *Conspicuous²⁹⁶ far, winding with one ascent*
 546 *Accessible from earth, one entrance high.*
 547 *The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung*
 548 *Still as it rose, impossible to climb.*
 549 *Betwixt these rocky pillars, Gabriel sat,*
 550 *Chief of the Angelic guards, awaiting night.*
 551 *About him exercised²⁹⁷ heroic games*
 552 *Th' unarmed youth of Heav'n, but nigh²⁹⁸ at hand*
 553 *Celestial armory—shields, helms, and spears,*
 554 *Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold.*
 555 *Thither came Uriel, gliding through the ev'n²⁹⁹*
 556 *On a sun-beam, swift as a shooting star*
 557 *In autumn thwarts³⁰⁰ the night (when vapors fired³⁰¹*

²⁹⁰ follow

²⁹¹ vigilant/cautious observation

²⁹² wild, uncultivated land

²⁹³ [noun]

²⁹⁴ extreme/outermost west

²⁹⁵ astronomical orientation: directly opposite

²⁹⁶ visible

²⁹⁷ practiced

²⁹⁸ close

²⁹⁹ evening, twilight

³⁰⁰ crosses, traverses

³⁰¹ burning

558 *Impress³⁰² the air) and shows the mariner*
 559 *From what point of his compass to beware*
 560 *Impetuous³⁰³ winds. He thus began in haste:*
 561 *“Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot³⁰⁴ hath given*
 562 *Charge³⁰⁵ and strict watch, that to this happy place*
 563 *No evil thing approach or enter in.*
 564 *This day at height of noon came to my sphere*
 565 *A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know*
 566 *More of the Almighty’s works, and chiefly man,*
 567 *God’s latest image. I described³⁰⁶ his way*
 568 *Bent all on speed, and marked³⁰⁷ his airy gait,³⁰⁸*
 569 *But in the mount that lies from Eden north,*
 570 *Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks*
 571 *Alien³⁰⁹ from Heav’n, with passions foul*
 obscured.³¹⁰
 572 *Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade*
 573 *Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,*
 574 *I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise³¹¹*
 575 *New troubles. Him thy care must be to find.”*
 576 *To whom the wingèd warrior thus returned:*
 577 *“Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,*
 578 *Amid the sun’s bright circle where thou sit’st,*
 579 *See far and wide. In at this gate none pass*
 580 *The vigilance³¹² here placed, but such as come*

³⁰² stamp, imprint on

³⁰³ violently forceful

³⁰⁴ destiny

³⁰⁵ responsibility

³⁰⁶ traced

³⁰⁷ noted

³⁰⁸ (1) course, (2) carriage: i.e., through the air, as spirits move

³⁰⁹ foreign, inconsistent, repugnant

³¹⁰ darkened

³¹¹ stir up, cause

³¹² watch, guard

581 *Well known from Heav'n. And since meridian*
 *hour*³¹³
 582 *No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,*
 583 *So minded,*³¹⁴ *have o'er-leaped these earthly bounds*
 584 *On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude*
 585 *Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.*
 586 *But if within the circuit of these walks,*
 587 *In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom*
 588 *Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."*
 589 *So promised he, and Uriel to his charge*³¹⁵
 590 *Returned on that bright beam, whose point now*
 raised
 591 *Bore him slope downward to the sun now fall'n*
 592 *Beneath the Azores, whither the prime orb,*
 593 *Incredible how swift, had thither rolled*
 594 *Diurnal,*³¹⁶ *or*³¹⁷ *this less voluble*³¹⁸ *earth,*
 595 *By shorter flight to the east, had left him there,*
 596 *Arraying with reflected purple and gold*
 597 *The clouds that on his western throne attend.*
 598 *Now came still*³¹⁹ *ev'ning on, and twilight gray*
 599 *Had in her sober livery*³²⁰ *all things clad.*³²¹
 600 *Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,*
 601 *They to their grassy couch, these to their nests*
 602 *Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale:*
 603 *She all night long her amorous descant*³²² *sung.*
 604 *Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament*

³¹³ meridian hour = noon

³¹⁴ disposed, thinking, intending

³¹⁵ responsibility: i.e., to his post

³¹⁶ daily: i.e., as it does every day

³¹⁷ or else

³¹⁸ rolling, revolving

³¹⁹ silent, quiet [adjective]

³²⁰ sober livery = grave/solemn/sedate uniform/style of dress

³²¹ "had clad all things in her sober livery"

³²² melodious song

605 *With living sapphires. Hesperus,³²³ that led*
 606 *The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,*
 607 *Rising in clouded majesty, at length*
 608 *(Apparent³²⁴ queen) unveiled her peerless light,*
 609 *And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.*
 610 *When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair consort, th' hour*
 611 *Of night, and all things now retired to rest,*
 612 *Mind³²⁵ us of like³²⁶ repose, since God hath set*
 613 *Labor and rest, as day and night, to men*
 614 *Successive,³²⁷ and the timely dew of sleep,*
 615 *Now falling with soft slumbrous weight, inclines³²⁸*
 616 *Our eye-lids. Other creatures all day long*
 617 *Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;*
 618 *Man hath his daily work of body or mind*
 619 *Appointed, which declares³²⁹ his dignity,*
 620 *And the regard³³⁰ of Heav'n on all his ways,*
 621 *While other animals unactive range,³³¹*
 622 *And of their doings God takes no account.*
 623 *To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east*
 624 *With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,*
 625 *And at our pleasant labor, to reform³³²*
 626 *Yon flow'ry arbors, yonder alleys³³³ green,*
 627 *Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,*
 628 *That mock our scant manuring,³³⁴ and require*

³²³ brightest of the early evening stars

³²⁴ manifest, obvious

³²⁵ think, remind

³²⁶ similar

³²⁷ one after another

³²⁸ bends downward

³²⁹ makes known

³³⁰ observant attention

³³¹ move hither and thither

³³² prune

³³³ passages, walks

³³⁴ tilling, cultivating

629 *More hands than ours to lop their wanton³³⁵*
growth.

630 *Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,*
 631 *That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,*
 632 *Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.*
 633 *Meanwhile, as Nature wills, night bids us rest.”*
 634 *To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:*
 635 *“My author and disposer, what thou bid’st*
 636 *Unargued I obey. So God ordains:*
 637 *God is thy law, thou mine. To know no more*
 638 *Is woman’s happiest knowledge, and her praise.*
 639 *With thee conversing I forget all time;*
 640 *All seasons, and their change, all please alike.*
 641 *Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,*
 642 *With charm³³⁶ of earliest birds. Pleasant the sun,*
 643 *When first on this delightful land he spreads*
 644 *His orient³³⁷ beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow’r,*
 645 *Glistering with dew. Fragrant the fertile earth*
 646 *After soft showers, and sweet the coming on*
 647 *Of grateful³³⁸ evening mild, then silent night,*
 648 *With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,*
 649 *And these the gems of Heav’n, her starry train.*
 650 *But neither breath of morn, when she ascends*
 651 *With charm³³⁹ of earliest birds, nor rising sun*
 652 *On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow’r,*
 653 *Glistering with dew, nor fragrance after showers,*
 654 *Nor grateful ev’ning mild, nor silent night,*
 655 *With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,*
 656 *Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.*
 657 *“But wherefore all night long shine these? For*
whom

³³⁵ luxuriant

³³⁶ blended song, of multiple origin

³³⁷ bright

³³⁸ pleasing

³³⁹ see footnote 336, above

658 *This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all
eyes?"*

659 *To whom our general³⁴⁰ ancestor replied:*

660 *"Daughter of God and man, accomplished³⁴¹
Eve,*

661 *These have their course to finish round the earth,*

662 *By morrow ev'ning, and from land to land*

663 *In order, though to nations yet unborn.*

664 *Minist'ring³⁴² light prepared,³⁴³ they set and rise,*

665 *Lest total darkness should by night regain*

666 *Her old possession, and extinguish life*

667 *In Nature and all things, which these soft fires*

668 *Not only enlighten,³⁴⁴ but with kindly³⁴⁵ heat*

669 *Of various³⁴⁶ influence³⁴⁷ foment³⁴⁸ and warm,*

670 *Temper or nourish, or in part shed down*

671 *Their stellar virtue³⁴⁹ on all kinds³⁵⁰ that grow*

672 *On earth, made hereby apter³⁵¹ to receive*

673 *Perfection from the sun's more potent³⁵² ray.*

674 *These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,*

675 *Shine not in vain, nor think,³⁵³ though men were
none,*

³⁴⁰ universal, common

³⁴¹ perfect, fulfilled

³⁴² furnishing, supplying

³⁴³ ready [adjective]

³⁴⁴ illuminate

³⁴⁵ (1) natural, (2) benevolent

³⁴⁶ variable, varying

³⁴⁷ disposition, temperament (i.e., astrologically)

³⁴⁸ rouse/stir up with heat

³⁴⁹ qualities, powers

³⁵⁰ the species

³⁵¹ better fit/suited

³⁵² powerful, mighty

³⁵³ should you think

- 676 *That Heav'n would want³⁵⁴ spectators, God want
praise.*
- 677 *Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth*
678 *Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:*
679 *All these with ceaseless praise His works behold*
680 *Both day and night. How often from the steep³⁵⁵*
681 *Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard*
682 *Celestial voices to the midnight air,*
683 *Sole, or responsive each to others' note,*
684 *Singing their great Creator? Oft in bands*
685 *While they keep watch, or nightly rounding
walk,³⁵⁶*
- 686 *With Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds*
687 *In full harmonic number³⁵⁷ joined, their songs*
688 *Divide³⁵⁸ the night, and lift our thoughts to
Heav'n."*
- 689 *Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed*
690 *On to their blissful bower. It was a place*
691 *Chosen by the sov'reign Planter,³⁵⁹ when He
framed*
- 692 *All things to man's delightful use. The roof*
693 *Of thickest covert³⁶⁰ was inwoven shade,*
694 *Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew*
695 *Of firm and fragrant leaf, on either side*
696 *Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,*
697 *Fenced up the verdant wall. Each beauteous
flow'r,*
- 698 *Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin,*

³⁵⁴ lack

³⁵⁵ height, slope

³⁵⁶ rounding walk = walking round

³⁵⁷ musical periods/groups of notes

³⁵⁸ into watches

³⁵⁹ proprietor

³⁶⁰ covering

- 699 *Reared high their flourished³⁶¹ heads between,
and wrought³⁶²*
- 700 *Mosaic. Underfoot the violet,*
- 701 *Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay*
- 702 *Broidered³⁶³ the ground, more colored than with
stone*
- 703 *Of costliest emblem.³⁶⁴ Other creature here,*
- 704 *Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none,*
- 705 *Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower*
- 706 *More sacred and sequestered, though but
feigned,³⁶⁵*
- 707 *Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor nymph*
- 708 *Nor Faunus³⁶⁶ haunted. Here, in close³⁶⁷ recess,³⁶⁸*
- 709 *With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,*
- 710 *Espoused³⁶⁹ Eve decked first her nuptial bed,*
- 711 *And Heav'nly choirs the hymnaean³⁷⁰ sung,*
- 712 *What day³⁷¹ the genial³⁷² Angel to our sire*
- 713 *Brought her in naked beauty more adorned,*
- 714 *More lovely, than Pandora,³⁷³ whom the gods*
- 715 *Endowed with all their gifts, and O! too like*
- 716 *In sad event, when to the unwiser son³⁷⁴*

³⁶¹ adorned

³⁶² made, shaped

³⁶³ embroidered

³⁶⁴ i.e., inlaid with precious gems

³⁶⁵ though but feigned = even if only in fables

³⁶⁶ pastoral god of vegetation and agriculture, who had goat horns and legs

³⁶⁷ intimate

³⁶⁸ seclusion, withdrawal, retirement

³⁶⁹ married

³⁷⁰ wedding hymn

³⁷¹ what day = on the day

³⁷² (1) festive, kindly, (2) nuptial

³⁷³ Pandora ("all gifts"), whose box of gifts, when opened, let loose all ills upon the world

³⁷⁴ she was brought to Epimetheus ("afterthought"), brother of Prometheus ("forethought")

717 *Of Japhet³⁷⁵ brought by Hermes,³⁷⁶ she ensnared*
 718 *Mankind with her fair looks, to be³⁷⁷ avenged*
 719 *On him³⁷⁸ who had stole Jove's authentic³⁷⁹ fire.*
 720 *Thus at their shady lodge³⁸⁰ arrived, both stood,*
 721 *Both turned, and under open sky adored³⁸¹*
 722 *The God that made both sky, air, earth, and*
 Heav'n,
 723 *Which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe*
 724 *And starry pole: "Thou also mad'st the night,*
 725 *Maker Omnipotent, and Thou the day,*
 726 *Which we, in our appointed work employed,*
 727 *Have finished, happy in our mutual help*
 728 *And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss*
 729 *Ordained by Thee. And this delicious³⁸² place*
 730 *For us too large, where thy abundance wants³⁸³*
 731 *Partakers, and uncropped³⁸⁴ falls to the ground.*
 732 *But thou hast promised from us two a race*
 733 *To fill the earth, who shall with us extol*
 734 *Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,*
 735 *And when we seek, as now, Thy gift of sleep."*
 736 *This said unanimous, and other rites*
 737 *Observing none, but adoration pure*
 738 *(Which God likes best), into their inmost bow'r*
 739 *Handed³⁸⁵ they went and, eased³⁸⁶ the putting off*
 740 *These troublesome disguises which we wear,*

³⁷⁵ Iapetus, a Titan

³⁷⁶ Jove's messenger

³⁷⁷ to be = in order to be

³⁷⁸ Prometheus

³⁷⁹ truly created by Jove

³⁸⁰ hut, cottage, house

³⁸¹ venerated

³⁸² wonderfully pleasant

³⁸³ lacks

³⁸⁴ unreaped

³⁸⁵ joined hand in hand

³⁸⁶ relieved/set free of

741 *Straight side by side were laid, nor turned, I*
 *ween,*³⁸⁷
 742 *Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites*
 743 *Mysterious of connubial love refused,*
 744 *Whatever hypocrites austerely talk*
 745 *Of purity, and place, and innocence,*
 746 *Defaming as impure what God declares*
 747 *Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.*
 748 *Our Maker bids increase: who bids abstain*
 749 *But our destroyer, foe to God and man?*
 750 *Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source*
 751 *Of human offspring, sole propriety*³⁸⁸
 752 *In Paradise of all things common*³⁸⁹ *else!*
 753 *By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men*
 754 *Among the bestial herds to range.*³⁹⁰ *By thee*
 755 *Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,*
 756 *Relations*³⁹¹ *dear, and all the charities*³⁹²
 757 *Of father, son, and brother, first were known.*
 758 *Far be it, that I should write*³⁹³ *thee sin or blame,*
 759 *Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,*
 760 *Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,*
 761 *Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,*
 762 *Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.*
 763 *Here love his golden shafts*³⁹⁴ *employs, here lights*
 764 *His constant*³⁹⁵ *lamp, and waves his purple wings,*
 765 *Reigns here and revels, not in the bought smile*
 766 *Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,*

³⁸⁷ believe, suppose

³⁸⁸ property

³⁸⁹ held in common

³⁹⁰ wander

³⁹¹ kinship

³⁹² natural affections

³⁹³ describe, call

³⁹⁴ arrows

³⁹⁵ steadfast, faithful, true

- 767 *Casual fruition,*³⁹⁶ *nor in court-amours,*
 768 *Mixed dance, or wanton*³⁹⁷ *masque, or midnight*
 ball,
 769 *Or serenade, which the starved lover sings*
 770 *To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.*
 771 *These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,*
 772 *And on their naked limbs the flow'ry roof*
 773 *Show'ed roses, which the morn repaired.*³⁹⁸
 Sleep on,
 774 *Blest pair! and O! yet happiest, if ye seek*
 775 *No happier state, and know to know no more!*
 776 *Now had night measured with her shadowy*
 *cone*³⁹⁹
 777 *Halfway up hill this vast sublunar vault,*⁴⁰⁰
 778 *And from their ivory port*⁴⁰¹ *the Cherubim,*
 779 *Forth issuing at the accustomed hour, stood armed*
 780 *To their night watches in warlike parade,*
 781 *When Gabriel to his next in power thus spoke:*
 782 *“Uzziel,*⁴⁰² *half these draw off, and coast the*
 south
 783 *With strictest watch. These other wheel*⁴⁰³ *the*
 north;
 784 *Our circuit meets full west.”* *As*⁴⁰⁴ *flame they part,*
 785 *Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.*⁴⁰⁵
 786 *From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called*

³⁹⁶ enjoyment

³⁹⁷ unchaste, lascivious

³⁹⁸ renewed, replaced

³⁹⁹ the earth's shadow

⁴⁰⁰ arch (the sky)

⁴⁰¹ Paradise's eastern gate

⁴⁰² “Strength of God”

⁴⁰³ move, turn to

⁴⁰⁴ like

⁴⁰⁵ the shield was worn on the left arm; the spear was held in the right

787 *That near him stood, and gave them thus in*
charge:
788 *“Ithuriel⁴⁰⁶ and Zephon,⁴⁰⁷ with wingèd speed*
789 *Search through this garden, leave unsearched no*
nook,
790 *But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,*
791 *Now laid perhaps asleep, secure of⁴⁰⁸ harm.*
792 *This ev’ning from⁴⁰⁹ the sun’s decline arrived*
793 *Who tells⁴¹⁰ of some infernal Spirit seen*
794 *Hitherward bent⁴¹¹ (who could have thought?),*
escaped
795 *The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt.*
796 *Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.”*
797 *So saying, on he led his radiant files,⁴¹²*
798 *Dazzling the moon. These to the bower direct*
799 *In search of whom they sought, him⁴¹³ there they*
found
800 *Squat⁴¹⁴ like a toad, close at⁴¹⁵ the ear of Eve,*
801 *Assaying⁴¹⁶ by his devilish art to reach*
802 *The organs of her fancy, and with them forge*
803 *Illusions, as he list,⁴¹⁷ phantasms and dreams,*
804 *Or if,⁴¹⁸ inspiring⁴¹⁹ venom, he might taint⁴²⁰*

⁴⁰⁶ “Discovery of God”

⁴⁰⁷ “Searcher of Secrets”

⁴⁰⁸ secure of = protected/safe from

⁴⁰⁹ from the time of

⁴¹⁰ who tells = one (Uriel) who tells

⁴¹¹ headed, bound

⁴¹² ranks/rows of armed angels

⁴¹³ Satan

⁴¹⁴ crouching

⁴¹⁵ close at = near

⁴¹⁶ trying

⁴¹⁷ desired, wished

⁴¹⁸ whether

⁴¹⁹ blowing, breathing

⁴²⁰ infect, corrupt

805 *The animal spirits that from pure blood arise*
 806 *Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise*
 807 *At least distempered,⁴²¹ discontented thoughts,*
 808 *Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,*
 809 *Blown up with high conceits engend'ring pride.*
 810 *Him thus intent, Ithuriel with his spear*
 811 *Touched lightly, for no falsehood can endure*
 812 *Touch of celestial temper,⁴²² but returns*
 813 *Of force⁴²³ to its own likeness. Up he starts,⁴²⁴*
 814 *Discovered and surprised.⁴²⁵ As when a spark*
 815 *Lights on a heap of nitrous powder,⁴²⁶ laid⁴²⁷*
 816 *Fit for the tun⁴²⁸ some magazine⁴²⁹ to store*
 817 *Against a rumored war, the smutty⁴³⁰ grain,⁴³¹*
 818 *With sudden blaze diffused,⁴³² inflames the air;*
 819 *So started up in his own shape the fiend.*
 820 *Back stepped those two fair Angels, half amazed⁴³³*
 821 *So sudden to behold the grisly⁴³⁴ king,*
 822 *Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost⁴³⁵ him soon:⁴³⁶*
 823 *“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged⁴³⁷ to*
 Hell

⁴²¹ disordered, ill-humored, deranged

⁴²² hardening

⁴²³ necessity

⁴²⁴ leaps, bounds, jumps

⁴²⁵ caught unawares

⁴²⁶ nitrous powder = gunpowder

⁴²⁷ piled up, heaped

⁴²⁸ barrel, cask

⁴²⁹ military warehouse

⁴³⁰ blackened

⁴³¹ powder of a granular texture: i.e., gunpowder

⁴³² sent forth

⁴³³ overwhelmed

⁴³⁴ horrible, ghastly

⁴³⁵ address

⁴³⁶ quickly, without delay

⁴³⁷ sentenced, condemned

824 *Com'st thou, escaped thy prison? And,*
transformed,
825 *Why sat'st thou like an enemy in wait,*
826 *Here watching at the head of these that sleep?"*
827 *"Know ye not then," said Satan, filled with*
scorn,
828 *"Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate⁴³⁸*
829 *For you, there⁴³⁹ sitting where ye durst not soar:*
830 *Not to know me argues⁴⁴⁰ yourselves unknown,*
831 *The lowest of your throng. Or if ye know,*
832 *Why ask ye, and superfluous begin*
833 *Your message, like to end as much in vain?"*
834 *To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with*
scorn:
835 *"Think not, revolted⁴⁴¹ Spirit, thy shape the*
same,
836 *Or undiminished brightness, to be known*
837 *As when thou stood'st in Heav'n upright and pure.*
838 *That glory then, when thou no more wast good,*
839 *Departed from thee, and thou resembl'st now*
840 *Thy sin and place of doom,⁴⁴² obscure and foul.*
841 *But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account*
842 *To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep*
843 *This place inviolable, and these from harm."*
844 *So spoke the Cherub, and his grave rebuke,*
845 *Severe in youthful beauty, added grace*
846 *Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,*
847 *And felt how awful⁴⁴³ goodness is, and saw*

⁴³⁸ suitable companion

⁴³⁹ i.e., in Heaven

⁴⁴⁰ indicates

⁴⁴¹ rebel

⁴⁴² judgment

⁴⁴³ sublime, majestic, impressive

848 *Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw and pined*⁴⁴⁴
 849 *His loss, but chiefly to find here observed*
 850 *His luster visibly impaired, yet seemed*
 851 *Undaunted. "If I must contend,"*⁴⁴⁵ *said he,*
 852 *"Best with the best, the sender, not the sent,*
 853 *Or all at once. More glory will be won,*
 854 *Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,*
 855 *"Will save us trial what the least can do*
 856 *Single against thee wicked, and thence weak."*
 857 *The fiend replied not, overcome with rage,*
 858 *But like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,*
 859 *Champing*⁴⁴⁶ *his iron curb.*⁴⁴⁷ *To strive or fly*⁴⁴⁸
 860 *He held it vain; awe*⁴⁴⁹ *from above had quelled*⁴⁵⁰
 861 *His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh*
 862 *The western point, where those half-rounding*
 guards
 863 *Just met, and closing stood in squadron joined,*
 864 *Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,*
 865 *Gabriel, from the front*⁴⁵¹ *thus called aloud:*
 866 *"O friends! I hear the tread of nimble*⁴⁵² *feet*
 867 *Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern*
 868 *Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade,*
 869 *And with them comes a third of regal*⁴⁵³ *port,*⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁴ mourned

⁴⁴⁵ fight

⁴⁴⁶ gnashing, rattling

⁴⁴⁷ the strap/chain of a horse's bit

⁴⁴⁸ strive or fly = fight or flee

⁴⁴⁹ dread combined with wonder

⁴⁵⁰ overcome

⁴⁵¹ front line

⁴⁵² quick

⁴⁵³ royal, stately

⁴⁵⁴ carriage, bearing

870 *But faded splendor wan,⁴⁵⁵ who by his gait*
 871 *And fierce demeanor seems the Prince of Hell,*
 872 *Not likely to part⁴⁵⁶ hence without contest.*
 873 *Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.”⁴⁵⁷*
 874 *He scarce had ended, when those two*
 approached
 875 *And brief related whom they brought, where*
 found,
 876 *How busied, in what form and posture couched.⁴⁵⁸*
 877 *To whom with stern regard⁴⁵⁹ thus Gabriel*
 spoke:
 878 *“Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds*
 prescribed
 879 *To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge⁴⁶⁰*
 880 *Of others, who approve⁴⁶¹ not to transgress*
 881 *By thy example, but have power and right*
 882 *To question thy bold entrance on this place,*
 883 *Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those*
 884 *Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss!”*
 885 *To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:*
 886 *“Gabriel, thou had’st in Heav’n th’ esteem⁴⁶² of*
 wise,
 887 *And such I held thee. But this question asked*
 888 *Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?*
 889 *Who would not, finding way, break loose from*
 Hell,

⁴⁵⁵ pallid, gloomy

⁴⁵⁶ depart

⁴⁵⁷ scowls

⁴⁵⁸ crouching, lurking

⁴⁵⁹ look

⁴⁶⁰ responsibility

⁴⁶¹ commend

⁴⁶² reputation

- 890 *Though thither doomed?⁴⁶³ Thou would'st thyself,
no doubt,*
- 891 *And boldly venture to whatever place*
- 892 *Farthest from pain, where thou might'st hope to
change⁴⁶⁴*
- 893 *Torment with ease, and soonest recompense⁴⁶⁵*
- 894 *Dole⁴⁶⁶ with delight, which in this place I sought.*
- 895 *To thee no reason, who know'st only good,*
- 896 *But evil hast not tried. And wilt object*
- 897 *His will who bound us? Let him surer⁴⁶⁷ bar*
- 898 *His iron gates, if he intends our stay*
- 899 *In that dark durance.⁴⁶⁸ Thus much what was
asked.*
- 900 *The rest is true, they found me where they say,*
- 901 *But that implies not violence or harm.”*
- 902 *Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel, moved,⁴⁶⁹*
- 903 *Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:*
- 904 *“O loss of one in Heav'n to judge of wise,⁴⁷⁰*
- 905 *Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,*
- 906 *And now returns him from his prison 'scaped,*
- 907 *Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise*
- 908 *Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither*
- 909 *Unlicensed⁴⁷¹ from his bounds⁴⁷² in Hell
prescribed.*
- 910 *So wise he judges it to fly⁴⁷³ from pain,*

⁴⁶³ sentenced

⁴⁶⁴ exchange

⁴⁶⁵ compensate, repay

⁴⁶⁶ grief, sorrow

⁴⁶⁷ more firmly/securely

⁴⁶⁸ forced confinement, imprisonment

⁴⁶⁹ provoked

⁴⁷⁰ “What a loss in Heaven is one who can judge what wisdom is!”

⁴⁷¹ unauthorized, without permission

⁴⁷² boundaries, limits

⁴⁷³ flee

911 *However,⁴⁷⁴ and to 'scape his punishment!*
 912 *So judge thou still, presumptuous! till the wrath,*
 913 *Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet⁴⁷⁵ thy flight*
 914 *Sevenfold, and scourge⁴⁷⁶ that wisdom back to*
 Hell,
 915 *Which taught thee yet no better; than no pain*
 916 *Can equal anger infinite provoked.*
 917 *But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee*
 918 *Came not all Hell broke loose? Is pain to them*
 919 *Less pain, less to be fled, or thou than they*
 920 *Less hardy⁴⁷⁷ to endure? Courageous chief,*
 921 *The first in flight from pain! Had'st thou alleged⁴⁷⁸*
 922 *To thy deserted host this cause of flight,*
 923 *Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."*
 924 *To which the fiend thus answered, frowning*
 stern:
 925 *"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,*
 926 *Insulting Angel! Well thou know'st I stood*
 927 *Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid*
 928 *The blasting vollied thunder made all speed⁴⁷⁹*
 929 *And seconded⁴⁸⁰ thy else⁴⁸¹ not dreaded spear.*
 930 *But still thy words at random,⁴⁸² as before,*
 931 *Argue thy inexperience what⁴⁸³ behooves⁴⁸⁴*

⁴⁷⁴ however he can

⁴⁷⁵ oppose

⁴⁷⁶ whip, lash

⁴⁷⁷ courageous

⁴⁷⁸ declared

⁴⁷⁹ hurry

⁴⁸⁰ reinforced

⁴⁸¹ otherwise

⁴⁸² thy words at random = thy careless/heedless words

⁴⁸³ as to what

⁴⁸⁴ is needful/required of . . . a faithful leader

932 *From hard assays⁴⁸⁵ and ill successes⁴⁸⁶ past*
 933 *A faithful leader; not to hazard all*
 934 *Through ways⁴⁸⁷ of danger by himself untried.*
 935 *I, therefore, I alone first undertook*
 936 *To wing⁴⁸⁸ the desolate abyss, and spy*
 937 *This new created world, whereof in Hell*
 938 *Fame⁴⁸⁹ is not silent, here in hope to find*
 939 *Better abode, and my afflicted Powers*
 940 *To settle here on earth, or in mid air,*
 941 *Though⁴⁹⁰ for possession put⁴⁹¹ to try once more*
 942 *What thou and thy gay legions dare against,*
 943 *Whose easier business were to serve their Lord*
 944 *High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymn His*
 throne,
 945 *And practised distances to cringe, not fight.”*
 946 *To whom the warrior Angel soon⁴⁹² replied:*
 947 *“To say and straight unsay, pretending first*
 948 *Wise to fly⁴⁹³ pain, professing⁴⁹⁴ next the spy,*
 949 *Argues⁴⁹⁵ no leader but a liar traced,⁴⁹⁶*
 950 *Satan—and couldst thou faithful add? O name,*
 951 *O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!*
 952 *Faithful to whom? To thy rebellious crew?*
 953 *Army of fiends, fit body to fit head!*
 954 *Was this your discipline and faith engaged,*

⁴⁸⁵ attempts, experiments

⁴⁸⁶ results

⁴⁸⁷ courses, directions, roads, paths

⁴⁸⁸ fly

⁴⁸⁹ rumor, report

⁴⁹⁰ even if

⁴⁹¹ forced, pushed

⁴⁹² quickly

⁴⁹³ flee

⁴⁹⁴ declare oneself

⁴⁹⁵ indicates

⁴⁹⁶ found, searched out

955 *Your military obedience, to dissolve*
 956 *Allegiance to th' acknowledged Power supreme?*
 957 *And thou, sly hypocrite, who now would'st seem*
 958 *Patron of liberty, who more than thou*
 959 *Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely⁴⁹⁷ adored*
 960 *Heav'n's awful⁴⁹⁸ Monarch? Wherefore,⁴⁹⁹ but in*
 hope
 961 *To dispossess Him, and thyself to reign?*
 962 *But mark what I agreed⁵⁰⁰ thee now. Avaunt!⁵⁰¹*
 963 *Fly thither whence thou fled'st! If from this hour*
 964 *Within these hallowed limits⁵⁰² thou appear,*
 965 *Back to the infernal pit I drag thee chained,*
 966 *And seal⁵⁰³ thee so as henceforth not to scorn*
 967 *The facile⁵⁰⁴ gates of Hell too slightly barred."*
 968 *So threatened he, but Satan to no threats*
 969 *Gave heed, but waxing⁵⁰⁵ more in rage⁵⁰⁶ replied:*
 970 *"Then when I am thy captive, talk of chains,*
 971 *Proud liminary⁵⁰⁷ Cherub! But ere then*
 972 *Far heavier load⁵⁰⁸ thyself expect to feel*
 973 *From my prevailing⁵⁰⁹ arm, though Heaven's King*
 974 *Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,⁵¹⁰*
 975 *Used to the yoke, draw'st His triumphant wheels*

⁴⁹⁷ slavelike, meanly

⁴⁹⁸ dread

⁴⁹⁹ why

⁵⁰⁰ counsel

⁵⁰¹ leave!

⁵⁰² boundaries

⁵⁰³ fasten

⁵⁰⁴ (1) easy, (2) courteous

⁵⁰⁵ growing

⁵⁰⁶ in rage = enraged

⁵⁰⁷ guardian of boundaries

⁵⁰⁸ material force

⁵⁰⁹ superior, stronger

⁵¹⁰ comrades

- 976 *In progress through the road of Heav'n star-*
paved."
- 977 *While thus he spoke, the angelic squadron*
bright
- 978 *Turned fiery red, sharp'ning in moonèd horns*⁵¹¹
- 979 *Their phalanx,*⁵¹² *and began to hem him round*
- 980 *With ported*⁵¹³ *spears, as thick as when a field*
- 981 *Of Ceres,*⁵¹⁴ *ripe for harvest, waving*⁵¹⁵ *bends*
- 982 *Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind*
- 983 *Sways*⁵¹⁶ *them. The careful ploughman doubting*
stands,
- 984 *Lest on the threshing floor his hopeful sheaves*⁵¹⁷
- 985 *Prove chaff. On th' other side, Satan, alarmed,*⁵¹⁸
- 986 *Collecting all his might, dilated*⁵¹⁹ *stood,*
- 987 *Like Teneriffe*⁵²⁰ *or Atlas,*⁵²¹ *unremoved.*⁵²²
- 988 *His stature reached the sky, and on his crest*
- 989 *Sat horror plumed,*⁵²³ *nor wanted*⁵²⁴ *in his grasp*
- 990 *What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful*
deeds
- 991 *Might have ensued, nor only Paradise*

⁵¹¹ moonèd horns = crescent formation

⁵¹² close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans

⁵¹³ raised/lifted and at the ready

⁵¹⁴ grain (metaphorical use of the goddess' name)

⁵¹⁵ [adverb]

⁵¹⁶ swings

⁵¹⁷ bundles

⁵¹⁸ alert

⁵¹⁹ (1) wings extended, (2) expanded in size

⁵²⁰ high peak in the Canary Islands

⁵²¹ Mt. Atlas in Mauritania, Africa

⁵²² (1) holding his ground, (2) unremovable

⁵²³ helmeted

⁵²⁴ was lacking

- 992 *In*⁵²⁵ *this commotion, but the starry cope*⁵²⁶
 993 *Of Heav'n, perhaps, or all the elements*
 994 *At least had gone to wrack,*⁵²⁷ *disturbed and torn*
 995 *With violence of this conflict, had not soon*⁵²⁸
 996 *Th' Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,*
 997 *Hung forth in Heav'n His golden scales,*⁵²⁹ *yet*⁵³⁰
 seen
 998 *Betwixt Astrea*⁵³¹ *and the Scorpion sign,*
 999 *Wherein all things created first He weighed,*
 1000 *The pendulous round earth with balanced air*
 1001 *In counterpoise, now ponders*⁵³² *all events,*
 1002 *Battles and realms. In these*⁵³³ *he put two weights,*
 1003 *The sequel*⁵³⁴ *each of parting*⁵³⁵ *and of fight.*
 1004 *The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam,*⁵³⁶
 1005 *Which Gabriel spying, thus bespoke*⁵³⁷ *the fiend:*
 1006 *"Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st*
 mine—
 1007 *Neither our own, but giv'n. What folly then*
 1008 *To boast what arms can do? since thine no more*
 1009 *Than Heav'n permits, nor mine, though doubled*
 now
 1010 *To trample thee as mire.*⁵³⁸ *For proof look up,*

⁵²⁵ involved in

⁵²⁶ vault

⁵²⁷ crash, collision, destruction

⁵²⁸ quickly

⁵²⁹ the constellation Libra ("the Scales") is between Scorpio and Virgo/Astrea

⁵³⁰ still

⁵³¹ Virgo

⁵³² reflects upon, weighs

⁵³³ i.e., the two pans of the scale

⁵³⁴ result

⁵³⁵ separating, breaking off

⁵³⁶ the balance beam

⁵³⁷ addressed

⁵³⁸ mud

- 1011 *And read thy lot⁵³⁹ in yon celestial sign,*
1012 *Where thou art weighed, and shown how light,*
how weak,
1013 *If thou resist.” The fiend looked up, and knew⁵⁴⁰*
1014 *His mounted scale aloft: nor more, but fled*
1015 *Murmuring,⁵⁴¹ and with him fled the shades of*
night.

The End of the Fourth Book

⁵³⁹ destiny

⁵⁴⁰ recognized

⁵⁴¹ grumbling, complaining, muttering

BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

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

God to render man inexcusable¹ sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand; who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise, his appearance described, his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; their discourse at table.

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

¹ i.e., responsible, without any excuse

1 *Now morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime²*
 2 *Advancing, sowed the earth with orient³ pearl,*
 3 *When Adam waked, so customed,⁴ for his sleep*
 4 *Was airy-light, from pure digestion bred,⁵*
 5 *And temperate⁶ vapors⁷ bland,⁸ which th' only*
 sound
 6 *Of leaves and fuming⁹ rills, Aurora's¹⁰ fan,*
 7 *Lightly dispersed,¹¹ and the shrill matin¹² song*
 8 *Of birds on every bough, so much the more*
 9 *His wonder was to find unawakened Eve*
 10 *With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,*
 11 *As through unquiet rest. He, on his side*
 12 *Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial¹³ love*
 13 *Hung over her enamored, and beheld*
 14 *Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,*
 15 *Shot forth peculiar¹⁴ graces. Then with voice*
 16 *Mild, as when Zephyrus¹⁵ on Flora¹⁶ breathes,*
 17 *Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: "Awake,*
 18 *My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,*
 19 *Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight!*

² region, realm

³ bright, gleaming

⁴ accustomed, in the habit

⁵ produced, developed

⁶ moderate

⁷ exhalations of a digestive kind

⁸ soft, mild

⁹ giving off vapors—mist and evaporation

¹⁰ goddess of morning

¹¹ Adam's exhalations were easily "dispersed" (dissipated, scattered) by the "fanning" motion of leaves and the "fuming" of running water

¹² morning

¹³ heartfelt

¹⁴ singular, special

¹⁵ west wind/spring breeze

¹⁶ goddess of flowers

20 *Awake. The morning shines, and the fresh field*
 21 *Calls us. We lose the prime,¹⁷ to mark¹⁸ how*
 spring¹⁹
 22 *Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,*
 23 *What drops the myrrh,²⁰ and what the balmy*
 reed,²¹
 24 *How Nature paints her colors, how the bee*
 25 *Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.”*
 26 *Such whispering waked her, but with startled*
 eye
 27 *On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spoke:*
 28 *“O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,*
 29 *My glory, my perfection! Glad I see*
 30 *Thy face, and morn returned, for I this night*
 31 *(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed*
 32 *(If dreamed) not, as I oft am wont,²² of thee,*
 33 *Works of day past, or morrow’s next design,²³*
 34 *But of offence and trouble, which my mind*
 35 *Knew never till this irksome²⁴ night. Methought*
 36 *Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk,*
 37 *With gentle voice; I thought it thine. It said,*
 38 *‘Why sleep’st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time,*
 39 *The cool, the silent, save²⁵ where silence yields*
 40 *To the night-warbling bird, that now awake*
 41 *Tunes sweetest his love-labored song. Now reigns*
 42 *Full-orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light*
 43 *Shadowy sets off the face of things. In vain,*

¹⁷ early morning (either dawn or about 6 A.M.)

¹⁸ note, observe

¹⁹ [verb]

²⁰ “what the myrrh tree (a gum resin) drops”

²¹ here, a balsam (pine) tree

²² accustomed

²³ plan, aim

²⁴ wearisome, irritating, tiring, annoying

²⁵ except

44 *If none regard.²⁶ Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,*
 45 *Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire?*
 46 *In whose sight all things joy,²⁷ with ravishment²⁸*
 47 *Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'*
 48 *I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;*
 49 *To find thee I directed then my walk,*
 50 *And on, methought, alone I passed through ways*
 51 *That brought me on a sudden to the tree*
 52 *Of interdicted²⁹ knowledge. Fair it seemed,*
 53 *Much fairer to my fancy than by day,*
 54 *And as I wond'ring looked, beside it stood*
 55 *One shaped and winged like one of those from*
 Heav'n
 56 *By us oft seen. His dewy locks distilled³⁰*
 57 *Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed,*
 58 *And 'O fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharged,³¹*
 59 *Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,*
 60 *Nor god, nor man? Is knowledge so despised?*
 61 *Or envy, or what reserve³² forbids to taste?*
 62 *Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold*
 63 *Longer thy offered good: why else set³³ here?'*
 64 *This said, he paused not, but with venturous³⁴ arm*
 65 *He plucked, he tasted; me damp³⁵ horror chilled*
 66 *At such bold words vouched³⁶ with a deed so bold,*
 67 *But he thus, overjoyed: 'O fruit divine,*

²⁶ look

²⁷ [verb]

²⁸ ecstasy

²⁹ forbidden

³⁰ exuded, let fall

³¹ overloaded

³² imposition of a limitation

³³ is it set

³⁴ venturesome

³⁵ dazed, depressing

³⁶ declared

68 *Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus*
cropped,³⁷
 69 *Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit*
 70 *For gods, yet able to make gods of men.*
 71 *And why not gods of men? Since good, the more*
 72 *Communicated, more abundant grows,*
 73 *The author³⁸ not impaired, but honored more?*
 74 *Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve!*
 75 *Partake thou also. Happy though thou art,*
 76 *Happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be.*
 77 *Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods*
 78 *Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined,*
 79 *But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes*
 80 *Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see*
 81 *What life the gods live there, and such live thou!'*
 82 *“So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,*
 83 *Ev'n to my mouth of that same fruit held part³⁹*
 84 *Which he had plucked. The pleasant savory smell*
 85 *So quickened appetite that I, methought,*
 86 *Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds*
 87 *With him I flew, and underneath beheld*
 88 *The earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide*
 89 *And various, wond'ring at my flight and change*
 90 *To this high exaltation. Suddenly*
 91 *My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,*
 92 *And fell asleep. But O, how glad I waked*
 93 *To find this but a dream!” Thus Eve her night*
 94 *Related, and thus Adam answered, sad:⁴⁰*
 95 *“Best image of myself, and dearer half,*
 96 *The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep*
 97 *Affects me equally, nor can I like*

³⁷ plucked

³⁸ instigator, the Creator

³⁹ a portion of

⁴⁰ firmly, soberly

98 *This uncouth⁴¹ dream, of evil sprung, I fear.*
 99 *Yet evil whence? In thee can harbor none,*
 100 *Created pure. But know that in the soul*
 101 *Are many lesser faculties, that serve*
 102 *Reason as chief; among these Fancy⁴² next⁴³*
 103 *Her office⁴⁴ holds. Of all external things*
 104 *Which the five watchful⁴⁵ senses represent,⁴⁶*
 105 *She forms imaginations, airy shapes,*
 106 *Which reason, joining or disjoining, frames*
 107 *All what we affirm or what deny, and call⁴⁷*
 108 *Our knowledge or opinion, then retires*
 109 *Into her private cell, when Nature rests.*
 110 *Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes*
 111 *To imitate her but, misjoining shapes,*
 112 *Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,*
 113 *Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.⁴⁸*
 114 *Some such resemblances, methinks, I find*
 115 *Of our last evening's talk, in this thy dream,*
 116 *But with addition strange. Yet be not sad.⁴⁹*
 117 *Evil into the mind of god or man*
 118 *May come and go, so unapproved, and leave*
 119 *No spot or blame behind. Which gives me hope*
 120 *That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,*
 121 *Waking thou never will consent to do.*
 122 *Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks*
 123 *That wont to be more cheerful and serene*
 124 *Than when fair morning first smiles on the world.*

⁴¹ unusual, unfamiliar, strange

⁴² imagination

⁴³ closest, nearest

⁴⁴ function

⁴⁵ vigilant

⁴⁶ bring before the mind

⁴⁷ what we call

⁴⁸ recent

⁴⁹ dismal

125 *And let us to our fresh employments rise*
 126 *Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers*
 127 *That open now their choicest bosomed⁵⁰ smells,*
 128 *Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.”*
 129 *So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was*
 cheered.
 130 *But silently a gentle tear let fall*
 131 *From either eye, and wiped them with her hair:*
 132 *Two other precious drops that ready stood,*
 133 *Each in their crystal sluice,⁵¹ he ere they fell*
 134 *Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse*
 135 *And pious awe, that feared to have offended.*
 136 *So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.*
 137 *But first, from under shady arborous roof*
 138 *Soon as they forth were come to open sight*
 139 *Of day-spring, and the sun, who scarce up-risen,*
 140 *With wheels yet hov’ring o’er the ocean-brim,*
 141 *Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,*
 142 *Discovering⁵² in wide landscape all the east*
 143 *Of Paradise and Eden’s happy plains,*
 144 *Lowly they bowed adoring, and began*
 145 *Their orisons,⁵³ each morning duly paid*
 146 *In various⁵⁴ style, for neither various style*
 147 *Nor holy rapture wanted⁵⁵ they to praise*
 148 *Their Maker; in fit⁵⁶ strains⁵⁷ pronounced, or sung*
 149 *Unmeditated, such prompt⁵⁸ eloquence*

⁵⁰ hidden, confined

⁵¹ a dam or any device holding back water

⁵² disclosing (i.e., making visible, after the darkness of night)

⁵³ prayers

⁵⁴ different, variable, changing

⁵⁵ lacked

⁵⁶ suitable, appropriate

⁵⁷ (1) flow of impassioned language, (2) style

⁵⁸ ready and willing

150 *Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous⁵⁹*
 verse,
 151 *More tuneable⁶⁰ than needed lute or harp*
 152 *To add more sweetness. And they thus began:*
 153 *“These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,*
 154 *Almighty! Thine this universal frame,⁶¹*
 155 *Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!*
 156 *Unspeakable, who sit'st above these. Heav'n's*
 157 *To us invisible, or dimly seen*
 158 *In these Thy lowest works. Yet these declare*
 159 *Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.*
 160 *Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,*
 161 *Angels, for ye behold Him, and with songs*
 162 *And choral symphonies,⁶² day without night,*
 163 *Circle His throne rejoicing, ye in Heav'n!*
 164 *On earth join all ye creatures to extol*
 165 *Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end!*
 166 *Fairest of stars,⁶³ last in the train of night*
 167 *(If better thou belong not to the dawn),*
 168 *Sure pledge⁶⁴ of day that crown'st the smiling*
 morn
 169 *With thy bright circlet,⁶⁵ praise Him in thy sphere,*
 170 *While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.⁶⁶*
 171 *Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,*
 172 *Acknowledge Him thy greater, sound His praise*
 173 *In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st*

⁵⁹ metrical

⁶⁰ tuneful, musical

⁶¹ structure, fabric

⁶² harmonious music

⁶³ Venus (as morning star, called Lucifer; as evening star, called Hesperus)

⁶⁴ promise

⁶⁵ gemlike headband

⁶⁶ early morning (either dawn or about 6 A.M.)

- 174 *And when high noon hast gained,⁶⁷ and when thou
fall'st.*
- 175 *Moon, that now meet'st the orient⁶⁸ sun, now fly'st⁶⁹*
176 *With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies,⁷⁰*
177 *And ye five other wand'ring⁷¹ fires⁷² that move*
178 *In mystic dance not without song, resound*
179 *His praise, who out of darkness called up light.*
180 *Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth*
181 *Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion⁷³ run*
182 *Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix*
183 *And nourish all things: let your ceaseless change*
184 *Vary,⁷⁴ to our great Maker still new praise.*
185 *Ye mists and exhalations that now rise*
186 *From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,*
187 *Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,*
188 *In honor to the world's great Author rise,*
189 *Whether to deck with clouds the uncolored⁷⁵ sky,*
190 *Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,*
191 *Rising or falling still advance His praise.*
192 *His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,*
193 *Breathe soft or loud. And wave your tops, ye
pines,*
194 *With every plant, in sign of worship wave!*
195 *Fountains,⁷⁶ and ye that warble as ye flow,*

⁶⁷ attained, achieved, reached

⁶⁸ gleaming, bright

⁶⁹ flees (it)

⁷⁰ moves quickly (rotating once every twenty-four hours)

⁷¹ i.e., not having fixed orbits

⁷² the known planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, Jupiter

⁷³ in fourfold combination

⁷⁴ exhibit divergence

⁷⁵ not of different colors, but only of one

⁷⁶ more usually used for "streams, brooks," than in the modern meaning of a man-made device

196 *Melodious murmurs, warbling tune*⁷⁷ *His praise.*
 197 *Join voices, all ye living souls! Ye birds,*
 198 *That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,*
 199 *Bear on your wings, and in your notes, His praise.*
 200 *Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk*
 201 *The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,*
 202 *Witness*⁷⁸ *if I be silent, morn or ev'n,*
 203 *To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,*
 204 *Made vocal*⁷⁹ *by my song, and taught His praise.*
 205 *Hail, universal Lord, be bounteous still*⁸⁰
 206 *To give us only good. And if the night*
 207 *Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,*
 208 *Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!"*
 209 *So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts*
 210 *Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted*⁸¹ *calm.*
 211 *On to their morning's rural*⁸² *work they haste,*
 212 *Among sweet dews and flow'rs, where any row*
 213 *Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far*
 214 *Their pampered boughs,*⁸³ *and needed hands to*
 check
 215 *Fruitless*⁸⁴ *embraces.*⁸⁵ *Or they led the vine*
 216 *To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines*
 217 *Her marriageable arms, and with him brings*
 218 *Her dow'r, th' adopted*⁸⁶ *clusters,*⁸⁷ *to adorn*

⁷⁷ sing

⁷⁸ testify, give evidence

⁷⁹ made vocal = sounded, turned into/endowed with music

⁸⁰ always

⁸¹ accustomed, usual, habitual

⁸² agricultural, pastoral

⁸³ pampered boughs = crammed with boughs

⁸⁴ without offspring

⁸⁵ entangled branches?

⁸⁶ the elm becomes the stepparent of the vine's "children," her bunches of grapes

⁸⁷ bunches (of grapes)

219 *His barren⁸⁸ leaves. Them thus employed beheld*
 220 *With pity Heav'n's high King,⁸⁹ and to him called*
 221 *Raphael, the sociable Spirit that deigned*
 222 *To travel with Tobias, and secured*
 223 *His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.⁹⁰*
 224 *“Raphael,” said He, “thou hear'st what stir on*
 earth
 225 *Satan, from Hell 'scaped through the darksome*
 gulf,
 226 *Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed*
 227 *This night the human pair, how he designs⁹¹*
 228 *In them at once to ruin all mankind.*
 229 *Go, therefore: half this day as friend with friend*
 230 *Converse with Adam, in what bow'r or shade*
 231 *Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired,*
 232 *To respite⁹² his day-labor with repast⁹³*
 233 *Or with repose, and such discourse bring on*
 234 *As may advise him of his happy state,*
 235 *Happiness in his power left free to will,*
 236 *Left to his own free will, his will though free,*
 237 *Yet mutable.⁹⁴ Whence warn him to beware*
 238 *He swerve not, too secure.⁹⁵ Tell him withal⁹⁶*
 239 *His danger, and from whom—what enemy,*
 240 *Late fall'n himself from Heav'n, is plotting now*
 241 *The fall of others from like state of bliss.*

⁸⁸ unproductive

⁸⁹ “With pity, Heaven’s High King (God) beheld Adam and Eve thus employed”

⁹⁰ see Book IV, above, at lines 168–71

⁹¹ plans, schemes

⁹² relieve

⁹³ food, a meal

⁹⁴ unsettled, fickle, variable, subject to change or alteration

⁹⁵ confident

⁹⁶ moreover, in addition

242 *By violence? No, for that shall be withstood,⁹⁷*
 243 *But by deceit and lies. This let him know*
 244 *Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend⁹⁸*
 245 *Surprisal, unadmonished,⁹⁹ unforewarned.”*
 246 *So spoke the Eternal Father, and fulfilled¹⁰⁰*
 247 *All justice. Nor delayed the wingèd Saint*
 248 *After his charge¹⁰¹ received, but from among*
 249 *Thousand celestial Ardors,¹⁰² where he stood*
 250 *Veiled¹⁰³ with his gorgeous¹⁰⁴ wings, up springing*
 light,
 251 *Flew through the midst of Heav’n. Th’ angelic*
 choirs,
 252 *On each hand parting, to his speed gave way*
 253 *Through all th’ empyreal road, till at the gate*
 254 *Of Heav’n arrived, the gate self-opened wide*
 255 *On golden hinges turning, as by work*
 256 *Divine the sov’ reign Architect had framed.¹⁰⁵*
 257 *From hence no cloud, or to obstruct his sight,*
 258 *Star interposed,¹⁰⁶ however small, he sees,*
 259 *Not unconform¹⁰⁷ to other shining globes,*
 260 *Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars*
 crowned
 261 *Above all hills. As when by night the glass*
 262 *Of Galileo, less assured,¹⁰⁸ observes*

⁹⁷ resisted

⁹⁸ claim, put forward as an excuse

⁹⁹ unexhorted, uninformed

¹⁰⁰ satisfied, did, performed

¹⁰¹ order, responsibility

¹⁰² radiant spirits

¹⁰³ shrouded, covered

¹⁰⁴ brilliant, magnificent

¹⁰⁵ contrived, built, intended

¹⁰⁶ placed between

¹⁰⁷ corresponding

¹⁰⁸ competent

263 *Imagined lands and regions in the moon,*
 264 *Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades¹⁰⁹*
 265 *Delos¹¹⁰ or Samos¹¹¹ first appearing, kens¹¹²*
 266 *A cloudy spot. Down thither prone¹¹³ in flight*
 267 *He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky*
 268 *Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing*
 269 *Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan¹¹⁴*
 270 *Winnows¹¹⁵ the buxom¹¹⁶ air, till within soar¹¹⁷*
 271 *Of tow'ring eagles, to all the fowls he seems*
 272 *A phoenix,¹¹⁸ gazed¹¹⁹ by all as that sole¹²⁰ bird,*
 273 *When, to enshrine his¹²¹ relics in the sun's*
 274 *Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.*
 275 *At once on th' eastern cliff of Paradise*
 276 *He¹²² lights, and to his proper shape returns,*
 277 *A Seraph winged. Six wings he wore, to shade*
 278 *His lineaments¹²³ divine. The pair that clad*
 279 *Each shoulder broad, came mantling¹²⁴ o'er his*
 breast
 280 *With regal ornament; the middle pair*

¹⁰⁹ islands in the south Aegean Sea

¹¹⁰ Greek island

¹¹¹ island off the coast of Asia Minor

¹¹² sees, identifies

¹¹³ headlong

¹¹⁴ wing

¹¹⁵ beats

¹¹⁶ flexible, unresisting

¹¹⁷ the altitude attained in soaring

¹¹⁸ mythical bird that perpetually renews its life, first burning its old body, then being reborn from the ashes

¹¹⁹ stared at

¹²⁰ solitary

¹²¹ the phoenix's

¹²² Raphael

¹²³ features

¹²⁴ draped

281 *Girt like a starry zone*¹²⁵ *his waist, and round*
 282 *Skirted*¹²⁶ *his loins and thighs with downy*¹²⁷ *gold*
 283 *And colors dipped*¹²⁸ *in Heav'n; the third his feet*
 284 *Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,*
 285 *Sky-tinctured*¹²⁹ *grain.* ¹³⁰ *Like Maia's son*¹³¹ *he*
 stood
 286 *And shook his plumes,* ¹³² *that*¹³³ *Heav'nly*
 fragrance filled
 287 *The circuit wide.* ¹³⁴ *Straight knew him all the*
 bands
 288 *Of Angels under*¹³⁵ *watch, and to his state,*
 289 *And to his message high, in honor rise,*
 290 *For on some message high they guessed him*
 bound.
 291 *Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come*
 292 *Into the blissful*¹³⁶ *field, through groves of myrrh,*
 293 *And flowering odors, cassia, nard,*¹³⁷ *and balm—*
 294 *A wilderness of sweets. For Nature here*
 295 *Wantoned*¹³⁸ *as in her prime, and played at will*
 296 *Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,*
 297 *Wild above*¹³⁹ *rule or art, enormous bliss.*

¹²⁵ belt

¹²⁶ covered, bordered, edged

¹²⁷ soft

¹²⁸ dyed (by immersion)

¹²⁹ colored

¹³⁰ dye

¹³¹ Hermes

¹³² plumage, feathers

¹³³ so that

¹³⁴ circuit wide = wide surrounding space

¹³⁵ participating in, performing

¹³⁶ blessed, beatified

¹³⁷ an aromatic balsam

¹³⁸ sported, played

¹³⁹ beyond

298 *Him through the spicy¹⁴⁰ forest onward come*
 299 *Adam discerned, as in the door he sat*
 300 *Of his cool bow'r, while now the mounted sun*
 301 *Shot down direct his fervid¹⁴¹ rays to warm*
 302 *Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam*
 needs.
 303 *And Eve within, due¹⁴² at her hour prepared*
 304 *For dinner savory fruits, of taste to please*
 305 *True appetite, and not disrelish¹⁴³ thirst*
 306 *Of nectarous draughts between, from milky*
 stream,
 307 *Berry or grape. To whom thus Adam called:*
 308 *"Haste hither, Eve, and worth thy sight behold*
 309 *Eastward among those trees, what glorious shape*
 310 *Comes this way moving, seems another morn*
 311 *Ris'n on mid-noon! Some great behest¹⁴⁴ from*
 Heav'n
 312 *To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe¹⁴⁵*
 313 *This day to be our guest. But go with speed,*
 314 *And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour*
 315 *Abundance, fit to honor and receive*
 316 *Our Heav'nly stranger. Well we may afford*
 317 *Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow¹⁴⁶*
 318 *From large¹⁴⁷ bestowed, where Nature multiplies*
 319 *Her fertile growth, and by disburthening¹⁴⁸ grows*
 320 *More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare."¹⁴⁹*

¹⁴⁰ aromatic

¹⁴¹ burning, glowing

¹⁴² properly

¹⁴³ render distasteful

¹⁴⁴ command

¹⁴⁵ condescend

¹⁴⁶ confer as a gift

¹⁴⁷ liberality, bounty

¹⁴⁸ discharging its load

¹⁴⁹ hoard

321 *To whom thus Eve:*

“Adam, earth’s hallowed¹⁵⁰

mold,¹⁵¹

322 *Of God inspired, small store¹⁵² will serve,¹⁵³ where
store,*

323 *All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk,*

324 *Save what by frugal¹⁵⁴ storing¹⁵⁵ firmness gains*

325 *To nourish, and superfluous¹⁵⁶ moist¹⁵⁷ consumes.*

326 *But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,¹⁵⁸*

327 *Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such
choice*

328 *To entertain our Angel-guest, as he*

329 *Beholding shall confess, that here on earth*

330 *God hath dispensed His bounties as in Heav’n.”*

331 *So saying, with dispatchful¹⁵⁹ looks in haste*

332 *She turns, on hospitable¹⁶⁰ thoughts intent*

333 *What choice to choose for delicacy best,*

334 *What order, so contrived as not to mix*

335 *Tastes not well joined, inelegant, but bring*

336 *Taste after taste upheld¹⁶¹ with kindest¹⁶² change.*

337 *Bestirs¹⁶³ her then, and from each tender stalk*

¹⁵⁰ holy, sanctified

¹⁵¹ soil

¹⁵² supply

¹⁵³ suffice

¹⁵⁴ careful

¹⁵⁵ laying by

¹⁵⁶ (1) unneeded, (2) excessive

¹⁵⁷ moisture

¹⁵⁸ thicket

¹⁵⁹ hurried, quick

¹⁶⁰ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁶¹ sustained, supported, confirmed

¹⁶² most natural

¹⁶³ busies

- 338 *Whatever earth, all-bearing mother, yields*
 339 *In India east or west, or middle shore*¹⁶⁴
 340 *In Pontus*¹⁶⁵ *or the Punic*¹⁶⁶ *coast, or where*
 341 *Alcinous*¹⁶⁷ *reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat*
 342 *Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell,*
 343 *She gathers tribute*¹⁶⁸ *large, and on the board*¹⁶⁹
 344 *Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape*
 345 *She crushes, inoffensive must,*¹⁷⁰ *and mead*
 346 *From many a berry, and from sweet kernels*
 pressed
 347 *She tempers*¹⁷¹ *dulcet*¹⁷² *creams.*¹⁷³ *Nor these to*
 hold
 348 *Wants*¹⁷⁴ *her fit*¹⁷⁵ *vessels pure. Then strews the*
 ground
 349 *With rose and odors from the shrub unfumed.*¹⁷⁶
 350 *Meanwhile our primitive*¹⁷⁷ *great sire, to meet*
 351 *His godlike guest, walks forth, without more train*
 352 *Accompanied than with his own complete*
 353 *Perfections. In himself was all his state,*
 354 *More solemn*¹⁷⁸ *than the tedious pomp that waits*
 355 *On princes, when their rich retinue long*

¹⁶⁴ Mediterranean

¹⁶⁵ the Black Sea

¹⁶⁶ Carthaginian/Phoenician (North African)

¹⁶⁷ king of the Phaeacian island, now Corfu

¹⁶⁸ homage, tax

¹⁶⁹ table

¹⁷⁰ unfermented juice

¹⁷¹ mixes

¹⁷² sweet

¹⁷³ smooth (creamy) and frothing liquids

¹⁷⁴ lacks

¹⁷⁵ suitable, appropriate

¹⁷⁶ not burned, as incense would be, since there was as yet no fire available to burn them

¹⁷⁷ original

¹⁷⁸ grand, imposing

356 *Of horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,*
 357 *Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.*
 358 *Nearer his presence Adam, though not awed,*
 359 *Yet with submiss¹⁷⁹ approach and reverence meek,*
 360 *As to a superior nature bowing low,*
 361 *Thus said:*

“Native of Heav’n, for other place

362 *None can than Heav’n such glorious shape*
contain,

363 *Since by descending from the thrones above*
 364 *Those happy places thou hast deigned a while*
 365 *To want,¹⁸⁰ and honor these, vouchsafe¹⁸¹ with us*
 366 *Two only, who yet by sov’ reign gift possess*
 367 *This spacious ground, in yonder shady bow’r*
 368 *To rest, and what the garden choicest bears*
 369 *To sit and taste, till this meridian¹⁸² heat*
 370 *Be over, and the sun more cool decline.”¹⁸³*

371 *Whom thus the angelic Virtue¹⁸⁴ answered mild:*
 372 *“Adam, I therefore came, nor art thou such*
 373 *Created, or such place hast here to dwell,*
 374 *As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heav’n,*
 375 *To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bow’r*
 376 *O’ershades, for these mid-hours, till evening rise,*
 377 *I have at will.”¹⁸⁵ So to the sylvan¹⁸⁶ lodge*
 378 *They came, that like Pomona’s¹⁸⁷ arbor¹⁸⁸ smiled,*

¹⁷⁹ submissive, subdued

¹⁸⁰ lack

¹⁸¹ condescend

¹⁸² noontime, midday

¹⁸³ sink down

¹⁸⁴ seventh of the nine angelic orders

¹⁸⁵ at will = as I please

¹⁸⁶ pastoral

¹⁸⁷ Roman goddess of fruits

¹⁸⁸ orchard, bower

- 379 *With flow'rets decked, and fragrant smells. But*
Eve,
- 380 *Undecked save with herself, more lovely fair*
- 381 *Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess*
feigned¹⁸⁹
- 382 *Of three that in mount Ida naked strove,¹⁹⁰*
- 383 *Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n. No*
veil¹⁹¹
- 384 *She needed, virtue-proof: no thought infirm¹⁹²*
- 385 *Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel "Hail"*
- 386 *Bestowed, the holy salutation used*
- 387 *Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:*
- 388 *"Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb*
- 389 *Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons,*
- 390 *Than with these various fruits the trees of God*
- 391 *Have heaped this table!"*
- Raised of grassy turf*
- 392 *Their table was, and mossy seats had round,*
- 393 *And on her ample square¹⁹³ from side to side*
- 394 *All autumn piled, though spring and autumn here*
- 395 *Danced hand in hand. A while discourse they*
hold—
- 396 *No fear lest dinner cool—when thus began*
- 397 *Our author:¹⁹⁴*
- "Heav'nly stranger, please to taste*
- 398 *These bounties,¹⁹⁵ which our Nourisher, from*
whom

¹⁸⁹ (1) from fables rather than real, (2) sham, because pagan

¹⁹⁰ a beauty competition among Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite; Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, gave the prize to Aphrodite

¹⁹¹ "veil" could then mean "cloak" or "mantle"

¹⁹² weak, shaky

¹⁹³ table

¹⁹⁴ Adam

¹⁹⁵ generous gifts

399 *All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,*
 400 *To us for food and for delight hath caused*
 401 *The earth to yield—unsavory food perhaps*
 402 *To spiritual natures. Only this I know,*
 403 *That one celestial Father gives to all.”*
 404 *To whom the Angel:*
 “Therefore what He gives
 405 *(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part*¹⁹⁶
 406 *Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found*
 407 *No ungrateful*¹⁹⁷ *food. And food alike those pure*
 408 *Intelligential substances require,*
 409 *As doth your rational,*¹⁹⁸ *and both*¹⁹⁹ *contain*
 410 *Within them every lower faculty*
 411 *Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch,*
 taste,
 412 *Tasting concoct,*²⁰⁰ *digest, assimilate,*
 413 *And corporeal to incorporeal turn.*
 414 *For know, whatever was created, needs*
 415 *To be sustained and fed. Of elements*
 416 *The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,*
 417 *Earth and the sea feed air, the air those fires*
 418 *Ethereal, and as lowest first the moon,*
 419 *Whence in her visage round*²⁰¹ *those spots,*
 *unpurged*²⁰²
 420 *Vapors not yet into her substance turned.*
 421 *Nor doth the moon no nourishment exhale*

¹⁹⁶ in part = who is in part

¹⁹⁷ distasteful, unwelcome

¹⁹⁸ as “rational” creatures, human beings are required to (and can) think in order to know; their knowledge is therefore of necessity partial. “Intelligential” creatures, however, are endowed with complete knowledge that is of their very essence

¹⁹⁹ both angels and men

²⁰⁰ heat for digestive purposes

²⁰¹ [adjective]

²⁰² unpurified

- 422 *From her moist continent*²⁰³ *to higher orbs.*
 423 *The sun, that light imparts to all, receives*
 424 *From all*²⁰⁴ *his alimental*²⁰⁵ *recompence*
 425 *In humid exhalations, and at ev'n*²⁰⁶
 426 *Supps*²⁰⁷ *with the ocean. Though in Heav'n the trees*
 427 *Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines*
 428 *Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each*
 morn
 429 *We brush mellifluous*²⁰⁸ *dews, and find the ground*
 430 *Covered with pearly grain; yet God hath here*²⁰⁹
 431 *Varied His bounty so with new delights*
 432 *As may compare with Heaven, and to taste*
 433 *Think not I shall be nice."*²¹⁰ *So down they sat,*
 434 *And to their viands*²¹¹ *fell, nor seemingly*²¹²
 435 *The Angel, nor in mist,*²¹³ *the common gloss*²¹⁴
 436 *Of theologians, but with keen dispatch*
 437 *Of real*²¹⁵ *hunger, and concoctive*²¹⁶ *heat*
 438 *To transubstantiate.*²¹⁷ *What redounds,*²¹⁸
 *transpires*²¹⁹

²⁰³ land

²⁰⁴ everything else

²⁰⁵ nutritional

²⁰⁶ evening

²⁰⁷ dines

²⁰⁸ flowing as sweet as honey

²⁰⁹ on earth, in the Garden of Eden

²¹⁰ fussy

²¹¹ food

²¹² so far as one can judge

²¹³ in mist = blurred (as an immaterial object)

²¹⁴ interpretation, explanation

²¹⁵ [bisyllabic]

²¹⁶ see footnote 200, above

²¹⁷ to turn corporeal to incorporeal, i.e., to make spiritual that which was material

²¹⁸ is excessive, superfluous

²¹⁹ is emitted/breathed/vaporized (i.e., passes through their "bodies," is excreted)

439 *Through Spirits with ease—nor wonder, if by fire*
 440 *Of sooty coal the empiric²²⁰ alchemist*
 441 *Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,*
 442 *Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,*
 443 *As from²²¹ the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve*
 444 *Ministered²²² naked, and their flowing cups*
 445 *With pleasant liquors crowned.²²³ O innocence*
 446 *Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,*
 447 *Then had the sons of God excuse to have been*
 448 *Enamored at that sight. But in those hearts*
 449 *Love unlibidinous²²⁴ reigned, nor jealousy*
 450 *Was understood, the injured lover's hell.*
 451 *Thus when with meats²²⁵ and drinks they had*
 sufficed,
 452 *Not burdened Nature,²²⁶ sudden mind arose*
 453 *In Adam, not to let th' occasion pass*
 454 *Giv'n him by this great conference²²⁷ to know*
 455 *Of things above his world, and of their being*
 456 *Who dwell in Heav'n, whose excellence he saw*
 457 *Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,*
 458 *Divine effulgence,²²⁸ whose high power, so far*
 459 *Exceeded human. And his wary²²⁹ speech*
 460 *Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:²³⁰*
 461 *"Inhabitant with God, now know I well*

²²⁰ lower-ranking, merely experimentally oriented (rather than the higher, theoretically oriented)

²²¹ as from = just as if it had come from

²²² served

²²³ filled to overflowing

²²⁴ unlustful, unlecherous

²²⁵ food

²²⁶ i.e., their natures

²²⁷ conversation, meeting [trisyllabic, second accented]

²²⁸ splendid radiance

²²⁹ careful

²³⁰ shaped, articulated

462 *Thy favor, in this honor done to man,*
 463 *Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed²³¹*
 464 *To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,*
 465 *Food not of Angels, yet accepted so*
 466 *As that more willingly thou could'st not seem*
 467 *At Heav'n's high feasts t' have fed. Yet what*
 compare?"
 468 *To whom the wingèd Hierarch²³² replied:*
 469 *"O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom*
 470 *All things proceed, and up to Him return,*
 471 *If not depraved²³³ from good, created all*
 472 *Such to perfection, one first²³⁴ matter all,*
 473 *Endued²³⁵ with various forms, various degrees*
 474 *Of substance and, in things that live, of life,*
 475 *But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,*
 476 *As nearer to Him placed, or nearer tending*
 477 *Each in their several active spheres assigned,*
 478 *Till body up to spirit work, in bounds²³⁶*
 479 *Proportioned to each kind. So from the root*
 480 *Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the*
 leaves
 481 *More airy, last the bright consummate²³⁷ flower*
 482 *Spirits odorous breathes. Flow'rs and their fruit,*
 483 *Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,²³⁸*
 484 *To vital spirits aspire, to animal,*
 485 *To intellectual, give both life and sense,*
 486 *Fancy and understanding, whence the soul*

²³¹ condescended

²³² member of the hierarch (order) of angels [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

²³³ perverted, corrupted

²³⁴ earliest (primeval)

²³⁵ invested, supplied

²³⁶ upward jumps

²³⁷ completed, perfected, supreme

²³⁸ elevated, refined, purified

487 *Reason receives, and reason is her being,*
 488 *Discursive, or intuitive.²³⁹ Discourse*
 489 *Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,*
 490 *Differing but in degree, of kind the same.*
 491 *Wonder not then, what God for you saw good*
 492 *If I refuse not, but convert, as you,*
 493 *To proper substance. Time may come when men*
 494 *With Angels may participate, and find*
 495 *No inconvenient²⁴⁰ diet, nor too light fare.*
 496 *And from these corporal nutriments perhaps*
 497 *Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,*
 498 *Improved by tract²⁴¹ of time and, winged, ascend*
 499 *Ethereal, as we. Or may, at choice,*
 500 *Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell,*
 501 *If ye be found obedient, and retain*
 502 *Unalterably firm His love entire,*
 503 *Whose²⁴² progeny²⁴³ you are. Meanwhile enjoy*
 504 *Your fill what²⁴⁴ happiness this happy state*
 505 *Can comprehend, incapable of more.”*
 506 *To whom the patriarch of mankind replied:*
 507 *“O favorable Spirit, propitious²⁴⁵ guest,*
 508 *Well hast thou taught the way that might direct*
 509 *Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set*
 510 *From center to circumference, whereon,*
 511 *In contemplation of created things,*
 512 *By steps we may ascend to God. But say,*
 513 *What meant that caution joined,²⁴⁶ ‘If ye be found*

²³⁹ complete instantaneous knowledge requiring no prior thought

²⁴⁰ unsuitable, inappropriate

²⁴¹ duration

²⁴² He whose

²⁴³ offspring

²⁴⁴ of what

²⁴⁵ gracious, helpful

²⁴⁶ added, annexed

514 *Obedient? ' Can we want²⁴⁷ obedience then*
 515 *To Him, or possibly His love desert,*
 516 *Who formed us from the dust and placed us here*
 517 *Full to the utmost measure of what bliss*
 518 *Human desires can seek or apprehend? "*
 519 *To whom the Angel:*

"Son of Heav'n and earth,

520 *Attend:²⁴⁸ that thou art happy, owe to God;*
 521 *That thou continuest such, owe to thyself—*
 522 *That is, to thy obedience: therein stand.²⁴⁹*
 523 *This was that caution given thee: be advised.²⁵⁰*
 524 *God made thee perfect,²⁵¹ not immutable,²⁵²*
 525 *And good He made thee, but to persevere*
 526 *He left it in thy power, ordained thy will*
 527 *By nature free, not overruled by fate*
 528 *Inextricable,²⁵³ or strict necessity.*
 529 *Our voluntary service He requires,*
 530 *Not our necessitated. Such with Him*
 531 *Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how*
 532 *Can hearts, not free, be tried²⁵⁴ whether they serve*
 533 *Willing or no, who will but what they must²⁵⁵*
 534 *By destiny, and can no other choose?*
 535 *Myself, and all th' Angelic host that stand*
 536 *In sight of God enthroned, our happy state*
 537 *Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds,*
 538 *On other surety²⁵⁶ none. Freely we serve,*

²⁴⁷ lack

²⁴⁸ listen, follow me closely/carefully

²⁴⁹ remain firm/steady

²⁵⁰ hereby notified, warned

²⁵¹ complete

²⁵² unalterable

²⁵³ from which one cannot extricate oneself

²⁵⁴ tested

²⁵⁵ must will

²⁵⁶ guarantee

539 *Because we freely love, as in our will*
 540 *To love or not. In this we stand or fall,*
 541 *And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n,*
 542 *And so from Heav'n to deepest Hell. O fall²⁵⁷*
 543 *From what high state of bliss, into what woe!"*
 544 *To whom our great progenitor:²⁵⁸*

"Thy words

545 *Attentive, and with more delighted ear,*
 546 *Divine instructor, I have heard, than when*
 547 *Cherubic songs by night from neighboring hills*
 548 *Aerial music send. Nor knew I not*
 549 *To be both will and deed created free.*
 550 *Yet that we never shall forget to love*
 551 *Our Maker, and obey Him whose command,*
 552 *Single,²⁵⁹ is yet so just, my constant thoughts*
 553 *Assured me, and still assure. Though what thou*
 tellest
 554 *Hath passed in Heav'n, some doubt within me*
 move,²⁶⁰
 555 *But more desire to hear, if thou consent,*
 556 *The full relation,²⁶¹ which must needs be strange,*
 557 *Worthy of sacred²⁶² silence to be heard.*
 558 *And we have yet large²⁶³ day,²⁶⁴ for scarce the sun*
 559 *Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins*
 560 *His other half in the great zone²⁶⁵ of Heav'n."*
 561 *Thus Adam made request, and Raphael,*
 562 *After short pause assenting, thus began:*

²⁵⁷ [noun]

²⁵⁸ ancestor, forefather

²⁵⁹ command, single = single command

²⁶⁰ raise, stir up

²⁶¹ narrative

²⁶² dedicated

²⁶³ ample, abundant

²⁶⁴ daylight hours (since the angel has said, in line 376, that he will stay on earth "till evening rise")

²⁶⁵ region, encircling band

563 “*High matter thou enjoyn’st*²⁶⁶ *me, O prime*²⁶⁷
 of men,
 564 *Sad*²⁶⁸ *task and hard. For how shall I relate*
 565 *To human sense the invisible exploits*
 566 *Of warring Spirits? How, without remorse,*²⁶⁹
 567 *The ruin of so many, glorious once,*
 568 *And perfect while they stood? How last*²⁷⁰ *unfold*
 569 *The secrets of another world, perhaps*
 570 *Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good*
 571 *This is dispensed,*²⁷¹ *and what surmounts the*
 reach
 572 *Of human sense I shall delineate*²⁷² *so,*
 573 *By lik’ning spiritual to corporal forms,*
 574 *As may express them best. Though what if earth*
 575 *Be but a shadow*²⁷³ *of Heav’n, and things therein*
 576 *Each t’other like, more than on earth is thought?*
 577 “*As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild*
 578 *Reigned where these Heav’ns now roll, where*
 earth now rests
 579 *Upon her center poised, when on a day*
 580 *(For time, though in eternity, applied*
 581 *To motion, measures all things durable*
 582 *By present, past, and future), on such day*
 583 *As Heav’n’s great year*²⁷⁴ *brings forth, the*
 *empyreal*²⁷⁵ *host*

²⁶⁶ impose on

²⁶⁷ first, original

²⁶⁸ sober, serious

²⁶⁹ regretful remembrance

²⁷⁰ finally, last of all

²⁷¹ permitted

²⁷² sketch, draw, portray

²⁷³ for men, a foreshadowing

²⁷⁴ calculated by Plato, in his *Republic*, as approximately thirty-six thousand years (i.e., when all the heavenly bodies have returned to their created starting points)

²⁷⁵ celestial

584 *Of Angels by imperial summons called,*
 585 *Innumerable before the Almighty's throne*
 586 *Forthwith, from all the ends of Heav'n, appeared*
 587 *Under their Hierarchs²⁷⁶ in orders bright.*
 588 *Ten thousand thousand ensigns²⁷⁷ high advanced,*
 589 *Standards²⁷⁸ and gonfalons²⁷⁹ 'twixt van²⁸⁰ and rear*
 590 *Stream in the air, and for distinction serve²⁸¹*
 591 *Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees,*
 592 *Or in their glittering tissues²⁸² bear emblazed²⁸³*
 593 *Holy memorials,²⁸⁴ acts of zeal and love*
 594 *Recorded eminent.²⁸⁵ Thus when in orbs*
 595 *Of circuit inexpressible they stood,*
 596 *Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,*
 597 *By whom in bliss embosomed²⁸⁶ sat the Son,*
 598 *Amidst as²⁸⁷ from a flaming mount whose top*
 599 *Brightness had made invisible, thus spoke:*
 600 *“ ‘Hear, all ye Angels, progeny²⁸⁸ of light,*
 601 *Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,*
 Powers!
 602 *Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.²⁸⁹*

²⁷⁶ archangels

²⁷⁷ banners, flags

²⁷⁸ military banner or flag

²⁷⁹ banners with tails/streamers, suspended from a crossbar rather than a pole
²⁸⁰ front, foremost

²⁸¹ for distinction serve = used in order to distinguish

²⁸² fabric, cloth

²⁸³ inscribed

²⁸⁴ [trissyllabic, second accented]

²⁸⁵ prominently

²⁸⁶ enclosed

²⁸⁷ as if

²⁸⁸ offspring

²⁸⁹ unrevoked shall stand = shall stand unrevoked (not rescinded/annulled/withdrawn, etc.)

603 *This day I have begot²⁹⁰ whom²⁹¹ I declare*
 604 *My only Son, and on this holy hill*
 605 *Him have anointed, whom ye now behold*
 606 *At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,*
 607 *And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow*
 608 *All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess²⁹² him Lord.*
 609 *Under his great vice-gerent²⁹³ reign abide*
 610 *United, as one individual soul,*
 611 *Forever happy. Him who disobeys,*
 612 *Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day,*
 613 *Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls*
 614 *Into utter darkness, deep engulfed,²⁹⁴ his place*
 615 *Ordained without redemption, without end.'*
 616 *“So spoke the Omnipotent, and with His words*
 617 *All seemed well pleased—all seemed, but were not*
 all.
 618 *That day, as other solemn days, they spent*
 619 *In song and dance about the sacred hill,*
 620 *Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere*
 621 *Of planets, and of fixed,²⁹⁵ in all her wheels*
 622 *Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,*
 623 *Eccentric,²⁹⁶ intervolved,²⁹⁷ yet regular*
 624 *Then most when most irregular they seem.*
 625 *And in their motions harmony divine*
 626 *So smooths²⁹⁸ her²⁹⁹ charming tones,³⁰⁰ that God's*
 own ear

²⁹⁰ called into being

²⁹¹ he whom

²⁹² acknowledge, avow

²⁹³ gerent = ruler, manager

²⁹⁴ swallowed, buried

²⁹⁵ fixed stars

²⁹⁶ elliptical, irregular

²⁹⁷ interwound

²⁹⁸ frees from difficulties, invests with calm/placidity

²⁹⁹ harmony divine's

³⁰⁰ musical intervals

- 627 *Listens delighted. Ev'ning now approached*
 628 *(For we have also our ev'ning and our morn,*
 629 *We ours for change delectable,³⁰¹ not need).*
 630 *Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn*
 631 *Desirous, all in circles as they stood.*
 632 *Tables are set, and on a sudden piled*
 633 *With Angels' food, and rubied nectar flows*
 634 *In pearl, in diamond,³⁰² and massy gold,*
 635 *Fruit of delicious vines, the growth³⁰³ of Heav'n.*
 636 *On flow'rs reposed,³⁰⁴ and with fresh flow'rets*
 crowned,
 637 *They eat, they drink, and in communion³⁰⁵ sweet*
 638 *Quaff³⁰⁶ immortality and joy, secure*
 639 *Of³⁰⁷ surfeit where full measure only bounds³⁰⁸*
 640 *Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who*
 show'red
 641 *With copious³⁰⁹ hand, rejoicing in their joy.*
 642 *Now when ambrosial³¹⁰ night with clouds*
 exhaled
 643 *From that high mount of God, whence light and*
 shade
 644 *Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had*
 changed
 645 *To grateful³¹¹ twilight (for night comes not there*

³⁰¹ delightful

³⁰² [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

³⁰³ produce, product

³⁰⁴ inclining, resting

³⁰⁵ fellowship, sharing

³⁰⁶ drink deeply of

³⁰⁷ secure of = safe from

³⁰⁸ limits

³⁰⁹ abundant

³¹⁰ (1) celestial, (2) divinely fragrant

³¹¹ pleasing, agreeable

646 *In darker veil), and roseate³¹² dewes disposed³¹³*
 647 *All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest.*
 648 *Wide over all the plain, and wider far*
 649 *Than all this globous³¹⁴ earth in plain outspread*
 650 *(Such are the courts of God), th' Angelic throng,*
 651 *Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend*
 652 *By living³¹⁵ streams among the trees of life,*
 653 *Pavilions³¹⁶ numberless, and sudden reared,*
 654 *Celestial tabernacles³¹⁷ where they slept,*
 655 *Fanned with cool winds, save those who, in their*
 course,³¹⁸
 656 *Melodious hymns about the sov'reign throne*
 657 *Alternate all night long. But not so waked*
 658 *Satan—so call him now, his former name*
 659 *Is heard no more in Heav'n. He of³¹⁹ the first,*
 660 *If not the first Arch-Angel, great in power,*
 661 *In favor and pre-eminence, yet fraught³²⁰*
 662 *With envy against the Son of God, that day*
 663 *Honored by his great Father, and proclaimed*
 664 *Messiah, King anointed, could not bear*
 665 *Through pride that sight, and thought himself*
 impaired.³²¹
 666 *Deep malice thence conceiving, and disdain,*
 667 *Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour*
 668 *Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved*

³¹² (1) rose-colored, (2) rose-scented

³¹³ inclined, prepared

³¹⁴ spherical, globular

³¹⁵ (1) constantly flowing, (2) refreshing

³¹⁶ a kind of large tent

³¹⁷ tents

³¹⁸ turn, customary practice

³¹⁹ among

³²⁰ filled

³²¹ lessened

669 *With all his legions to dislodge,³²² and leave*
 670 *Unworshipped, unbeyed, the throne supreme,*
 671 *Contemptuous. And his next subordinate³²³*
 672 *Awak'ning, thus to him in secret spoke:*
 673 *“ ‘Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep*
 can close
 674 *Thy eye-lids, and³²⁴ rememb'rest what decree*
 675 *Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips*
 676 *Of Heav'n's Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts*
 677 *Wast wont,³²⁵ I mine to thee was wont t' impart.³²⁶*
 678 *Both waking,³²⁷ we were one. How then can now*
 679 *Thy sleep dissent?³²⁸ New laws thou see'st*
 imposed:
 680 *New laws from Him who reigns, new minds may*
 raise
 681 *In us who serve, new counsels to debate*
 682 *What doubtful may ensue. More in this place*
 683 *To utter is not safe. Assemble thou*
 684 *Of all those myriads³²⁹ which we lead the chief.³³⁰*
 685 *Tell them that by command, ere yet dim night*
 686 *Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,³³¹*
 687 *And all who under me their banners wave,*
 688 *Homeward, with flying³³² march, where we*
 possess³³³

³²² leave one's place of lodging (break camp)

³²³ Beelzebub

³²⁴ if you

³²⁵ in the habit of

³²⁶ make known, communicate

³²⁷ both waking = both of us awake

³²⁸ disagree, be at variance

³²⁹ countless numbers

³³⁰ the chief = the best part

³³¹ I am to haste . . . homeward = I will hurry . . . home

³³² (1) swift, (2) literally flying (through the air)

³³³ hold, occupy

689 *The quarters³³⁴ of the North, there to prepare*
 690 *Fit entertainment to receive our King,*
 691 *The great Messiah, and his new commands,*
 692 *Who speedily through all the hierarchies³³⁵*
 693 *Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.'*
 694 *“So spoke the false Arch-Angel, and infused³³⁶*
 695 *Bad influence³³⁷ into th' unwary breast*
 696 *Of his associate. He³³⁸ together calls,*
 697 *Or several³³⁹ one by one,³⁴⁰ the regent³⁴¹ Powers*
 698 *Under him Regent,³⁴² tells, as he was taught,*
 699 *That the Most High commanding, now ere night,*
 700 *Now ere dim night had disincumbered³⁴³ Heav'n,*
 701 *The great hierarchal standard³⁴⁴ was to move;*
 702 *Tells the suggested cause, and casts between*
 703 *Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound³⁴⁵*
 704 *Or taint³⁴⁶ integrity. But all obeyed*
 705 *The wonted³⁴⁷ signal and superior voice³⁴⁸*
 706 *Of their great Potentate,³⁴⁹ for great indeed*
 707 *His name, and high was his degree³⁵⁰ in Heav'n.*

³³⁴ (1) headquarters, (2) regions

³³⁵ angelic orders

³³⁶ insinuated

³³⁷ [trissyllabic, second accented]

³³⁸ Beelzebub

³³⁹ separately

³⁴⁰ “He calls together, or else speaks to them separately, or one by one”

³⁴¹ controlling, governing

³⁴² under him Regent = which were Regents under him

³⁴³ freed

³⁴⁴ ensign of the hierarchy

³⁴⁵ test

³⁴⁶ corrupt

³⁴⁷ familiar

³⁴⁸ command, will, right

³⁴⁹ person with great and independent power, a ruler

³⁵⁰ rank

708 *His count'nance, as the morning-star that guides*
 709 *The starry flock, allured³⁵¹ them, and with lies*
 710 *Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's host.*
 711 *Meanwhile th' Eternal eye, whose sight discerns*
 712 *Abstrusest³⁵² thoughts, from forth His holy mount*
 713 *And from within the golden lamps that burn*
 714 *Nightly before Him, saw without their light*
 715 *Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread*
 716 *Among the sons of morn, what multitudes*
 717 *Were banded to oppose His high decree*
 718 *And, smiling, to His only Son thus said:*
 719 *“ ‘Son, thou in whom my glory I behold*
 720 *In full resplendence, heir of all my might,*
 721 *Nearly³⁵³ it now concerns us to be sure*
 722 *Of our omnipotence, and with what arms*
 723 *We mean to hold what anciently³⁵⁴ we claim*
 724 *Of deity or empire. Such a foe*
 725 *Is rising who intends t' erect his throne*
 726 *Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North,*
 727 *Nor so content, hath in his thought to try*
 728 *In battle what our power is, or our right.*
 729 *Let us advise,³⁵⁵ and to this hazard³⁵⁶ draw*
 730 *With speed what force is left, and all employ*
 731 *In our defence, lest unawares we lose*
 732 *This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.’*
 733 *To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear,*
 734 *Ligh'tning divine, ineffable,³⁵⁷ serene,*

³⁵¹ charmed, tempted

³⁵² the most hidden

³⁵³ particularly

³⁵⁴ of long standing

³⁵⁵ consider, reflect

³⁵⁶ peril

³⁵⁷ inexpressible

735 *Made answer:*
 ‘Mighty Father, Thou Thy foes
 736 *Justly hast in derision and, secure,*³⁵⁸
 737 *Laugh’st at their vain designs and tumults*³⁵⁹ *vain,*
 738 *Matter to me of glory, whom their hate*
 739 *Illustrates,*³⁶⁰ *when they see all regal power*
 740 *Giv’n me, to quell*³⁶¹ *their pride,*³⁶² *and in event*³⁶³
 741 *Know whether I be dextrous*³⁶⁴ *to subdue*
 742 *Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heav’n.’*
 743 *“So spoke the Son. But Satan, with his Powers,*
 744 *Far was advanced on*³⁶⁵ *wingèd speed, an host*
 745 *Innumerable*³⁶⁶ *as the stars of night,*
 746 *Or stars of morning, dew-drops, which the sun*
 747 *Impearls on every leaf and every flower.*
 748 *Regions they passed, the mighty regencies*
 749 *Of Seraphim, and Potentates, and Thrones*
 750 *In their triple degrees*³⁶⁷ *—regions to which*
 751 *All thy dominion, Adam, is no more*
 752 *Than what this garden is to all the earth*
 753 *And all the sea, from one entire globose*³⁶⁸
 754 *Stretched into longitude*³⁶⁹ *—which, having*
 passed,

³⁵⁸ safe

³⁵⁹ commotions, agitations

³⁶⁰ makes illustrious

³⁶¹ put an end to, suppress, destroy

³⁶² matter to me of glory . . . to quell their pride

³⁶³ in event = in the occurrence

³⁶⁴ adroit, skillful

³⁶⁵ with

³⁶⁶ [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

³⁶⁷ the nine angelic orders were at one time said to be divided into three sub-groupings

³⁶⁸ having the form of a globe

³⁶⁹ stretched into longitude = stretched lengthwise

755 *At length into the limits³⁷⁰ of the North*
 756 *They came. And Satan to his royal seat*
 757 *High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount*
 758 *Raised on a mount, with pyramids and tow'rs*
 759 *From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold,*
 760 *The palace of great Lucifer (so call*
 761 *That structure, in the dialect of men*
 762 *Interpreted)³⁷¹ which, not long after, he*
 763 *(Affecting all equality with God)*
 764 *In imitation of that mount whereon*
 765 *Messiah was declared, in sight of Heav'n,*
 766 *The Mountain of the Congregation called,*
 767 *For thither he assembled all his train,*
 768 *Pretending³⁷² so commanded to consult*
 769 *About the great reception of their King,*
 770 *Thither to come, and with calumnious³⁷³ art*
 771 *Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:*
 772 *“ ‘Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,*
 Powers—
 773 *If these magnificent titles yet remain*
 774 *Not merely titular,³⁷⁴ since by decree*
 775 *Another now hath to himself engrossed³⁷⁵*
 776 *All power, and us eclipsed under the name*
 777 *Of King anointed, for whom all this haste*
 778 *Of midnight-march and hurried meeting here,*
 779 *This only to consult how we may best,*
 780 *With what may be devised of honors new,*
 781 *Receive him coming to receive from us*
 782 *Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile!*

³⁷⁰ territories, bounds

³⁷¹ explained, translated

³⁷² claiming, feigning

³⁷³ false, slanderous

³⁷⁴ having the name, but not the reality

³⁷⁵ collected

783 *Too much to one! But double how endured,*
 784 *To one and to His image³⁷⁶ now proclaimed?*
 785 *But what if better counsels might erect³⁷⁷*
 786 *Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?*
 787 *Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend*
 788 *The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust*
 789 *To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves*
 790 *Natives and sons of Heav'n, possessed before*
 791 *By none, and if not equal all, yet free,*
 792 *Equally free, for orders and degrees*
 793 *Jar not with liberty, but well consist.³⁷⁸*
 794 *Who can in reason, then, or right, assume*
 795 *Monarchy over such as live by right*
 796 *His equals, if in power and splendor less,*
 797 *In freedom equal? Or can introduce*
 798 *Law and edict on us, who without law*
 799 *Err not? Much less for this to be our Lord*
 800 *And look for adoration, to th' abuse³⁷⁹*
 801 *Of those imperial titles which assert*
 802 *Our being ordained to govern, not to serve.'*
 803 *“Thus far his bold discourse without control³⁸⁰*
 804 *Had audience, when among the Seraphim*
 805 *Abdiel,³⁸¹ than whom none with more zeal adored*
 806 *The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,*
 807 *Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe³⁸²*
 808 *The current³⁸³ of his fury thus opposed:*
 809 *“ ‘O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!*

³⁷⁶ artificial representation, copy, counterpart, portrait

³⁷⁷ raise

³⁷⁸ well consist = are consistent

³⁷⁹ perversion, corruption, misuse

³⁸⁰ check

³⁸¹ “to boil”

³⁸² stringent, rigorous

³⁸³ flowing

810 *Words which no ear ever to hear in Heav'n*
 811 *Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,*
 812 *In place thyself so high above thy peers.*
 813 *Canst thou with impious obloquy³⁸⁴ condemn*
 814 *The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,*
 815 *That to His only Son, by right endued³⁸⁵*
 816 *With regal scepter, every soul in Heav'n*
 817 *Shall bend the knee, and in that honor due³⁸⁶*
 818 *Confess³⁸⁷ him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,*
 819 *Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,*
 820 *And equal over equals to let reign,*
 821 *One over all with unsucceeded³⁸⁸ power.*
 822 *Shalt thou give law to God? Shalt thou dispute*
 823 *With Him the points of liberty, who made*
 824 *Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of*
 Heav'n
 825 *Such as He pleased, and circumscribed³⁸⁹ their*
 being?
 826 *Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,*
 827 *And of our good and of our dignity*
 828 *How provident³⁹⁰ He is, how far from thought*
 829 *To make us less, bent³⁹¹ rather to exalt*
 830 *Our happy state, under one head more near³⁹²*
 831 *United. But to grant it thee unjust³⁹³*

³⁸⁴ speaking evil

³⁸⁵ invested

³⁸⁶ fit, proper, owed

³⁸⁷ acknowledge, avow

³⁸⁸ uninherited

³⁸⁹ marked out the limits of

³⁹⁰ careful

³⁹¹ inclined

³⁹² nearly

³⁹³ to be unjust

832 *That equal over equals monarch reign:*
 833 *Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou*
 count—
 834 *Or all Angelic nature joined in one—*
 835 *Equal to him, begotten Son? By whom,*
 836 *As by His Word, the Mighty Father made*
 837 *All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n*
 838 *By Him created in their bright degrees,*
 839 *Crowned them with glory, and to their glory*
 named
 840 *Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,*
 Powers,
 841 *Essential Powers, nor by His reign obscured³⁹⁴*
 842 *But more illustrious made, since He the head*
 843 *One of our number thus reduced becomes,*
 844 *His laws our laws, all honor to Him done*
 845 *Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,*
 846 *And tempt not these,³⁹⁵ but hasten to appease³⁹⁶*
 847 *Th' incensèd Father and th' incensèd Son,*
 848 *While pardon may be found, in time³⁹⁷ besought.'*
 849 *“So spoke the fervent³⁹⁸ Angel, but his zeal*
 850 *None seconded, as out of season³⁹⁹ judged,*
 851 *Or singular⁴⁰⁰ and rash.⁴⁰¹ Whereat rejoiced*
 852 *Th' apostate and, more haughty, thus replied:*
 853 *“That we were formed then, say'st thou? And*
 the work

³⁹⁴ dimmed, darkened

³⁹⁵ these others

³⁹⁶ pacify, mollify

³⁹⁷ in time = if in time

³⁹⁸ ardent, intensely earnest

³⁹⁹ out of season = inopportune, unseasonable, not at the right time

⁴⁰⁰ just him

⁴⁰¹ hasty, impetuous

854 *Of secondary*⁴⁰² *hands, by task transferred*
 855 *From Father to His Son? Strange*⁴⁰³ *point and new!*
 856 *Doctrine which we would know whence learned.*
 Who saw
 857 *When this creation was? Remember 'st thou*
 858 *Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?*
 859 *We know no time when we were not as now,*
 860 *Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised*
 861 *By our own quick'ning*⁴⁰⁴ *power, when fatal*⁴⁰⁵
 course
 862 *Had circled his full orb, the birth mature*⁴⁰⁶
 863 *Of this our native Heav'n, ethereal*⁴⁰⁷ *sons.*
 864 *Our puissance*⁴⁰⁸ *is our own: our own right hand*
 865 *Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try*
 866 *Who is our equal. Then thou shalt behold*
 867 *Whether by supplication we intend*
 868 *Address,*⁴⁰⁹ *and to begirt*⁴¹⁰ *th' Almighty throne*
 869 *Beseeking or besieging. This report,*
 870 *These tidings carry to th' anointed King,*
 871 *And fly,*⁴¹¹ *ere evil intercept thy flight.'*
 872 *"He said, and as the sound of waters deep*
 873 *Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause,*⁴¹²
 874 *Through the infinite host. Nor less for that*
 875 *The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone,*

⁴⁰² second-best, second-class, subsidiary, auxiliary

⁴⁰³ unfamiliar

⁴⁰⁴ life-giving, animating

⁴⁰⁵ destined, fated

⁴⁰⁶ complete

⁴⁰⁷ celestial

⁴⁰⁸ power

⁴⁰⁹ the act of addressing someone

⁴¹⁰ surround

⁴¹¹ (1) flee, (2) fly on wings

⁴¹² "hoarse murmur echoed applause to his words"

876 *Encompassed round with foes, thus answered*
bold:
877 “ ‘O alienate⁴¹³ from God, O Spirit accursed,
878 *Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall*
879 *Determined,⁴¹⁴ and thy hapless⁴¹⁵ crew involved*
880 *In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread*
881 *Both of thy crime and punishment. Henceforth*
882 *No more be troubled how to quit the yoke*
883 *Of God’s Messiah. Those indulgent⁴¹⁶ laws*
884 *Will not be now vouchsafed;⁴¹⁷ other decrees*
885 *Against thee are gone forth without recall.*
886 *That golden scepter, which thou did’st reject,*
887 *Is now an iron rod to bruise⁴¹⁸ and break*
888 *Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise.⁴¹⁹*
889 *Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly*
890 *These wicked tents devoted,⁴²⁰ lest the wrath*
891 *Impendent,⁴²¹ raging into sudden flame,*
892 *Distinguish not.⁴²² For soon expect to feel*
893 *His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.*
894 *Then who created thee lamenting learn,*
895 *When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.’*
896 “*So spoke the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found*
897 *Among the faithless, faithful only he,*
898 *Among innumerable false. Unmoved,*
899 *Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,*
900 *His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal,*

⁴¹³ estranged

⁴¹⁴ settled, decided

⁴¹⁵ luckless

⁴¹⁶ lenient

⁴¹⁷ bestowed, conferred

⁴¹⁸ crush, smash

⁴¹⁹ advise me (to leave)

⁴²⁰ (1) dedicated (to evil), (2) doomed

⁴²¹ overhanging, imminent

⁴²² distinguish not = not distinguish between you and me

901 *Nor number, nor example, with him wrought*⁴²³
902 *To swerve from truth, or change his constant*
mind,
903 *Though single.*⁴²⁴ *From amidst them forth he*
passed,
904 *Long way through hostile scorn, which he*
sustained
905 *Superior, nor of violence*⁴²⁵ *feared aught,*
906 *And with retorted*⁴²⁶ *scorn, his back he turned*
907 *On those proud tow'rs to swift destruction*
doomed."

The End of the Fifth Book

⁴²³ worked

⁴²⁴ alone

⁴²⁵ [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁴²⁶ returned, cast back

BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his Angels. The first fight described: Satan and his Powers retire under night; he calls a council, invents devilish engines,¹ which in the second day's fight put Michael and his Angels to some disorder, but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan.

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

¹ machines, mechanical devices

1 *“All night the dreadful² Angel,³ unpursued,*
 2 *Through Heav’n’s wide champaign⁴ held his way,*
 till morn,
 3 *Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand*
 4 *Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave*
 5 *Within the mount of God, fast by⁵ His throne,*
 6 *Where light and darkness in perpetual round*
 7 *Lodge⁶ and dislodge⁷ by turns, which makes*
 through Heav’n
 8 *Grateful⁸ vicissitude,⁹ like day and night.*
 9 *Light issues forth, and at the other door*
 10 *Obsequious¹⁰ darkness enters, till her hour*
 11 *To veil the Heav’n, though darkness there might*
 well
 12 *Seem twilight here. And now went forth the morn*
 13 *Such as¹¹ in highest Heav’n, arrayed in gold*
 14 *Empyrean.¹² From before her vanished night,*
 15 *Shot through with orient¹³ beams. When all the*
 plain¹⁴
 16 *Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,*
 17 *Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,*
 18 *Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his¹⁵ view,*

² fearless

³ Abdiel

⁴ open country

⁵ fast by = very near

⁶ reside

⁷ go away

⁸ pleasing

⁹ mutation

¹⁰ obedient, dutiful

¹¹ as it is

¹² celestial

¹³ brightly shining

¹⁴ [when all the plain (lines 15 ff.) = subject; met his view (line 18) = verb]

¹⁵ Abdiel’s

19 *War he perceived, war in procinct,¹⁶ and found*
 20 *Already known what he for news had thought*
 21 *To have reported. Gladly then he mixed*
 22 *Among those friendly Powers, who him received*
 23 *With joy and acclamations loud—that one*
 24 *That of so many myriads¹⁷ fall'n—yet one*
 25 *Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill*
 26 *They led him, high applauded, and present¹⁸*
 27 *Before the seat supreme, from whence a voice,*
 28 *From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:*
 29 *“ ‘Servant of God, well done, well hast thou*
 fought
 30 *The better fight, who single hast maintained*
 31 *Against revolted multitudes the cause*
 32 *Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,*
 33 *And for the testimony of truth hast borne*
 34 *Universal reproach, far worse to bear*
 35 *Than violence. For this was all thy care,*
 36 *To stand approved¹⁹ in sight of God, though*
 worlds
 37 *Judged thee perverse.²⁰ The easier conquest now*
 38 *Remains²¹ thee, aided by this host of friends,*
 39 *Back on thy foes more glorious to return*
 40 *Than, scorned, thou didst depart, and to subdue*
 41 *By force, who reason for their law refuse,*
 42 *Right reason for their law, and for their King*
 43 *Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.*
 44 *“ ‘Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,*

¹⁶ readiness, preparation

¹⁷ countless numbers

¹⁸ present him [verb, in the present tense]

¹⁹ valued, good

²⁰ incorrect, wicked

²¹ remains to

45 *And thou, in military prowess next,*
 46 *Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons*
 47 *Invincible, lead forth my armèd Saints,*
 48 *By thousands and by millions, ranged for fight,*
 49 *Equal in number to that Godless crew*
 50 *Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms*
 51 *Fearless assault,²² and to the brow²³ of Heav'n*
 52 *Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss,*
 53 *Into their place of punishment, the gulf*
 54 *Of Tartarus,²⁴ which ready opens wide*
 55 *His fiery chaos to receive their fall.'*
 56 *“So spoke the Sov'reign Voice, and clouds*
 began
 57 *To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll*
 58 *In dusky wreaths, reluctant²⁵ flames, the sign*
 59 *Of wrath awaked, nor with less dread²⁶ the loud*
 60 *Ethereal trumpet from on high 'gan blow.*
 61 *At which command the Powers militant*
 62 *That stood²⁷ for Heav'n, in mighty quadrate²⁸*
 joined
 63 *Of union irresistible, moved on*
 64 *In silence their bright legions, to the sound*
 65 *Of instrumental harmony that breathed*
 66 *Heroic ardor to advent'rous deeds*
 67 *Under their godlike leaders, in the cause*
 68 *Of God and His Messiah. On they move*

²² [verb]

²³ cliff edge

²⁴ lowest region of Hades/Hell

²⁵ writhing

²⁶ fear, awe, reverence

²⁷ were drawn up for battle

²⁸ square formation

- 69 *Indissolubly firm, nor²⁹ obvious³⁰ hill,*
 70 *Nor straitening³¹ vale, nor wood, nor stream,*
 divides
 71 *Their perfect ranks, for high above the ground*
 72 *Their march was, and the passive³² air upbore*
 73 *Their nimble³³ tread. As when the total kind³⁴*
 74 *Of birds, in orderly array on wing,*
 75 *Came summoned over Eden to receive*
 76 *Their names of thee,³⁵ so over many a tract³⁶*
 77 *Of Heav'n they marched, and many a province*
 wide,
 78 *Tenfold the length of this terrene.³⁷ At last,*
 79 *Far in the horizon to the north appeared*
 80 *From skirt³⁸ to skirt a fiery region, stretched*
 81 *In battailous³⁹ aspect, and nearer view⁴⁰*
 82 *Bristled with upright beams⁴¹ innumerable*
 83 *Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged,⁴² and*
 shields
 84 *Various, with boastful argument⁴³ portrayed,⁴⁴*

²⁹ and neither

³⁰ obstructing

³¹ constricting

³² quiescent, unresisting

³³ quick

³⁴ race, species

³⁵ Adam

³⁶ stretch/extent of land, region

³⁷ earth

³⁸ border

³⁹ ready/eager for battle [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁴⁰ on nearer view

⁴¹ upright beams = the upright poles

⁴² crowded

⁴³ statements, slogans, arguments

⁴⁴ painted, adorned

85 *The banded Powers of Satan hasting on*
 86 *With furious⁴⁵ expedition,⁴⁶ for they weened⁴⁷*
 87 *That self-same day, by fight or by surprise,*
 88 *To win the mount of God, and on His throne*
 89 *To set the envier of His state, the proud*
 90 *Aspirer. But their thoughts proved fond⁴⁸ and*
 vain
 91 *In the mid way,⁴⁹ though strange to us it seemed*
 92 *At first, that Angel should with Angel war,*
 93 *And in fierce hosting⁵⁰ meet, who wont to⁵¹ meet*
 94 *So oft in festivals of joy and love*
 95 *Unanimous,⁵² as sons of one great Sire,*
 96 *Hymning th' Eternal Father. But the shout*
 97 *Of battle now began, and rushing sound*
 98 *Of onset ended soon each milder thought.*
 99 *High in the midst, exalted as a god,*
 100 *Th' apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,*
 101 *Idol of majesty divine, enclosed*
 102 *With flaming Cherubim, and golden shields.*
 103 *Then lighted⁵³ from his gorgeous throne, for now*
 104 *'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,*
 105 *A dreadful⁵⁴ interval,⁵⁵ and front to front*
 106 *Presented stood in terrible array*

⁴⁵ wild, mad

⁴⁶ speed

⁴⁷ thought, expected

⁴⁸ foolish

⁴⁹ "when they were halfway there"

⁵⁰ hostile encounter

⁵¹ wont to = usually

⁵² like-minded

⁵³ descended

⁵⁴ fearful, terrible

⁵⁵ open space

IO7 *Of hideous length. Before the cloudy⁵⁶ van,⁵⁷*
 IO8 *On the rough⁵⁸ edge of battle ere it joined,*
 IO9 *Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,*
 IIO *Came tow'ring, armed in adamant and gold.*
 III *Abdiel that sight endured not, where he stood*
 I12 *Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,*
 I13 *And thus his own undaunted heart explores:*
 I14 *“ ‘O Heav'n! that such resemblance of the*
 Highest
 I15 *Should yet remain, where faith and realty⁵⁹*
 I16 *Remain not. Wherefore should not strength and*
 might
 I17 *There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove*
 I18 *Where boldest, though to fight unconquerable?*
 I19 *His puissance, trusting⁶⁰ in th' Almighty's aid,*
 I20 *I mean to try,⁶¹ whose reason I have tried*
 I21 *Unsound and false, nor is it aught but just*
 I22 *That he, who in debate of truth hath won,*
 I23 *Should win in arms, in both disputes alike*
 I24 *Victor, though brutish⁶² that contest⁶³ and foul,⁶⁴*
 I25 *When reason hath to deal with force, yet so*
 I26 *Most reason is that reason overcome.'*
 I27 *So pondering, and from his armèd peers*
 I28 *Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met*
 I29 *His daring foe, at this prevention⁶⁵ more*

⁵⁶ darkened by ignorance, anger, etc.

⁵⁷ foremost part

⁵⁸ bristling

⁵⁹ loyalty, devotion, honesty [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁶⁰ (Abdiel, not Satan, is trusting in God)

⁶¹ test, probe

⁶² savage

⁶³ [second syllable accented]

⁶⁴ wicked, dirty, offensive

⁶⁵ (1) obstruction, obstacle, (2) confrontation

130 *Incensed,⁶⁶ and thus securely him⁶⁷ defied:*
 131 *“ ‘Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have*
 reached
 132 *The height of thy aspiring unopposed,*
 133 *The throne of God unguarded, and His side*
 134 *Abandoned, at the terror of thy power*
 135 *Or potent tongue. Fool! Not to think how vain*
 136 *Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms,*
 137 *Who out of smallest things could, without end,*
 138 *Have raised incessant armies to defeat*
 139 *Thy folly, or with solitary hand,*
 140 *Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow*
 141 *Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed⁶⁸*
 142 *Thy legions under darkness. But thou see’st*
 143 *All are not of thy train.⁶⁹ There be who⁷⁰ faith*
 144 *Prefer, and piety to God, though then*
 145 *To thee not visible when I alone*
 146 *Seemed in thy world erroneous⁷¹ to dissent*
 147 *From all. My sect⁷² thou see’st. Now learn too late*
 148 *How few⁷³ sometimes may know, when thousands*
 err.’
 149 *Whom the grand⁷⁴ foe, with scornful eye askance,⁷⁵*
 150 *Thus answered:*
 “ ‘Ill for thee, but in wished hour
 151 *Of my revenge, first sought for. Thou return’st*

⁶⁶ is Abdiel incensed at Satan? or Satan at Abdiel?

⁶⁷ Satan

⁶⁸ submerged, buried, completely covered

⁶⁹ (1) course, (2) following

⁷⁰ those who

⁷¹ misguided, mistaken

⁷² party

⁷³ a few

⁷⁴ principal, great

⁷⁵ (1) sideways, (2) askew, asquint

152 *From flight, seditious⁷⁶ Angel! to receive*
 153 *Thy merited reward, the first assay⁷⁷*
 154 *Of this right hand provoked, since first that*
 tongue,
 155 *Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose*
 156 *A third part of the gods, in synod met*
 157 *Their deities to assert,⁷⁸ who while they feel*
 158 *Vigor divine within them, can allow*
 159 *Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st*
 160 *Before thy fellows, ambitious to win*
 161 *From me some plume,⁷⁹ that thy success⁸⁰ may*
 show
 162 *Destruction⁸¹ to the rest. This pause between*
 163 *(Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know:*
 164 *At first I thought that liberty and Heav'n*
 165 *To Heav'nly souls had been all one, but now*
 166 *I see that most through sloth had rather serve,*
 167 *Minist'ring Spirits, trained up in feast and song!*
 168 *Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of Heav'n,*
 169 *Servility with freedom to contend,*
 170 *As both their deeds compared this day shall*
 prove.'
 171 *To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern replied:*
 172 *" 'Apostate! Still thou err'st, nor end wilt find*
 173 *Of erring, from the path of truth remote.*
 174 *Unjustly thou deprav'st⁸² it with the name*
 175 *Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,*

⁷⁶ rebelling

⁷⁷ (1) assault, (2) test

⁷⁸ (1) free, (2) claim

⁷⁹ reward

⁸⁰ result, outcome

⁸¹ slaughter

⁸² corrupt

176 *Or Nature: God and Nature bid⁸³ the same,*
 177 *When he who rules is worthiest, and excels*
 178 *Them whom he governs. This is servitude,*
 179 *To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled*
 180 *Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,*
 181 *Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled.⁸⁴*
 182 *Yet lewdly⁸⁵ dar'st our minist'ring⁸⁶ upbraid.⁸⁷*
 183 *Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom! Let me serve*
 184 *In Heav'n God ever blest, and His divine*
 185 *Behests⁸⁸ obey, worthiest to be obeyed.*
 186 *Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect.*
 Meanwhile,
 187 *From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from*
 flight,
 188 *This greeting on thy impious crest⁸⁹ receive.'*
 189 *"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,*
 190 *Which hung not, but so swift with tempest⁹⁰ fell*
 191 *On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight*
 192 *Nor motion of swift thought, less could his*
 shield,
 193 *Such ruin⁹¹ intercept. Ten paces huge⁹²*
 194 *He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee,*
 195 *His massy spear upstaid,⁹³ as if on earth*
 196 *Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,*

⁸³ command

⁸⁴ enslaved

⁸⁵ wickedly, basely

⁸⁶ serving

⁸⁷ censure, reproach

⁸⁸ commands

⁸⁹ heraldic device on the top of his helmet

⁹⁰ violent speed

⁹¹ injury, damage

⁹² "ten large paces"

⁹³ held up

- 197 *Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,*
198 *Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized*
199 *The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see*
200 *Thus foiled⁹⁴ their mightiest; ours joy filled, and*
shout,
201 *Presage of victory,⁹⁵ and fierce desire*
202 *Of battle. Whereat Michael⁹⁶ bid sound*
203 *The Arch-Angel trumpet. Through the vast⁹⁷ of*
Heav'n
204 *It sounded, and the faithful armies rung*
205 *Hosanna to the Highest.*
- “Nor stood at gaze⁹⁸*
206 *The adverse legions, nor less hideous, joined,⁹⁹*
207 *The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,*
208 *And clamor such as heard in Heav'n till now*
209 *Was never. Arms on armor clashing brayed¹⁰⁰*
210 *Horrible discord, and the madding¹⁰¹ wheels*
211 *Of brazen¹⁰² chariots raged. Dire¹⁰³ was the noise*
212 *Of conflict. Overhead the dismal hiss*
213 *Of fiery darts¹⁰⁴ in flaming vollies flew,*
214 *And flying vaulted¹⁰⁵ either host with fire.*
215 *So under fiery cope¹⁰⁶ together rushed*

⁹⁴ discomfited, overthrown

⁹⁵ [trissyllabic]

⁹⁶ [trissyllabic?]

⁹⁷ vastness

⁹⁸ in wonder/amazement

⁹⁹ met, now engaged in combat

¹⁰⁰ made a harsh, clashing sound

¹⁰¹ frenzied, turning furiously

¹⁰² brasslike, brass-hard

¹⁰³ horrible, dreadful

¹⁰⁴ spears, javelins, arrows

¹⁰⁵ covered

¹⁰⁶ canopy

216 *Both battles¹⁰⁷ main,¹⁰⁸ with ruinous assault*
 217 *And inextinguishable rage. All Heav'n*
 218 *Resounded, and had earth been then, all earth*
 219 *Had to her center shook.*

“What wonder, when

220 *Millions of fierce encount'ring Angels fought*
 221 *On either side, the least of whom could wield*
 222 *These elements, and arm him with the force*
 223 *Of all their regions? How much more of power*
 224 *Army against army numberless to raise*
 225 *Dreadful combustion¹⁰⁹ warring, and disturb,*
 226 *Though not destory, their happy native seat,*
 227 *Had not the Eternal King Omnipotent,*
 228 *From His stronghold of Heav'n high, over-*
 ruled¹¹⁰

229 *And limited their might, though numbered¹¹¹ such*
 230 *As each divided¹¹² legion might have seemed*
 231 *A numerous host, in strength each armèd band*
 232 *A legion. Led in fight, yet leader seemed*
 233 *Each warrior single as in chief, expert*
 234 *When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway*
 235 *Of battle, open when, and when to close*
 236 *The ridges¹¹³ of grim¹¹⁴ war. No thought of flight,*
 237 *None of retreat, no unbecoming deed*
 238 *That argued fear. Each on himself relied,*
 239 *As¹¹⁵ only in his arm the moment¹¹⁶ lay*

¹⁰⁷ armies

¹⁰⁸ mighty

¹⁰⁹ tumultuous conflagration

¹¹⁰ controlled, ruled against

¹¹¹ of such numbers

¹¹² split into factions, discordant

¹¹³ battle lines

¹¹⁴ fierce, cruel

¹¹⁵ as if

¹¹⁶ cause, influence, turning point

240 *Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame*
 241 *Were done, but infinite, for wide was spread*
 242 *That war and various. Sometimes on firm ground*
 243 *A standing fight; then soaring on main¹¹⁷ wing*
 244 *Tormented¹¹⁸ all the air. All air seemed then*
 245 *Conflicting¹¹⁹ fire.*

“Long time in even scale

246 *The battle hung, till Satan, who that day*
 247 *Prodigious¹²⁰ power had shown, and met in arms*
 248 *No equal, ranging through the dire attack*
 249 *Of fighting Seraphim confused,¹²¹ at length*
 250 *Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and*
 felled
 251 *Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed*
 sway¹²²
 252 *Brandished aloft, the horrid¹²³ edge came down*
 253 *Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand*
 254 *He hasted, and opposed¹²⁴ the rocky orb*
 255 *Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,*
 256 *A vast circumference. At his approach*
 257 *The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil*
 258 *Surceased,¹²⁵ and glad, as hoping here to end*
 259 *Intestine¹²⁶ war in Heav’n, th’ arch-foe subdued*
 260 *Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown*
 261 *And visage all inflamed first thus began:*

¹¹⁷ mighty, vigorous

¹¹⁸ shaking, stirring

¹¹⁹ battling

¹²⁰ marvelous, amazing

¹²¹ disorderly

¹²² motion, force

¹²³ frightful

¹²⁴ set in opposition, put in the way

¹²⁵ left off

¹²⁶ internal

262 “ *Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,*
 263 *Unnamed in Heav’n, now plenteous, as thou*
 see’st—
 264 *These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,*
 265 *Though heaviest by just measure¹²⁷ on thyself*
 266 *And thy adherents! How hast thou disturbed*
 267 *Heav’n’s blessèd peace, and into Nature brought*
 268 *Misery, uncreated till the crime*
 269 *Of thy rebellion! How hast thou instilled*
 270 *Thy malice into thousands, once upright*
 271 *And faithful, now proved false! But think not here*
 272 *To trouble holy rest.¹²⁸ Heav’n casts thee out*
 273 *From all her confines.¹²⁹ Heav’n, the seat of bliss,*
 274 *Brooks¹³⁰ not the works of violence and war.*
 275 *Hence then, and evil go with thee along,*
 276 *Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell,*
 277 *Thou and thy wicked crew! There mingle¹³¹*
 broils,¹³²
 278 *Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,*
 279 *Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from*
 God,
 280 *Precipitate thee with augmented pain.’*
 281 “*So spoke the Prince of Angels, to whom thus*
 282 *The adversary:*
 “*‘Nor think thou with wind*
 283 *Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds*
 284 *Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of*
 these
 285 *To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise*

¹²⁷ quantity, degree, proportion

¹²⁸ spiritual/mental peace

¹²⁹ borders

¹³⁰ puts up with

¹³¹ join together

¹³² quarrels

286 *Unvanquished? Easier to transact¹³³ with me*
 287 *That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with*
 threats
 288 *To chase me hence? Err not, that so shall end*
 289 *The strife which thou call'st evil, but we style*
 290 *The strife of glory, which we mean to win,*
 291 *Or turn this Heav'n itself into the Hell*
 292 *Thou fablest, here however to dwell free,*
 293 *If not to reign. Meanwhile, thy utmost force*
 294 *(And join Him named Almighty to thy aid)*
 295 *I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'*
 296 *"They ended parle,¹³⁴ and both addressed¹³⁵ for*
 fight
 297 *Unspeakable, for who, though with the tongue*
 298 *Of Angels, can relate, or to what things*
 299 *Liken on earth conspicuous,¹³⁶ that may lift*
 300 *Human imagination to such height*
 301 *Of godlike power? For likest gods they seemed,*
 302 *Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,*
 303 *Fit to decide the empire of great Heav'n.*
 304 *Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air*
 305 *Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields*
 306 *Blazed opposite, while expectation stood*
 307 *In horror. From each hand¹³⁷ with speed retired,*
 308 *Where erst was thickest¹³⁸ fight, th' Angelic throng,*
 309 *And left large field,¹³⁹ unsafe within the wind¹⁴⁰*
 310 *Of such commotion—such as, to set forth*
 311 *Great things by small, if Nature's concord broke,*

¹³³ negotiate

¹³⁴ parley

¹³⁵ readied

¹³⁶ visible

¹³⁷ side, direction

¹³⁸ most dense

¹³⁹ space, room

¹⁴⁰ (1) wind, (2) violence

312 *Among the constellations war were sprung,*
 313 *Two planets, rushing from aspect¹⁴¹ malign*
 314 *Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky*
 315 *Should combat, and their jarring spheres*
 confound.¹⁴²
 316 *Together both with next to almighty arm*
 317 *Up-lifted imminent, one stroke they aimed*
 318 *That might determine,¹⁴³ and not need repeat,*
 319 *As not of power at once, nor odds¹⁴⁴ appeared*
 320 *In might or swift prevention.¹⁴⁵ But the sword*
 321 *Of Michael from the armory of God*
 322 *Was giv'n him tempered so that neither keen*
 323 *Nor solid might resist that edge. It met*
 324 *The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite*
 325 *Descending, and in half cut sheer,¹⁴⁶ nor stayed,*
 326 *But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring,*
 shared¹⁴⁷
 327 *All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,*
 328 *And writhed him to and fro convolved,¹⁴⁸ so sore*
 329 *The griding¹⁴⁹ sword with discontinuous¹⁵⁰ wound*
 330 *Passed through him. But the ethereal substance*
 closed,
 331 *Not long divisible, and from the gash*
 332 *A stream of nectarous humor¹⁵¹ issuing flowed*

¹⁴¹ bearing, relative position

¹⁴² destroy one another?

¹⁴³ settle/put an end to/decide/resolve

¹⁴⁴ advantage

¹⁴⁵ blocking, parrying

¹⁴⁶ completely

¹⁴⁷ divided

¹⁴⁸ coiling, twisting

¹⁴⁹ piercing

¹⁵⁰ breaking the organic continuity of Satan's bodily substance

¹⁵¹ fluid, essence

333 *Sanguine,*¹⁵² *such as celestial Spirits may bleed,*
 334 *And all his armor stained, erewhile so bright.*
 335 *Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run*
 336 *By Angels many and strong, who interposed*
 337 *Defence, while others bore him on their shields*
 338 *Back to his chariot, where it stood retired*¹⁵³
 339 *From off the files of war.*¹⁵⁴ *There they him laid*
 340 *Gnashing for anguish and despite*¹⁵⁵ *and shame*
 341 *To find himself not matchless, and his pride*
 342 *Humbled by such rebuke,*¹⁵⁶ *so far beneath*
 343 *His confidence to equal God in power.*
 344 *Yet soon he healed, for Spirits that live throughout*
 345 *Vital in every part, not as frail man*
 346 *In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,*¹⁵⁷
 347 *Cannot but*¹⁵⁸ *by annihilating die,*
 348 *Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound*
 349 *Receive, no more than can the fluid air.*
 350 *All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,*
 351 *All intellect, all sense, and as they please*
 352 *They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size*
 353 *Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.*
 354 *“Meanwhile in other parts like*¹⁵⁹ *deeds*
 deserved
 355 *Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,*
 356 *And with fierce ensigns*¹⁶⁰ *pierced the deep*
 *array*¹⁶¹

¹⁵² bloody

¹⁵³ withdrawn

¹⁵⁴ files of war = rows/ranks of fighters

¹⁵⁵ outrage, anger

¹⁵⁶ disgrace

¹⁵⁷ kidneys

¹⁵⁸ except

¹⁵⁹ similar [adjective]

¹⁶⁰ troops serving under a single ensign/banner/flag

¹⁶¹ ranks

- 357 *Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied,*
 358 *And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound*
 359 *Threat'ned, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n*
 360 *Refrained his tongue blasphemous. But anon¹⁶²*
 361 *Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms*
 362 *And uncouth¹⁶³ pain, fled bellowing. On each*
 wing¹⁶⁴
 363 *Uriel and Raphael his¹⁶⁵ vaunting¹⁶⁶ foe,*
 364 *Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,*
 365 *Vanquished Adramelech¹⁶⁷ and Asmadai,¹⁶⁸*
 366 *Two potent Thrones,¹⁶⁹ that to be less than gods*
 367 *Disdained, but meaner¹⁷⁰ thoughts learned in their*
 flight,
 368 *Mangled¹⁷¹ with ghastly wounds through plate and*
 mail.
 369 *Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy*
 370 *The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow*
 371 *Ariel,¹⁷² and Arioch,¹⁷³ and the violence*
 372 *Of Ramiel¹⁷⁴ scorched and blasted, overthrew.*
 373 *“I might relate of thousands, and their names*
 374 *Eternize here on earth, but those elect*

¹⁶² soon, at once

¹⁶³ unfamiliar, never experienced

¹⁶⁴ of the army: military formation

¹⁶⁵ their: i.e., each of them vanquished “his” boasting opponent

¹⁶⁶ boasting

¹⁶⁷ Assyrian sun god

¹⁶⁸ Asmodeus, the demon in the Apocryphal Book of Tobit: see Book 4, line 168, above

¹⁶⁹ third of the nine angelic orders

¹⁷⁰ inferior, lower

¹⁷¹ cut, hacked

¹⁷² “lion of God”

¹⁷³ a Spirit of revenge; Arioch is mentioned in Genesis 14:1 as a “king of Ellasar”

¹⁷⁴ “exaltation of God”—although in the Apocryphal Book of Enoch, Ramiel’s lustfulness with mortal women causes him to fall from Heaven

375 *Angels, contented with their fame in Heav'n,*
 376 *Seek not the praise of men. The other sort,*
 377 *In might though wondrous and in acts of war,*
 378 *Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom¹⁷⁵*
 379 *Cancelled from Heav'n and sacred memory,*
 380 *Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.*
 381 *For strength from truth divided, and from just,¹⁷⁶*
 382 *Illaudable,¹⁷⁷ nought merits but dispraise*
 383 *And ignominy,¹⁷⁸ yet to glory aspires,*
 384 *Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame.*
 385 *Therefore eternal silence be their doom.¹⁷⁹*
 386 *“And now, their mightiest quelled,¹⁸⁰ the battle*
 swerved,¹⁸¹
 387 *With many an inroad¹⁸² gored.¹⁸³ Deformed¹⁸⁴ rout*
 388 *Entered, and foul disorder, all the ground*
 389 *With shivered armor strewn, and on a heap*
 390 *Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,*
 391 *And fiery-foaming steeds. What stood, recoiled*
 392 *O'er-wearied, through the faint¹⁸⁵ Satanic host*
 393 *Defensive scarce, or with pale¹⁸⁶ fear surprised¹⁸⁷*
 394 *(Then first with fear surprised, and sense of*
 pain)
 395 *Fled ignominious, to such evil brought*

¹⁷⁵ judgment, sentence

¹⁷⁶ that which is just

¹⁷⁷ unworthy

¹⁷⁸ dishonor, disgrace

¹⁷⁹ fate, destiny

¹⁸⁰ crushed

¹⁸¹ changed

¹⁸² raid

¹⁸³ stuck, stabbed, pierced: i.e., into the rebel ranks

¹⁸⁴ hideous

¹⁸⁵ spiritless, feeble

¹⁸⁶ ashen

¹⁸⁷ attacked, captured

- 396 *By sin of disobedience, till that hour*
 397 *Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.*
 398 *Far otherwise th' inviolable¹⁸⁸ Saints,*
 399 *In cubic phalanx¹⁸⁹ firm, advanced entire,¹⁹⁰*
 400 *Invulnerable, impenetrably armed,*
 401 *Such high advantages their innocence*
 402 *Gave them above their foes, not to have sinned,*
 403 *Not to have disobeyed. In fight they stood*
 404 *Unwearied, unobnoxious¹⁹¹ to be pained*
 405 *By wound, though from their place by violence*
 moved.
 406 *"Now Night her course began and, over*
 Heav'n
 407 *Inducing darkness, grateful truce imposed,*
 408 *And silence on the odious¹⁹² din of war.*
 409 *Under her cloudy covert both retired,*
 410 *Victor and vanquished. On the foughten field*
 411 *Michael and his Angels prevalent¹⁹³*
 412 *Encamping, placed in guard their watches*
 round,¹⁹⁴
 413 *Cherubic¹⁹⁵ waving fires. On th' other part,¹⁹⁶*
 414 *Satan with his rebellious disappeared,*
 415 *Far in the dark dislodged¹⁹⁷ and, void¹⁹⁸ of rest,*
 416 *His potentates to council called by night,*
 417 *And in the midst thus, undismayed, began:*

¹⁸⁸ unable to be violated/broken/injured [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹⁸⁹ close-packed battle array, sixteen-man-deep square, perfected by the Romans

¹⁹⁰ as a whole

¹⁹¹ not exposed/liable

¹⁹² hateful

¹⁹³ victorious, dominant

¹⁹⁴ around

¹⁹⁵ red

¹⁹⁶ side

¹⁹⁷ gone away

¹⁹⁸ devoid

418 “ *O now in danger tried, now known in arms*
 419 *Not to be overpowered, companions dear,*
 420 *Found worthy not of liberty alone,*
 421 *Too mean pretence!¹⁹⁹ but what we more affect,²⁰⁰*
 422 *Honor, dominion, glory, and renown,*
 423 *Who have sustained one day in doubtful²⁰¹ fight*
 424 *(And if one day, why not eternal days?)*
 425 *What Heaven’s Lord had powerfullest to send*
 426 *Against us from about His throne, and judged*
 427 *Sufficient to subdue us to His will,*
 428 *But proves not so. Then fallible, it seems,*
 429 *Of future we may deem Him, though till now*
 430 *Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed,*
 431 *Some disadvantage we endured and pain,*
 432 *Till now not known, but known, as soon*
 contemned,²⁰²
 433 *Since now we find this our empyreal²⁰³ form*
 434 *Incapable of mortal injury,*
 435 *Imperishable, and though pierced with wound,*
 436 *Soon closing, and by native vigor healed.*
 437 *Of evil then so small, as easy think²⁰⁴*
 438 *The remedy. Perhaps more valid²⁰⁵ arms,*
 439 *Weapons more violent, when next we meet,*
 440 *May serve to better us, and worse our foes,*
 441 *Or equal what between us made the odds,*
 442 *In Nature none. If other hidden cause*
 443 *Left them superior, while we can preserve*
 444 *Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,*
 445 *Due search and consultation will disclose.’*

¹⁹⁹ claim

²⁰⁰ seek, aim at

²⁰¹ uncertain

²⁰² disdained

²⁰³ celestial

²⁰⁴ ponder

²⁰⁵ effective, technically perfect

446 *“He sat; and in the assembly next upstood*
 447 *Nisroch,²⁰⁶ of Principalities²⁰⁷ the prime.²⁰⁸*
 448 *As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,*
 449 *Sore toiled,²⁰⁹ his riven²¹⁰ arms²¹¹ to havoc²¹² hewn,*
 450 *And cloudy²¹³ in aspect²¹⁴ thus answering spoke:*
 451 *“ ‘Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free*
 452 *Enjoyment of our right as gods! Yet hard*
 453 *For gods, and too unequal work we find,*
 454 *Against unequal arms to fight in pain,*
 455 *Against unpained, impassive,²¹⁵ from which evil*
 456 *Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails*
 457 *Valor or strength, though matchless, quelled²¹⁶*
 with pain
 458 *Which all subdues, and makes remiss²¹⁷ the hands*
 459 *Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well*
 460 *Spare²¹⁸ out of life, perhaps, and not repine,²¹⁹*
 461 *But live content, which is the calmest life.*
 462 *But pain is perfect misery, the worst*
 463 *Of evils and, excessive, overturns*
 464 *All patience. He who therefore can invent²²⁰*
 465 *With what more forcible we may offend²²¹*

²⁰⁶ an Assyrian deity

²⁰⁷ fifth of the nine angelic orders

²⁰⁸ principal, first

²⁰⁹ fatigued

²¹⁰ split, cracked open

²¹¹ weapons, armor

²¹² destruction

²¹³ darkened

²¹⁴ countenance, face

²¹⁵ invulnerable

²¹⁶ vanquished, crushed

²¹⁷ weak

²¹⁸ dispense with

²¹⁹ complain

²²⁰ find, discover, produce

²²¹ attack

466 *Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm*
 467 *Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves*
 468 *No less than for deliverance what we owe.'*
 469 *Whereto with look composed Satan replied:*
 470 *“ ‘Not uninvented that, which thou aright²²²*
 471 *Believ'st so main²²³ to our success, I bring.*
 472 *Which of us who beholds the bright surface*
 473 *Of this ethereous²²⁴ mould²²⁵ whereon we stand,*
 474 *This continent of spacious Heav'n, adorned*
 475 *With plant, fruit, flow'r ambrosial, gems, and*
 gold—
 476 *Whose eye so superficially²²⁶ surveys*
 477 *These things, as not to mind²²⁷ from whence they*
 grow
 478 *Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,*
 479 *Of spiritous and fiery spume,²²⁸ till touched*
 480 *With Heav'n's ray, and tempered,²²⁹ they shoot forth*
 481 *So beauteous, opening to the ambient²³⁰ light?*
 482 *These in their dark nativity²³¹ the deep*
 483 *Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame,*
 484 *Which into hollow engines, long and round,*
 485 *Thick rammed,²³² at th' other bore²³³ with touch of*
 fire

²²² correctly

²²³ important

²²⁴ composed of ether or similar celestial material [trissyllabic, second accented, “-eous” elided]

²²⁵ ground

²²⁶ only seeing the surface (an erudite pun)

²²⁷ think

²²⁸ foam

²²⁹ modified, worked

²³⁰ surrounding

²³¹ birthplace

²³² stuffed

²³³ aperture, hole

486 *Dilated*²³⁴ *and infuriate, shall send forth*
 487 *From far; with thund'ring noise, among our foes*
 488 *Such implements of mischief as shall dash*
 489 *To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands*
 490 *Adverse,*²³⁵ *that they shall fear we have disarmed*
 491 *The Thunderer of His only dreaded bolt.*
 492 *Nor long shall be our labor: yet ere dawn,*
 493 *Effect*²³⁶ *shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive,*
 494 *Abandon fear, to strength and counsel joined*
 495 *Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.'*
 496 *"He ended, and his words their drooping*
 *cheer*²³⁷
 497 *Enlightened,*²³⁸ *and their languished*²³⁹ *hope*
 revived.
 498 *Th' invention all admired, and each, how he*
 499 *To be the inventor missed, so easy it seemed*
 500 *Once found, which yet unfound most would have*
 thought
 501 *Impossible. Yet, haply,*²⁴⁰ *of thy race*
 502 *In future days, if malice should abound,*
 503 *Someone intent on mischief, or inspired*
 504 *With devilish machination,*²⁴¹ *might devise*
 505 *Like*²⁴² *instrument to plague the sons of men*
 506 *For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.*
 507 *Forthwith from council to the work they flew.*
 508 *None arguing stood; innumerable hands*
 509 *Were ready. In a moment up they turned*

²³⁴ (1) distended, amplified, enlarged, (2) spread abroad

²³⁵ (1) opposite, (2) hostile

²³⁶ accomplishment

²³⁷ countenances

²³⁸ lit up, illuminated

²³⁹ drooping

²⁴⁰ perhaps

²⁴¹ contrivance

²⁴² similar

510 *Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath*
 511 *The originals²⁴³ of Nature in their crude*
 512 *Conception. Sulphurous and nitrous foam*
 513 *They found, they mingled and, with subtle art,*
 514 *Concocted²⁴⁴ and adjusted,²⁴⁵ they reduced*
 515 *To blackest grain,²⁴⁶ and into store conveyed.*
 516 *Part²⁴⁷ hidden veins digged up (nor hath this*
 earth
 517 *Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,*
 518 *Whereof to found²⁴⁸ their engines and their balls*
 519 *Of missive ruin;²⁴⁹ part incentive²⁵⁰ reed*
 520 *Provide, pernicious²⁵¹ with one touch to fire.*
 521 *So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,²⁵²*
 522 *Secret they finished, and in order set,*
 523 *With silent circumspection,²⁵³ unespied.*
 524 *“Now when fair morn orient²⁵⁴ in Heav’n*
 appeared,
 525 *Up rose the victor-Angels, and to arms*
 526 *The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood*
 527 *Of golden panoply,²⁵⁵ refulgent²⁵⁶ host,²⁵⁷*

²⁴³ original elements

²⁴⁴ mixed

²⁴⁵ arranged, systematized

²⁴⁶ granules

²⁴⁷ some of them

²⁴⁸ melt and mold, build

²⁴⁹ missive ruin = missilelike destruction

²⁵⁰ kindling

²⁵¹ swift

²⁵² conscious Night = Night, aware of what they were doing

²⁵³ caution

²⁵⁴ bright

²⁵⁵ armor

²⁵⁶ gleaming, radiant, resplendent

²⁵⁷ army

528 *Soon banded.*²⁵⁸ *Others from the dawning hills*
 529 *Look round, and scouts each coast light-armed*
 scour,
 530 *Each quarter to descry*²⁵⁹ *the distant foe,*
 531 *Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,*
 532 *In motion or in halt. Him soon they met*
 533 *Under spread ensigns moving nigh, in slow*
 534 *But firm battalion. Back with speediest sail*
 535 *Zophiel,*²⁶⁰ *of Cherubim the swiftest wing,*
 536 *Came flying, and in mid air aloud thus cried:*
 537 *“ ‘Arm, warriors, arm for fight! The foe at*
 hand,
 538 *Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit*
 539 *This day. Fear not his flight: so thick a cloud*
 540 *He comes, and settled in his face I see*
 541 *Sad*²⁶¹ *resolution, and secure.*²⁶² *Let each*
 542 *His adamantine coat gird*²⁶³ *well, and each*
 543 *Fit well his helm, grip fast his orbèd shield,*
 544 *Borne ev’n*²⁶⁴ *or high, for this day will pour down,*
 545 *If I conjecture*²⁶⁵ *aught, no drizzling shower,*
 546 *But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.’*
 547 *“So warned he them, aware themselves, and*
 soon
 548 *In order, quit of all impediment,*
 549 *Instant without disturb they took alarm,*²⁶⁶
 550 *And onward moved embattled.*²⁶⁷ *When behold!*

²⁵⁸ joined/formed into a company

²⁵⁹ discover

²⁶⁰ “spy of God”

²⁶¹ sober, serious, firm

²⁶² confident [adjective, modifying “resolution”]

²⁶³ buckle

²⁶⁴ level, horizontal

²⁶⁵ can predict

²⁶⁶ the call to arms

²⁶⁷ in battle order

551 *Not distant far with heavy²⁶⁸ pace the foe*
 552 *Approaching, gross²⁶⁹ and huge,²⁷⁰ in hollow cube*
 553 *Training²⁷¹ his devilish enginery, impaled²⁷²*
 554 *On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,*
 555 *To hide the fraud. At interview²⁷³ both stood*
 556 *A while, but suddenly at head appeared*
 557 *Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:*
 558 *“ Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold,²⁷⁴*
 559 *That all may see, who hate us, how we seek*
 560 *Peace and composure,²⁷⁵ and with open breast*
 561 *Stand ready to receive them, if they like*
 562 *Our overture,²⁷⁶ and turn not back perverse.²⁷⁷*
 563 *But that I doubt. However, witness, Heav'n!*
 564 *Heav'n, witness thou anon!²⁷⁸ while we discharge*
 565 *Freely our part. Ye who appointed stand*
 566 *Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch*
 567 *What we propound,²⁷⁹ and loud that all may hear!’*
 568 *“So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce*
 569 *Had ended, when to right and left the front*
 570 *Divided, and to either flank retired,*
 571 *Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,*
 572 *A triple mounted row of pillars laid*
 573 *On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,*
 574 *Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,*

²⁶⁸ slow

²⁶⁹ massive

²⁷⁰ of great size

²⁷¹ pulling

²⁷² surrounded, enclosed

²⁷³ their face-to-face meeting

²⁷⁴ open

²⁷⁵ agreement, settlement

²⁷⁶ opening, revelation

²⁷⁷ obstinate

²⁷⁸ at once

²⁷⁹ bring forward

- 575 *With branches lopped, in wood or mountain
felled),*
- 576 *Brass, iron, stony mould,²⁸⁰ had not their mouths*
577 *With hideous orifice²⁸¹ gaped on us wide,*
578 *Portending hollow truce. At each, behind,*
579 *A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed*
580 *Stood waving, tipped with fire, while we,
suspense,²⁸²*
- 581 *Collected stood, within our thoughts amused.²⁸³*
582 *Not long, for sudden all at once their reeds*
583 *Put forth, and to a narrow vent²⁸⁴ applied*
584 *With nicest²⁸⁵ touch. Immediate in a flame,*
585 *But soon obscured with smoke all Heav'n
appeared,*
- 586 *From those deep-throated engines belched,²⁸⁶
whose roar*
- 587 *Emboweled²⁸⁷ with outrageous²⁸⁸ noise the air*
588 *And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul*
589 *Their devilish glut,²⁸⁹ chained thunderbolts and
hail*
- 590 *Of iron globes which, on the victor host*
591 *Levelled, with such impetuous²⁹⁰ fury smote*
592 *That, whom they hit, none on their feet might
stand,*
- 593 *Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell*

²⁸⁰ forms

²⁸¹ opening, aperture

²⁸² uncertain, doubtful

²⁸³ staring, puzzled

²⁸⁴ vent = hole, here the “touch-hole”

²⁸⁵ most precise, delicate

²⁸⁶ vomited

²⁸⁷ filled

²⁸⁸ enormous

²⁸⁹ overflowing amount

²⁹⁰ violent, forceful, rapid

- 594 *By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel rolled,*
 595 *The sooner for²⁹¹ their arms.²⁹² Unarmed, they*
 might
- 596 *Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift*
 597 *By quick contraction or remove, but now*
 598 *Foul dissipation²⁹³ followed, and forced rout,*
 599 *Nor served it to relax²⁹⁴ their serried²⁹⁵ files.²⁹⁶*
 600 *What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse*
 601 *Repeated, and indecent²⁹⁷ overthrow*
 602 *Doubled, would render them yet more despised,*
 603 *And to their foes a laughter, for in view*
 604 *Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,*
 605 *In posture to displode²⁹⁸ their second tire²⁹⁹*
 606 *Of thunder. Back defeated to return*
 607 *They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,*
 608 *And to his mates thus in derision called:*
 609 *“O friends! Why come not on, these victors*
 proud?
- 610 *Erewhile they fierce were coming, and when we,*
 611 *To entertain them fair, with open front*
 612 *And breast (what could we more?), propounded*
 terms
- 613 *Of composition, straight they changed their*
 minds,
- 614 *Flew off, and into strange vagaries³⁰⁰ fell,*

²⁹¹ because of

²⁹² armor

²⁹³ scattering

²⁹⁴ loosen, open

²⁹⁵ pressed close together

²⁹⁶ ranks

²⁹⁷ unseemly

²⁹⁸ discharge, explode

²⁹⁹ volley

³⁰⁰ frolicking

615 *As they would dance. Yet for a dance they
 seemed*
 616 *Somewhat extravagant and wild—perhaps*
 617 *For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,*
 618 *If our proposals once again were heard,*
 619 *We should compel them to a quick result.’*
 620 *To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:*
 621 *“ ‘Leader! the terms we sent were terms of
 weight,*
 622 *Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,*
 623 *Such as we might perceive amused³⁰¹ them all,*
 624 *And stumbled³⁰² many. Who receives them right*
 625 *Had need from head to foot well understand.³⁰³*
 626 *Not understood, this gift they have besides,*
 627 *They show us when our foes walk not upright.’*
 628 *“So they among themselves in pleasant vein*
 629 *Stood scoffing, heightened³⁰⁴ in their thoughts
 beyond*
 630 *All doubt of victory. Eternal Might*
 631 *To match with their inventions they presumed*
 632 *So easy, and of His thunder made a scorn,*
 633 *And all His host derided, while they stood*
 634 *A while in trouble. But they³⁰⁵ stood not long.*
 635 *Rage prompted them at length, and found them
 arms*
 636 *Against such hellish mischief fit t’ oppose.*
 637 *Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,*
 638 *Which God hath in His mighty Angels placed!)*
 639 *Their arms away they threw, and to the hills*

³⁰¹ amazed

³⁰² overthrew

³⁰³ (1) comprehend, (2) be supported (“stand under”)

³⁰⁴ excited

³⁰⁵ the angels

- 640 *(For earth hath this variety from Heav'n,*
 641 *Of pleasure situate³⁰⁶ in hill and dale)*
 642 *Light³⁰⁷ as the lightning glimpse they ran, they*
 flew.
 643 *From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,*
 644 *They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,*
 645 *Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops*
 646 *Up-lifting bore them in their hands. Amaze,*
 647 *Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host,*
 648 *When coming towards them so dread they saw³⁰⁸*
 649 *The bottom of the mountains upward turned,*
 650 *Till on those cursed engines' triple-row*
 651 *They saw them whelmed,³⁰⁹ and all their*
 confidence
 652 *Under the weight of mountains buried deep,*
 653 *Themselves invaded³¹⁰ next, and on their heads*
 654 *Main³¹¹ promontories³¹² flung, which in the air*
 655 *Came shadowing, and oppressed³¹³ whole legions*
 armed.
 656 *Their armor helped their harm, crushed in and*
 bruised
 657 *Into their substance pent,³¹⁴ which wrought them*
 pain
 658 *Implacable,³¹⁵ and many a dolorous groan,*
 659 *Long struggling underneath, ere they could*
 wind

³⁰⁶ located

³⁰⁷ swiftly/easily

³⁰⁸ [prosodically, "When coming towards them so dread they saw"]

³⁰⁹ thrown, so as to cover

³¹⁰ attacked, intruded upon

³¹¹ great, solid

³¹² headlands

³¹³ weighed down, crushed

³¹⁴ distended

³¹⁵ inexorable

660 *Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest
light,*
661 *Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.*
662 *The rest, in imitation, to like arms*
663 *Betook them, and the neighboring hills uptore.*
664 *So hills amid the air encountered hills,*
665 *Hurled to and fro with jaculation³¹⁶ dire,³¹⁷*
666 *That under ground they fought in dismal shade.*
667 *Infernal noise! War seemed a civil game*
668 *To this uproar. Horrid confusion heaped*
669 *Upon confusion rose.*

“And now all Heav’n

670 *Had gone to wrack,³¹⁸ with ruin overspread,*
671 *Had not th’ Almighty Father, where He sits*
672 *Shrined in His sanctuary of Heav’n secure,*
673 *Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen*
674 *This tumult, and permitted all, advised,³¹⁹*
675 *That His great purpose He might so fulfil,*
676 *To honor His anointed Son avenged*
677 *Upon his enemies, and to declare*
678 *All power on him transferred. Whence to His
Son,*

679 *The assessor³²⁰ of His throne, He thus began:*
680 *“ ‘Effulgence³²¹ of my glory, Son below’d,*
681 *Son, in whose face invisible is beheld*
682 *Visibly, what by Deity I am,*
683 *And in whose hand what by decree I do,*
684 *Second Omnipotence! Two days are past,*
685 *Two days, as we compute the days of Heav’n,*

³¹⁶ hurling, throwing

³¹⁷ horrible

³¹⁸ disaster, wreck, ruin

³¹⁹ judicious, deliberate

³²⁰ associate, sharer

³²¹ radiance

686 *Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame*
 687 *These disobedient. Sore hath been their fight,*
 688 *As likeliest was, when two such foes met armed,*
 689 *For to themselves I left them, and thou know'st*
 690 *Equal in their creation they were formed,*
 691 *Save what sin hath impaired, which yet hath*
 wrought
 692 *Insensibly, for I suspend their doom.*³²²
 693 *Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last*³²³
 694 *Endless, and no solution will be found.*
 695 *War wearied hath performed what war can do,*
 696 *And to disordered rage let loose the reins*
 697 *With mountains, as with weapons, armed, which*
 makes
 698 *Wild work in Heav'n, and dangerous to the*
 *main.*³²⁴
 699 *Two days are therefore past, the third is thine,*
 700 *For thee I have ordained it, and thus far*
 701 *Have suffered*³²⁵ *that the glory may be thine*
 702 *Of ending this great war, since none but thou*
 703 *Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace*
 704 *Immense I have transfused,*³²⁶ *that all may know*
 705 *In Heav'n and Hell thy power above compare*
 706 *And, this perverse*³²⁷ *commotion*³²⁸ *governed*³²⁹
 thus,
 707 *To manifest thee worthiest to be heir*

³²² sentence, judgment

³²³ hold out

³²⁴ the whole, the rest of Heaven

³²⁵ tolerated, allowed

³²⁶ poured, instilled

³²⁷ wicked, stubborn

³²⁸ disturbance, sedition

³²⁹ curbed, checked

708 *Of all things, to be heir, and to be King*
 709 *By sacred unction,³³⁰ thy deservèd right.*
 710 *Go then, thou mightiest, in thy Father's might.*
 711 *Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels*
 712 *That shake Heav'n's basis, bring forth all my*
 war,
 713 *My bow and thunder. My almighty arms*
 714 *Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh.*
 715 *Pursue these sons of darkness, drive them out*
 716 *From all Heav'n's bounds into the utter deep.*
 717 *There let them learn, as likes them,³³¹ to despise*
 718 *God, and Messiah his anointed King.'*
 719 *"He said, and on His Son with rays direct*
 720 *Shone full. He all his Father full expressed*
 721 *Ineffably³³² into his face received,*
 722 *And thus the Filial Godhead, answering, spoke:*
 723 *"O Father, O Supreme of Heav'nly Thrones,*
 724 *First, Highest, Holiest, Best! Thou always seek'st*
 725 *To glorify Thy Son, I always Thee,*
 726 *As is most just. This I my glory account,³³³*
 727 *My exaltation, and my whole delight,*
 728 *That Thou, in me well pleased, declar'st Thy will*
 729 *Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.*
 730 *Scepter and power; Thy giving, I assume,*
 731 *And gladlier shall resign, when in the end*
 732 *Thou shalt be all in all, and I in Thee*
 733 *Forever, and in me all whom Thou lov'st.*
 734 *But whom Thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on*
 735 *Thy terrors, as I put Thy mildness on,*
 736 *Image of Thee in all things, and shall soon,*

³³⁰ anointing

³³¹ as likes them = as they please

³³² beyond the power of words

³³³ consider, value

- 737 *Armed with Thy might, rid Heav'n of these
rebelled,*
- 738 *To their prepared ill mansion driven down,*
- 739 *To chains of darkness, and th' undying worm,³³⁴*
- 740 *That from Thy just obedience could revolt,*
- 741 *Whom to obey is happiness entire.*
- 742 *Then shall Thy Saints unmixed,³³⁵ and from th'
impure*
- 743 *Far separate, circling Thy holy mount,*
- 744 *Unfeignèd Halleluiahs to Thee sing,*
- 745 *Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief'*
- 746 *“So said, he o'er his scepter bowing, rose*
- 747 *From the right hand of Glory where he sat.*
- 748 *And the third sacred morn began to shine,*
- 749 *Dawning through Heav'n. Forth rushed with
whirlwind sound*
- 750 *The chariot of paternal Deity,*
- 751 *Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel
undrawn,³³⁶*
- 752 *Itself instinct³³⁷ with Spirit, but convoyed³³⁸*
- 753 *By four Cherubic shapes. Four faces each*
- 754 *Had wondrous. As with stars, their bodies all*
- 755 *And wings were set with eyes, with eyes the
wheels*
- 756 *Of beryl, and careering³³⁹ fires between.*
- 757 *Over their heads a crystal firmament,*
- 758 *Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure*

³³⁴ serpent, snake

³³⁵ purified

³³⁶ undreamed

³³⁷ innate

³³⁸ carried, conveyed

³³⁹ racing

759 *Amber, and colors of the showery³⁴⁰ arch.³⁴¹*
 760 *He in celestial panoply all armed*
 761 *Of radiant Urim,³⁴² work divinely wrought,*
 762 *Ascended. At his right hand victory*
 763 *Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow*
 764 *And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored,*
 765 *And from about him fierce effusion³⁴³ rolled*
 766 *Of smoke, and bickering³⁴⁴ flame, and sparkles*
 dire.
 767 *Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,*
 768 *He onward came. Far off his coming shone,*
 769 *And twenty thousand (I their number heard)*
 770 *Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen.*
 771 *He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime³⁴⁵*
 772 *On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned,*
 773 *Illustrious³⁴⁶ far and wide, but by his own*
 774 *First seen. Them unexpected joy surprised,*
 775 *When the great ensign of Messiah blazed*
 776 *Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heav'n,*
 777 *Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced³⁴⁷*
 778 *His army, circumfused³⁴⁸ on either wing,*
 779 *Under their head³⁴⁹ embodied³⁵⁰ all in one.*
 780 *Before him Power Divine his way prepared;*

³⁴⁰ i.e., resembling a shower

³⁴¹ the heavens

³⁴² the jewels on the high priest Aaron's breastplate: see Exodus 28:30

³⁴³ pouring-out

³⁴⁴ flashing, glistening, quivering

³⁴⁵ exalted

³⁴⁶ luminous, gleaming

³⁴⁷ drew/led back

³⁴⁸ diffused around

³⁴⁹ leader

³⁵⁰ united

- 781 *At his command the uprooted hills retired*³⁵¹
 782 *Each to his place. They heard his voice, and went*
 783 *Obsequious.*³⁵² *Heav'n his wonted*³⁵³ *face*
 renewed,
 784 *And with fresh flow'rets hill and valley smiled.*
 785 *This saw his hapless*³⁵⁴ *foes, but stood obdured,*³⁵⁵
 786 *And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,*
 787 *Insensate,*³⁵⁶ *hope conceiving*³⁵⁷ *from despair.*
 788 *"In Heav'nly Spirits could such perverseness*
 dwell?
 789 *But to convince the proud what signs avail,*
 790 *Or wonders move th' obdurate to relent?*
 791 *They, hardened more by what might most*
 *reclaim,*³⁵⁸
 792 *Grieving to see his glory, at the sight*
 793 *Took envy and, aspiring to his height,*
 794 *Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud*
 795 *Weening*³⁵⁹ *to prosper, and at length prevail*
 796 *Against God and Messiah, or to fall*
 797 *In universal ruin last.*³⁶⁰ *And now*
 798 *To final battle drew, disdainng flight,*
 799 *Or faint retreat. When the great Son of God*
 800 *To all his host on either hand thus spoke:*
 801 *"Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here*
 stand,
 802 *Ye Angels armed; this day from battle rest.*

³⁵¹ withdrew

³⁵² dutiful, obedient

³⁵³ usual, habitual, familiar

³⁵⁴ unlucky

³⁵⁵ unyielding

³⁵⁶ foolish

³⁵⁷ forming, taking

³⁵⁸ reform, win back

³⁵⁹ thinking

³⁶⁰ finally, in the end

803 *Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God*
 804 *Accepted, fearless in His righteous cause,*
 805 *And as ye have received, so have ye done,*
 806 *Invincibly. But of this cursèd crew*
 807 *The punishment to other hand belongs.*
 808 *Vengeance is His, or whose He sole appoints.*
 809 *Number to this day's work is not ordained,*
 810 *Nor multitude. Stand only, and behold*
 811 *God's indignation on these godless poured*
 812 *By me. Not you, but me, they have despised,*
 813 *Yet envied. Against me is all their rage,*
 814 *Because the Father, to whom in Heav'n supreme*
 815 *Kingdom, and power, and glory appertains,*
 816 *Hath honored me, according to His will.*
 817 *Therefore to me their doom³⁶¹ He hath assigned,*
 818 *That they may have their wish, to try³⁶² with me*
 819 *In battle which the stronger proves, they all,*
 82 *Or I alone against them, since by strength*
 821 *They measure all, of other excellence*
 822 *Not emulous,³⁶³ nor care who them excels.*
 823 *Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.³⁶⁴*
 824 *“So spoke the Son, and into terror changed*
 825 *His count'nance, too severe to be beheld,*
 826 *And full of wrath bent on his enemies.*
 827 *At once the Four spread out their starry wings*
 828 *With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs*
 829 *Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound*
 830 *Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.³⁶⁵*
 831 *He on his impious foes right onward drove,*

³⁶¹ fate

³⁶² test

³⁶³ desirous

³⁶⁴ grant

³⁶⁵ army

832 *Gloomy*³⁶⁶ *as night. Under his burning wheels*
 833 *The steadfast empyrean*³⁶⁷ *shook throughout,*
 834 *All but the throne itself of God. Full soon*
 835 *Among them he arrived, in his right hand*
 836 *Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent*
 837 *Before him, such as in their souls infixed*
 838 *Plagues.*³⁶⁸ *They astonished*³⁶⁹ *all resistance lost,*
 839 *All courage. Down their idle*³⁷⁰ *weapons dropped.*
 840 *O'er shields, and helms, and helmèd heads he*
 rode
 841 *Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,*
 842 *That wished the mountains now might be again*
 843 *Thrown on them, as a shelter from his ire.*³⁷¹
 844 *Nor less on either side tempestuous fell*
 845 *His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four*
 846 *Distinct*³⁷² *with eyes, and from the living wheels*
 847 *Distinct alike with multitude of eyes.*
 848 *One Spirit in them ruled; and every eye*
 849 *Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious*³⁷³ *fire*
 850 *Among the accursed, that withered all their*
 strength,
 851 *And of their wonted*³⁷⁴ *vigor left them drained,*
 852 *Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.*
 853 *Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked*
 854 *His thunder in mid volley, for he meant*
 855 *Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n.*

³⁶⁶ dark, dismal

³⁶⁷ [four syllables, first and third accented]

³⁶⁸ scourges, wounds, afflictions

³⁶⁹ stunned

³⁷⁰ useless

³⁷¹ wrath

³⁷² adorned

³⁷³ rapid

³⁷⁴ customary

856 *The overthrown he raised, and as a herd*
 857 *Of goats or timorous flock together thronged*
 858 *Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursued*
 859 *With terrors, and with furies, to the bounds*
 860 *And crystal wall of Heav'n, which op'ning wide,*
 861 *Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed*
 862 *Into the wasteful³⁷⁵ deep. The monstrous sight*
 863 *Struck them with horror backward, but far worse*
 864 *Urged them behind. Headlong themselves they*
 threw
 865 *Down from the verge³⁷⁶ of Heav'n. Eternal wrath*
 866 *Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.*
 867 *"Hell heard th' unsufferable³⁷⁷ noise, Hell saw*
 868 *Heav'n ruining³⁷⁸ from Heav'n, and would have*
 fled
 869 *Affrighted, but strict³⁷⁹ Fate had cast too deep*
 870 *Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.*
 871 *Nine days they fell. Confounded³⁸⁰ Chaos roared,*
 872 *And felt tenfold confusion in their fall*
 873 *Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout³⁸¹*
 874 *Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last*
 875 *Yawning³⁸² received them whole, and on them*
 closed,
 876 *Hell their fit habitation, fraught³⁸³ with fire*
 877 *Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.*
 878 *Disburdened Heav'n rejoiced, and soon repaired*

³⁷⁵ empty

³⁷⁶ edge

³⁷⁷ unbearable, intolerable

³⁷⁸ falling headlong, falling into ruins [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

³⁷⁹ rigorous

³⁸⁰ disordered, confused

³⁸¹ defeated army

³⁸² opening wide

³⁸³ filled

879 *Her mural*³⁸⁴ *breach, returning whence it rolled.*
 880 *“Sole victor, from th’ expulsion of his foes,*
 881 *Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.*
 882 *To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood*
 883 *Eye-witnesses of his almighty acts,*
 884 *With jubilee*³⁸⁵ *advanced and, as they went,*
 885 *Shaded with branching palm, each Order bright*
 886 *Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,*
 887 *Son, heir, and Lord, to him dominion giv’n,*
 888 *Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode*
 889 *Triumphant through mid Heav’n, into the courts*
 890 *And temple of his Mighty Father throned*
 891 *On high, who into glory him received,*
 892 *Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.*
 893 *“Thus, measuring things in Heav’n by things*
 on earth,
 894 *At thy*³⁸⁶ *request, and that thou may’st beware*³⁸⁷
 895 *By what is past, to thee I have revealed*
 896 *What might have else to human race been hid,*
 897 *The discord which befell,*³⁸⁸ *and war in Heav’n*
 898 *Among th’ angelic Powers, and the deep fall*
 899 *Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled*
 900 *With Satan—he who envies now thy state,*
 901 *Who now is plotting how he may seduce*
 902 *Thee also from obedience, that*³⁸⁹ *with*³⁹⁰ *him*
 903 *Bereaved*³⁹¹ *of happiness, thou may’st partake*
 904 *His punishment, eternal misery,*

³⁸⁴ walled

³⁸⁵ joyful shouts

³⁸⁶ Adam’s

³⁸⁷ be cautious, take warning

³⁸⁸ occurred

³⁸⁹ so that

³⁹⁰ like him, together with him

³⁹¹ deprived

905 *Which would be all his solace and revenge,*
906 *As a despite³⁹² done against the Most High,*
907 *Thee once³⁹³ to gain companion³⁹⁴ of his woe.*
908 *But listen not to his temptations, warn*
909 *Thy weaker.³⁹⁵ Let it profit thee t' have heard,*
910 *By terrible example, the reward*
911 *Of disobedience. Firm they might have stood,*
912 *Yet fell. Remember, and fear to transgress."*

The End of the Sixth Book

³⁹² spiteful injury

³⁹³ once and for all, forever

³⁹⁴ as companion

³⁹⁵ weaker partner, Eve

BOOK VII

THE ARGUMENT

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

The Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his¹ re-ascention into Heaven.

¹ i.e., Christ

1 *Descend from Heav'n, Urania,² by that name*
 2 *If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine*
 3 *Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,*
 4 *Above the flight of Pegasean³ wing!⁴*
 5 *The meaning, not the name, I call, for thou*
 6 *Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top*
 7 *Of old Olympus, dwell'st, but Heav'nly-born,*
 8 *Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed,*
 9 *Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,⁵*
 10 *Wisdom thy sister, and with her did'st play*
 11 *In presence of th' Almighty Father, pleased*
 12 *With thy celestial song. Up led by thee*
 13 *Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presumed,*
 14 *An earthly guest, and drawn⁶ empyreal air,*
 15 *Thy temp'ring.⁷ With like safety guided down,*
 16 *Return me to my native element,⁸*
 17 *Lest from this flying steed unreined (as once*
 18 *Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)*
 19 *Dismounted,⁹ on the Aleian field¹⁰ I fall,*
 20 *Erroneous¹¹ there to wander, and forlorn.¹²*
 21 *Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound¹³*
 22 *Within the visible diurnal sphere:¹⁴*

² "heavenly": muse of astronomy

³ Bellerophon's flying horse

⁴ i.e., "above" (beyond) pagan inspiration

⁵ live, keep company

⁶ breathed in

⁷ of thy blending/alloying/preparation

⁸ surroundings

⁹ Bellerophon was unhorsed by Zeus, when attempting to fly up to the gods' home

¹⁰ to which Bellerophon fell when unhorsed

¹¹ wandering aimless, straying (as Bellerophon had done)

¹² lost, abandoned

¹³ enclosed, contained, confined

¹⁴ diurnal sphere: the sphere that revolves daily around the earth

23 *Standing on earth, not rapt¹⁵ above the pole,¹⁶*
 24 *More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged*
 25 *To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,*
 26 *On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues,*
 27 *In darkness, and with dangers compassed*
 round,¹⁷
 28 *And solitude. Yet not alone while thou*
 29 *Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn*
 30 *Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,*
 31 *Urania, and fit audience find, though few.*
 32 *But drive far off the barbarous dissonance*
 33 *Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race¹⁸*
 34 *Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard¹⁹*
 35 *In Rhodopé,²⁰ where woods and rocks had ears*
 36 *To rapture,²¹ till the savage clamor drowned*
 37 *Both harp and voice. Nor could the Muse defend*
 38 *Her son.²² So fail not thou, who thee implores,*
 39 *For thou art Heav'nly, she an empty dream.*
 40 *Say, goddess, what ensued when Raphael,*
 41 *The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarned*
 42 *Adam, by dire example, to beware*
 43 *Apostasy, by what befell²³ in Heav'n*
 44 *To those apostates, lest the like befall*
 45 *In Paradise to Adam or his race,*
 46 *Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,*

¹⁵ swept away, carried

¹⁶ above the pole = into Heaven

¹⁷ compassed round = surrounded

¹⁸ group or class of persons, here Bacchantes or worshipers of Bacchus

¹⁹ Orpheus

²⁰ mountain range in Thrace, sacred to Bacchus

²¹ ecstasy

²² Calliope, muse of epic poetry

²³ happened

47 *If they transgress, and slight²⁴ that sole
 command,*
 48 *So easily obeyed amid the choice*
 49 *Of all tastes else to please their appetite,*
 50 *Though wand'ring.²⁵ He with his consorted²⁶ Eve*
 51 *The story heard, attentive, and was filled*
 52 *With admiration²⁷ and deep muse²⁸ to hear*
 53 *Of things so high²⁹ and strange³⁰—things to their
 thought*
 54 *So unimaginable, as hate in Heav'n,*
 55 *And war so near the peace of God in bliss,*
 56 *With such confusion,³¹ but the evil, soon*
 57 *Driv'n back, redounded³² as a flood on those*
 58 *From whom it sprung, impossible to mix*
 59 *With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed³³*
 60 *The doubts that in his heart arose, and now*
 61 *Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know*
 62 *What nearer might concern him, how this world*
 63 *Of Heav'n and earth conspicuous³⁴ first began,*
 64 *When, and whereof created, for what cause,*
 65 *What within Eden, or without, was done*
 66 *Before his memory—as one whose drought*
 67 *Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current³⁵ stream,*
 68 *Whose liquid murmur heard, new thirst excites,*

²⁴ ignore, disdain

²⁵ unsteady, not fixed

²⁶ partner in marriage

²⁷ wonder

²⁸ pensiveness

²⁹ exalted

³⁰ astonishing, unknown

³¹ disorder, commotion

³² turned back

³³ dismissed, abandoned

³⁴ visible

³⁵ flowing

69 *Proceeded thus to ask his Heav'nly guest:*
 70 *“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,*
 71 *Far differing from this world, thou hast revealed,*
 72 *Divine interpreter!³⁶ by favor sent*
 73 *Down from the empyrean, to forewarn*
 74 *Us timely of what might else have been our loss,*
 75 *Unknown, which human knowledge could not*
 reach.
 76 *For which to the infinitely Good we owe*
 77 *Immortal thanks, and His admonishment*
 78 *Receive, with solemn purpose to observe*
 79 *Immutably His sov'reign will, the end³⁷*
 80 *Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsafed³⁸*
 81 *Gently,³⁹ for our instruction, to impart*
 82 *Things above earthly thought, which yet*
 concerned
 83 *Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seemed,*
 84 *Deign to descend now lower, and relate*
 85 *What may no less perhaps avail us, known,*
 86 *How first began this Heav'n which we behold*
 87 *Distant so high, with moving fires adorned*
 88 *Innumerable, and this which yields or fills*
 89 *All space, the ambient⁴⁰ air wide interfused⁴¹*
 90 *Embracing round this florid⁴² earth. What cause*
 91 *Moved the Creator, in His holy rest⁴³*
 92 *Through all eternity, so late⁴⁴ to build*
 93 *In Chaos, and the work begun, how soon*

³⁶ messenger

³⁷ purpose

³⁸ deigned, condescended

³⁹ courteously, generously

⁴⁰ encompassing

⁴¹ interspersed, poured in

⁴² flowering, blooming, bright

⁴³ repose

⁴⁴ recently

94 *Absolved.⁴⁵ If unforbid thou may'st unfold*
 95 *What we, not to explore the secrets, ask*
 96 *Of His eternal empire, but the more*
 97 *To magnify His works, the more we know.*
 98 *And the great light of day yet wants⁴⁶ to run*
 99 *Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in*
 Heav'n,
 100 *Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,*
 101 *And longer will delay to hear thee tell*
 102 *His generation,⁴⁷ and the rising birth*
 103 *Of Nature from the unapparent⁴⁸ deep.⁴⁹*
 104 *Or if the star of ev'ning and the moon*
 105 *Haste to thy audience, night with her will bring*
 106 *Silence—and sleep, list'ning to thee, will*
 watch,⁵⁰
 107 *Or we can bid⁵¹ his absence till thy song*
 108 *End, and dismiss⁵² thee ere the morning shine.”*
 109 *Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought,⁵³*
 110 *And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:*
 111 *“This also thy request, with caution asked,*
 112 *Obtain, though to recount Almighty works*
 113 *What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,*
 114 *Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?*
 115 *Yet what thou canst attain,⁵⁴ which best may*
 serve

⁴⁵ completed

⁴⁶ lacks

⁴⁷ creating, begetting

⁴⁸ invisible

⁴⁹ Chaos

⁵⁰ stay awake

⁵¹ ask

⁵² send away, allow to depart

⁵³ supplicated

⁵⁴ gain, reach

116 *To glorify the Maker, and infer*⁵⁵
 117 *Thee also happier, shall not be withheld*
 118 *Thy hearing. Such commission from above*
 119 *I have received, to answer thy desire*
 120 *Of knowledge within bounds. Beyond,*⁵⁶ *abstain*
 121 *To ask, nor let thine own inventions*⁵⁷ *hope*
 122 *Things not revealed, which the invisible King,*
 123 *Only*⁵⁸ *Omniscient, hath suppressed*⁵⁹ *in night,*
 124 *To none communicable in earth or Heaven:*
 125 *Enough is left besides to search and know.*
 126 *But knowledge is as food, and needs no less*
 127 *Her temp'rance over appetite, to know*
 128 *In measure what the mind may well contain,*
 129 *Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns*
 130 *Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.*
 131 *“Know then, that after Lucifer from Heav'n*
 132 *(So call him, brighter once amidst the host*
 133 *Of Angels than that star*⁶⁰ *the stars among)*
 134 *Fell with his flaming legions through the deep*
 135 *Into his place, and the great Son returned*
 136 *Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent*
 137 *Eternal Father from His throne beheld*
 138 *Their multitude, and to His Son thus spoke:*
 139 *“ ‘At last our envious foe hath failed, who*
 thought
 140 *All*⁶¹ *like himself rebellious, by whose aid*
 141 *This inaccessible high strength, the seat*
 142 *Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,*
 143 *He trusted to have seized, and into fraud*

⁵⁵ make, show, prove

⁵⁶ further

⁵⁷ imagining

⁵⁸ the only

⁵⁹ hidden, kept secret

⁶⁰ Lucifer, the morning star

⁶¹ all were

- I44 *Drew many, whom their place knows here no
 more.*
 I45 *Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,*
 I46 *Their station.⁶² Heaven, yet populous, retains*
 I47 *Number sufficient to possess⁶³ her realms*
 I48 *Though wide, and this high temple to frequent⁶⁴*
 I49 *With ministeries⁶⁵ due, and solemn rites.*
 I50 *But lest his heart exalt him in the harm*
 I51 *Already done, to have dispeopled Heav'n,*
 I52 *My damage fondly⁶⁶ deemed,⁶⁷ I can repair*
 I53 *That detriment,⁶⁸ if such it be to lose*
 I54 *Self-lost, and in a moment will create*
 I55 *Another world, out of one man a race*
 I56 *Of men innumerable, there to dwell,*
 I57 *Not here, till by degrees of merit raised*
 I58 *They open to themselves at length the way*
 I59 *Up hither, under long obedience tried,⁶⁹*
 I60 *And earth be changed to Heav'n, and Heav'n to
 earth,*
 I61 *One kingdom, joy and union without end.*
 I62 *Meanwhile inhabit lax,⁷⁰ ye Powers of Heav'n,*
 I63 *And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee*
 I64 *This I perform. Speak thou, and be it done!*
 I65 *My overshadowing⁷¹ Spirit and Might with thee*
 I66 *I send along. Ride forth, and bid the deep*
 I67 *Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and earth—*

⁶² position, place

⁶³ occupy, hold

⁶⁴ [frequent]

⁶⁵ services (in the religious sense)

⁶⁶ foolishly

⁶⁷ surmised

⁶⁸ loss

⁶⁹ tested

⁷⁰ loosely, at ease

⁷¹ protecting

- 198 *Cherub, and Seraph, Potentates, and Thrones,*
 199 *And Virtues, wingèd Spirits, and chariots winged*
 200 *From th' armory⁷⁵ of God, where stand of old*
 201 *Myriads, between two brazen⁷⁶ mountains*
 lodged⁷⁷
 202 *Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,*
 203 *Celestial equipage,⁷⁸ and now came forth*
 204 *Spontaneous,⁷⁹ for within them Spirit lived,*
 205 *Attendant on their Lord. Heav'n op'ned wide*
 206 *Her ever-during⁸⁰ gates, harmonious sound*
 207 *On golden hinges moving, to let forth*
 208 *The King of Glory, in his powerful Word*
 209 *And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.*
 210 *On Heav'nly ground they stood, and from the*
 shore
 211 *They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss*
 212 *Outrageous⁸¹ as a sea, dark, wasteful,⁸² wild,*
 213 *Up from the bottom turned by furious winds*
 214 *And surging waves, as mountains, to assault*
 215 *Heav'n's height, and with the center mix the*
 pole.
 216 *“Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou, deep:*
 peace!”
 217 *Said then the Omnific⁸³ Word. ‘Your discord end!’*
 218 *Nor stayed but on the wings of Cherubim*
 219 *Uplifted, in paternal glory rode*
 220 *Far into Chaos and the world unborn,*

⁷⁵ arsenal

⁷⁶ like brass

⁷⁷ deposited

⁷⁸ apparatus

⁷⁹ naturally [trissyllabic, second accented, “-eous” elided]

⁸⁰ enduring

⁸¹ enormous

⁸² desolate

⁸³ all-creating

221 *For Chaos heard His voice. Him all his train*
 222 *Followed in bright procession, to behold*
 223 *Creation, and the wonders of His might.*
 224 *Then stayed the fervid⁸⁴ wheels, and in His hand*
 225 *He took the golden compasses, prepared*
 226 *In God's eternal store, to circumscribe⁸⁵*
 227 *This universe, and all created things.*
 228 *One foot He centered, and the other turned*
 229 *Round through the vast profundity⁸⁶ obscure.*
 230 *And said: 'Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,*
 231 *This be thy just circumference, O world!'*
 232 *Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the earth,*
 233 *Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound⁸⁷*
 234 *Covered the abyss, but on the wat'ry calm*
 235 *His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,*
 236 *And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth*
 237 *Throughout the fluid mass, but downward*
 purged⁸⁸
 238 *The black tartareous⁸⁹ cold infernal dregs,*
 239 *Adverse to life. Then founded,⁹⁰ then conglobed⁹¹*
 240 *Like things to like; the rest to several place*
 241 *Disparted,⁹² and between⁹³ spun out the air,*
 242 *And earth self-balanced on her center hung.*
 243 *'Let there be light,' said God, and forthwith light*

⁸⁴ glowing

⁸⁵ inscribe/draw a circular line/boundary

⁸⁶ depth

⁸⁷ deep

⁸⁸ removed

⁸⁹ (1) earthy, gritty, sedimentary, (2) hellish

⁹⁰ created

⁹¹ collected and compacted

⁹² separated

⁹³ in between

244 *Ethereal,⁹⁴ first of things, quintessence⁹⁵ pure,*
 245 *Sprung from the deep, and from her native east*
 246 *To journey through the airy gloom began,*
 247 *Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun*
 248 *Was not; she⁹⁶ in a cloudy tabernacle⁹⁷*
 249 *Sojourned⁹⁸ the while. God saw the light was*
 good,
 250 *And light from darkness by the hemisphere*
 251 *Divided; light the Day, and darkness Night*
 252 *He named. Thus was the first day, ev'n and morn,*
 253 *Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung*
 254 *By the celestial choirs, when orient⁹⁹ light*
 255 *Exhaling¹⁰⁰ first from darkness they beheld,*
 256 *Birth-day of Heav'n and earth. With joy and*
 shout
 257 *The hollow universal orb they filled,*
 258 *And touched their golden harps, and hymning*
 praised
 259 *God and His works. Creator Him they sung,*
 260 *Both when first ev'ning was, and when first*
 morn.
 261 *Again, God said: 'Let there be firmament¹⁰¹*
 262 *Amid the waters, and let it divide*
 263 *The waters from the waters.' And God made*
 264 *The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,*
 265 *Transparent, elemental air, diffused*
 266 *In circuit to the uttermost convex*

⁹⁴ spiritlike

⁹⁵ the fifth essence, of which substance the heavenly bodies were thought to be composed

⁹⁶ the sun

⁹⁷ tent

⁹⁸ stayed for a while, tarried

⁹⁹ gleaming

¹⁰⁰ blowing, sent out

¹⁰¹ firm or solid structure

267 *Of this great round, partition¹⁰² firm and sure,*
 268 *The waters underneath from those above*
 269 *Dividing, for as earth, so He the world*
 270 *Built on circumfluous¹⁰³ waters calm, in wide*
 271 *Crystalline ocean, and the loud¹⁰⁴ misrule¹⁰⁵*
 272 *Of Chaos far removed,¹⁰⁶ lest fierce extremes*
 273 *Contiguous¹⁰⁷ might distemper¹⁰⁸ the whole frame.*
 274 *And Heav'n He named the firmament. So ev'n*
 275 *And morning chorus sung the second day.*
 276 *“The earth was formed, but in the womb as yet*
 277 *Of waters, embryon¹⁰⁹ immature involved,¹¹⁰*
 278 *Appeared not. Over all the face of earth*
 279 *Main ocean flowed, not idle¹¹¹ but with warm*
 280 *Prolific¹¹² humor¹¹³ soft'ning all her globe,*
 281 *Fermented¹¹⁴ the great mother to conceive,*
 282 *Satiate with genial¹¹⁵ moisture, when God said:*
 283 *'Be gathered now ye waters under Heav'n*
 284 *Into one place, and let dry land appear.'*
 285 *Immediately the mountains huge appear*
 286 *Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave*
 287 *Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky,*

¹⁰² division, distribution

¹⁰³ ambient, flowing around

¹⁰⁴ offensive

¹⁰⁵ disorder

¹⁰⁶ took away

¹⁰⁷ [trissyllabic, second accented, “-uous” elided]

¹⁰⁸ disturb, disorder, derange

¹⁰⁹ embryo [trissyllabic, second accented]

¹¹⁰ reserved

¹¹¹ uselessly, pointless

¹¹² fertilizing

¹¹³ fluids, essences

¹¹⁴ stirred

¹¹⁵ generative

288 *So high as heaved the tumid¹¹⁶ hills, so low*
 289 *Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,*
 290 *Capacious bed of waters. Thither they¹¹⁷*
 291 *Hasted with glad precipitance,¹¹⁸ uprolled¹¹⁹*
 292 *As drops on dust conglobing¹²⁰ from the dry.*
 293 *Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge¹²¹ direct,*
 294 *For haste: such flight the great command*
 impressed
 295 *On the swift floods. As armies at the call*
 296 *Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)*
 297 *Troop¹²² to their standard, so the wat'ry throng,*
 298 *Wave rolling after wave, where way they found,*
 299 *If steep, with torrent¹²³ rapture,¹²⁴ if through plain,*
 300 *Soft-ebbing,¹²⁵ nor withstood them rock or hill,*
 301 *But they, or¹²⁶ under ground, or circuit wide*
 302 *With serpent error¹²⁷ wand'ring, found their way,*
 303 *And on the washy¹²⁸ ooze deep channels wore—*
 304 *Easy,¹²⁹ ere God had bid the ground be dry,*
 305 *All but within those banks, where rivers now*
 306 *Stream and perpetual draw their humid train.¹³⁰*

¹¹⁶ swelling, bulging

¹¹⁷ the waters

¹¹⁸ great speed

¹¹⁹ rolled up

¹²⁰ collecting

¹²¹ beds, lines

¹²² [verb]

¹²³ rushing [adjective]

¹²⁴ force of movement

¹²⁵ flowing back

¹²⁶ whether, either

¹²⁷ winding

¹²⁸ waterlogged

¹²⁹ comfortable

¹³⁰ current

- 307 *The dry land, earth,¹³¹ and the great receptacle*
 308 *Of congregated waters, He called seas,*
 309 *And saw that it was good. And said: 'Let th' earth*
 310 *Put forth the verdant¹³² grass, herb yielding seed,*
 311 *And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,*
 312 *Whose seed is in herself upon the earth.'*
 313 *He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then*
 314 *Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,*
 315 *Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure*
 clad
 316 *Her universal face with pleasant green.*
 317 *Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered*
 318 *Op'ning their various colors, and made gay*
 319 *Her bosom, smelling sweet, and these scarce*
 blown,¹³³
 320 *Forth flourished thick the clust'ring vine, forth*
 crept
 321 *The swelling gourd, up stood the corny¹³⁴ reed*
 322 *Embattled¹³⁵ in her field, and the humble shrub,*
 323 *And bush with frizzled hair implicit.¹³⁶ Last*
 324 *Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread*
 325 *Their branches hung with copious fruit, or*
 gemmed¹³⁷
 326 *Their blossoms. With high woods the hills were*
 crowned,
 327 *With tufts¹³⁸ the valleys, and each fountain-side,*

¹³¹ "He called the dry land 'earth' "

¹³² green

¹³³ formed

¹³⁴ grainlike

¹³⁵ crenellated, having battlements

¹³⁶ entangled, entwined

¹³⁷ budded

¹³⁸ groups of trees/shrubs

328 *With borders long¹³⁹ the rivers, that earth now*
 329 *Seemed like to Heav'n, a seat where gods might*
 dwell,
 330 *Or wander with delight, and love to haunt¹⁴⁰*
 331 *Her sacred shades, though God had yet not*
 rained
 332 *Upon the earth, and man to till the ground*
 333 *None was. But from the earth a dewy mist*
 334 *Went up, and watered all the ground, and each*
 335 *Plant of the field, which ere it was in th' earth*
 336 *God made, and every herb, before it grew*
 337 *On the green stem. God saw that it was good.*
 338 *So ev'n and morn recorded the third day.*
 339 *"Again th' Almighty spoke: 'Let there be lights*
 340 *High in th' expanse of Heaven, to divide*
 341 *The day from night, and let them be for signs,*
 342 *For seasons, and for days, and circling years,*
 343 *And let them be for lights, as I ordain*
 344 *Their office in the firmament of Heav'n,*
 345 *To give light on the earth.' And it was so.*
 346 *And God made two great lights, great for their*
 use
 347 *To man, the greater to have rule by day,*
 348 *The less by night, altern.¹⁴¹ And made the stars,*
 349 *And set them in the firmament of Heav'n*
 350 *T' illuminate the earth, and rule the day*
 351 *In their vicissitude,¹⁴² and rule the night,*
 352 *And light from darkness to divide. God saw,*
 353 *Surveying His great work, that it was good,*
 354 *For of celestial bodies first the sun*

¹³⁹ along

¹⁴⁰ visit, habituate

¹⁴¹ alternately

¹⁴² mutation, sequence

355 *A mighty sphere He framed, unlightsome¹⁴³ first,¹⁴⁴*
 356 *Though of ethereal mould, then formed the moon*
 357 *Globose,¹⁴⁵ and every magnitude of stars,*
 358 *And sowed with stars the Heav'n, thick as a field.*
 359 *Of light by far the greater part He took,*
 360 *Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed*
 361 *In the sun's orb, made porous to receive*
 362 *And drink the liquid light, firm to retain*
 363 *Her gathered beams, great palace¹⁴⁶ now of light.*
 364 *Hither, as to their fountain, other stars*
 365 *Repairing,¹⁴⁷ in their golden urns draw light,*
 366 *And hence the morning-planet¹⁴⁸ gilds her horns.¹⁴⁹*
 367 *By tincture¹⁵⁰ or reflection they augment*
 368 *Their small peculiar,¹⁵¹ though from human sight*
 369 *So far remote, with diminution seen.¹⁵²*
 370 *First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,*
 371 *Regent¹⁵³ of day, and all th' horizon round*
 372 *Invested¹⁵⁴ with bright rays, jocund¹⁵⁵ to run*
 373 *His longitude¹⁵⁶ through Heav'n's high road. The*
 gray
 374 *Dawn and the Pleiades before him danced,*

¹⁴³ not luminous

¹⁴⁴ at first

¹⁴⁵ of globular shape

¹⁴⁶ residence

¹⁴⁷ going, resorting

¹⁴⁸ Venus

¹⁴⁹ Galileo discovered that Venus, like the moon, had phases (then commonly spoken of as "horns")

¹⁵⁰ extraction, infusion, absorption

¹⁵¹ private property

¹⁵² with diminution seen = seen with lessened light

¹⁵³ ruler, governor, controller

¹⁵⁴ clothed, vested

¹⁵⁵ glad

¹⁵⁶ east-west course

375 *Shedding sweet influence.¹⁵⁷ Less bright the*
 moon,
 376 *But opposite in levelled¹⁵⁸ west was set,*
 377 *His¹⁵⁹ mirror, with full face borrowing her light*
 378 *From him, for other light she needed none*
 379 *In that aspect,¹⁶⁰ and still that distance keeps*
 380 *Till night, then in the east her turn she shines,*
 381 *Revolved on Heav'n's great axle, and her reign*
 382 *With thousand lesser lights dividual¹⁶¹ holds,*
 383 *With thousand thousand stars, that then*
 appeared
 384 *Spangling¹⁶² the hemisphere. Then first adorned*
 385 *With their bright luminaries that set and rose,*
 386 *Glad ev'ning and glad morn crowned the fourth*
 day.
 387 *“And God said: ‘Let the waters generate*
 388 *Reptile with spawn abundant, living soul,*
 389 *And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings*
 390 *Displayed on the open firmament of Heav'n.’*
 391 *And God created the great whales, and each*
 392 *Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously*
 393 *The waters generated by their kinds,*
 394 *And every bird of wing after his kind,*
 395 *And saw that it was good, and blessed them,*
 saying:
 396 *‘Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,*
 397 *And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill,*
 398 *And let the fowl be multiplied on th' earth.’*

¹⁵⁷ flowing forces

¹⁵⁸ horizontal

¹⁵⁹ the sun's

¹⁶⁰ position

¹⁶¹ divided, separate

¹⁶² decorating

- 399 *Forthwith the sounds*¹⁶³ *and seas, each creek and*
bay,
- 400 *With fry*¹⁶⁴ *innumerable swarm, and shoals*
- 401 *Of fish that with their fins, and shining scales,*
- 402 *Glide under the green wave, in sculls*¹⁶⁵ *that oft*
- 403 *Bank*¹⁶⁶ *the mid sea, part single, or with mate,*
- 404 *Graze the sea-weed their pasture, and through*
groves
- 405 *Of coral stray, or sporting*¹⁶⁷ *with quick glance,*
- 406 *Show to the sun their waved coats dropped*¹⁶⁸ *with*
gold,
- 407 *Or in their pearly shells at ease, attend*¹⁶⁹
- 408 *Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food*
- 409 *In jointed armour watch.*¹⁷⁰ *On smooth*¹⁷¹ *the seal*
- 410 *And bended*¹⁷² *dolphins play, part huge of bulk,*
- 411 *Wallowing*¹⁷³ *unwieldy,*¹⁷⁴ *enormous in their gait*
- 412 *Tempest*¹⁷⁵ *the ocean. There Leviathan,*
- 413 *Hugest of living creatures, on the deep*
- 414 *Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,*
- 415 *And seems a moving land, and at his gills*
- 416 *Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.*

¹⁶³ channels, inlets

¹⁶⁴ smaller fish

¹⁶⁵ schools

¹⁶⁶ form a mass/mound in

¹⁶⁷ frolicking

¹⁶⁸ sprinkled, flecked

¹⁶⁹ look for

¹⁷⁰ watch for

¹⁷¹ smooth water

¹⁷² striped

¹⁷³ rolling, surging

¹⁷⁴ ungraceful

¹⁷⁵ disturb violently [verb]

- 417 *Meanwhile the tepid¹⁷⁶ caves, and fens,¹⁷⁷ and
shores*
- 418 *Their brood as numerous hatch, from th' egg that
soon*
- 419 *Bursting with kindly¹⁷⁸ rupture forth disclosed*
- 420 *Their callow¹⁷⁹ young, but feathered soon and
fledge¹⁸⁰*
- 421 *They summed¹⁸¹ their pens¹⁸² and, soaring the air
sublime,¹⁸³*
- 422 *With clang¹⁸⁴ despised¹⁸⁵ the ground, under a
cloud*
- 423 *In prospect.¹⁸⁶ There the eagle and the stork*
- 424 *On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build.*
- 425 *Part loosely wing the region,¹⁸⁷ part more wise*
- 426 *In common, ranged¹⁸⁸ in figure,¹⁸⁹ wedge¹⁹⁰ their
way,*
- 427 *Intelligent¹⁹¹ of seasons, and set forth*
- 428 *Their airy caravan, high over seas*
- 429 *Flying, and over lands, with mutual¹⁹² wing*
- 430 *Easing their flight. So steers the prudent crane*

¹⁷⁶ lukewarm

¹⁷⁷ marshes

¹⁷⁸ natural

¹⁷⁹ downy, unfledged

¹⁸⁰ maturely feathered

¹⁸¹ collect

¹⁸² full-grown feathers

¹⁸³ high

¹⁸⁴ harsh birdcalls

¹⁸⁵ looked down on

¹⁸⁶ in visual survey from the ground, the mass of birds resembles a cloud

¹⁸⁷ i.e., of the sky

¹⁸⁸ arranged

¹⁸⁹ a pattern

¹⁹⁰ cleave, drive (as per their wedgelike, triangular formation)

¹⁹¹ understanding

¹⁹² reciprocal: those behind, it was said, rested their heads on those in front

- 431 *Her annual voyage, borne on winds. The air*
 432 *Floats¹⁹³ as they pass, fanned with unnumbered*
plumes.
 433 *From branch to branch the smaller birds with*
song
 434 *Solaced¹⁹⁴ the woods, and spread their painted*
wings
 435 *Till ev'n,¹⁹⁵ nor then the solemn¹⁹⁶ nightingale*
 436 *Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft*
lays.¹⁹⁷
 437 *Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed*
 438 *Their downy breast; the swan with archèd neck,*
 439 *Between her white wings mantling¹⁹⁸ proudly,*
rows
 440 *Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit*
 441 *The dank¹⁹⁹ and, rising on stiff pennons, tow'r²⁰⁰*
 442 *The mid aerial sky. Others on ground*
 443 *Walked firm, the crested cock whose clarion²⁰¹*
sounds
 444 *The silent hours, and th' other²⁰² whose gay train*
 445 *Adorns him, colored with the florid hue*
 446 *Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus*
 447 *With fish replenished,²⁰³ and the air with fowl,*
 448 *Ev'ning and morn solemnized²⁰⁴ the fifth day.*

¹⁹³ moves gently, undulates

¹⁹⁴ made a cheerful place of

¹⁹⁵ evening

¹⁹⁶ grave, impressive

¹⁹⁷ songs

¹⁹⁸ spread out, one after the other

¹⁹⁹ wet spot, wetness

²⁰⁰ [verb]

²⁰¹ trumpetlike call [noun]

²⁰² the peacock

²⁰³ filled

²⁰⁴ proclaimed, honored

449 *“The sixth, and of Creation last, arose*
 450 *With ev’ning harps, and matin,²⁰⁵ when God said:*
 451 *‘Let th’ earth bring forth soul living, in her kind,²⁰⁶*
 452 *Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of th’*
 earth,
 453 *Each in their kind.’ The earth obeyed, and*
 straight
 454 *Op’ning her fertile womb teemed²⁰⁷ at a birth*
 455 *Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,*
 456 *Limbed and full grown. Out of the ground up*
 rose,
 457 *As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons²⁰⁸*
 458 *In forest wild, in thicket, brake,²⁰⁹ or den.*
 459 *Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked,*
 460 *The cattle in the fields and meadows green,*
 461 *Those²¹⁰ rare and solitary, these²¹¹ in flocks*
 462 *Pasturing at once, and in broad herds*
 upsprung.²¹²
 463 *The grassy clods²¹³ now calved: now half*
 appeared
 464 *The tawny lion, pawing to get free*
 465 *His hinder parts, then springs as broke from*
 bonds,
 466 *And rampant²¹⁴ shakes his brinded²¹⁵ mane. The*
 ounce,²¹⁶

²⁰⁵ (1) birdsong [if a noun], or (2) morning [if an adjective modifying “harps”]

²⁰⁶ of her sort/kind/species

²⁰⁷ brought forth

²⁰⁸ dwells

²⁰⁹ brushwood

²¹⁰ the wild beasts of the wood

²¹¹ cattle

²¹² come into being

²¹³ earth

²¹⁴ rearing

²¹⁵ brindled, streaked

²¹⁶ lynx

- 467 *The libbard,²¹⁷ and the tiger, as the mole*
 468 *Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw*
 469 *In hillocks. The swift stag from under ground*
 470 *Bore up his branching head. Scarce from his*
 mould
 471 *Behemoth,²¹⁸ biggest born of earth, upheaved*
 472 *His vastness. Fleeced the flocks, and bleating*
 rose
 473 *As²¹⁹ plants. Ambiguous²²⁰ between²²¹ sea and*
 land
 474 *The river-horse,²²² and scaly crocodile.*
 475 *At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,*
 476 *Insect or worm. Those waved their limber²²³*
 fans²²⁴
 477 *For wings, and smallest lineaments²²⁵ exact²²⁶*
 478 *In all the liveries decked of summer's pride*
 479 *With spots of gold and purple, azure and green.*
 480 *These as a line their long dimension drew,*
 481 *Streaking²²⁷ the ground with sinuous trace.²²⁸ Not*
 all
 482 *Minims²²⁹ of Nature: some of serpent-kind,*

²¹⁷ leopard

²¹⁸ see Job 40:15–24

²¹⁹ like

²²⁰ hesitating

²²¹ [between]

²²² hippo = horse, potamus = of the river: Milton here translates the Greek

²²³ flexible

²²⁴ tails

²²⁵ parts of the body

²²⁶ finished, perfect

²²⁷ marking with stripes

²²⁸ tracks

²²⁹ very small creatures

483 *Wondrous in length and corpulence,*²³⁰ *involved*²³¹
 484 *Their snaky folds, and added*²³² *wings. First crept*
 485 *The parsimonious emmet,*²³³ *provident*
 486 *Of future, in small room large heart enclosed,*
 487 *Pattern of just equality perhaps*
 488 *Hereafter, joined in her popular*²³⁴ *tribes*
 489 *Of commonalty. Swarming, next appeared*
 490 *The female bee, that feeds her husband drone*
 491 *Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells*
 492 *With honey stored. The rest are numberless,*
 493 *And thou their natures know'st, and gav'st them*
 names,
 494 *Needless to thee repeated. Nor unknown*
 495 *The serpent, subtlest*²³⁵ *beast of all the field,*
 496 *Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes*
 497 *And hairy mane terrific,*²³⁶ *though to thee*
 498 *Not noxious,*²³⁷ *but obedient at thy call.*
 499 *"Now Heav'n in all her glory shone, and*
 rolled
 500 *Her motions, as the great first Mover's hand*
 501 *First wheeled their course. Earth in her rich*
 attire
 502 *Consummate*²³⁸ *lovely smiled. Air, water, earth,*
 503 *By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was*
 walked,
 504 *Frequent, and of the sixth day yet remained.*

²³⁰ size

²³¹ enwrapped

²³² [adjective]

²³³ ant

²³⁴ crowded [popular?]

²³⁵ most artful, trickiest

²³⁶ frightful, terrorizing

²³⁷ hurtful

²³⁸ supremely, perfected

505 *There wanted yet the master-work, the end*²³⁹
 506 *Of all yet done, a creature who not prone*²⁴⁰
 507 *And brute*²⁴¹ *as other creatures, but endued*
 508 *With sanctity*²⁴² *of reason, might erect*
 509 *His stature, and upright with front*²⁴³ *serene*
 510 *Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence*
 511 *Magnanimous*²⁴⁴ *to correspond*²⁴⁵ *with Heav'n,*
 512 *But grateful to acknowledge whence his good*
 513 *Descends, thither with heart, and voice, and eyes*
 514 *Directed in devotion, to adore*
 515 *And worship God Supreme, who made him chief*
 516 *Of all His works. Therefore th' Omnipotent*
 517 *Eternal Father (for where is not He*
 518 *Present?) thus to His Son audibly spoke:*
 519 *“ Let us make now man in our image, man*
 520 *In our similitude,*²⁴⁶ *and let them*²⁴⁷ *rule*
 521 *Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,*
 522 *Beast of the field, and over all the earth,*
 523 *And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.’*
 524 *This said, He formed thee, Adam, thee, O man,*
 525 *Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed*
 526 *The breath of life. In His own image He*
 527 *Created thee, in the image of God*
 528 *Express,*²⁴⁸ *and thou becam’st a living soul.*
 529 *Male He created thee, but thy consort*

²³⁹ goal, purpose

²⁴⁰ face down

²⁴¹ savage

²⁴² holy feelings

²⁴³ face

²⁴⁴ noble

²⁴⁵ be harmonious with, answer to

²⁴⁶ likeness

²⁴⁷ men

²⁴⁸ exact [adjective]

530 *Female, for race,²⁴⁹ then blessed mankind, and
said:*

531 *'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;*
532 *Subdue²⁵⁰ it, and throughout dominion hold*
533 *Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,*
534 *And every living thing that moves on th' earth.'*
535 *Wherever thus created, for no place*
536 *Is yet distinct²⁵¹ by name, thence, as thou know'st,*
537 *He brought thee into this delicious grove,*
538 *This garden, planted with the trees of God,*
539 *Delectable both to behold and taste,*
540 *And freely all their pleasant fruit for food*
541 *Gave thee. All sorts are here that all th' earth
yields,*

542 *Variety without end. But of the tree*
543 *Which tasted, works knowledge of good and evil,*
544 *Thou may'st not. In the day thou eat'st, thou
di'st.²⁵²*

545 *Death is the penalty imposed. Beware,*
546 *And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin*
547 *Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.*

548 *"Here finished He, and all that He had made*
549 *Viewed, and behold all was entirely good.*
550 *So ev'n and morn accomplished the sixth day.*

551 *"Yet not till the Creator from His work*
552 *Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,*
553 *Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns, His high abode,*
554 *Thence to behold this new created world,*
555 *Th' addition of His empire, how it showed*
556 *In prospect from His throne, how good, how fair,*

²⁴⁹ breeding, generation

²⁵⁰ control, cultivate

²⁵¹ differentiated, distinguishable

²⁵² die-est

557 *Answering*²⁵³ *His great idea.*²⁵⁴ *Up He rode*
 558 *Followed with acclamation, and the sound*
 559 *Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned*
 560 *Angelic harmonies. The earth, the air*
 561 *Resounded (thou rememb'rest, for thou heard'st),*
 562 *The Heav'ns and all the constellations rung,*
 563 *The planets in their station listening stood,*
 564 *While the bright pomp*²⁵⁵ *ascended jubilant.*
 565 *'Open, ye everlasting gates!' they sung,*
 566 *'Open, ye Heav'ns! your living doors! Let in*
 567 *The great Creator from His work returned*
 568 *Magnificent, His six days work, a world!*
 569 *Open, and henceforth oft, for God will deign*
 570 *To visit oft the dwellings of just men,*
 571 *Delighted, and with frequent intercourse*
 572 *Thither will send His wingèd messengers*
 573 *On errands of supernal*²⁵⁶ *grace.' So sung*
 574 *The glorious train*²⁵⁷ *ascending. He through*
 Heav'n,
 575 *That opened wide her blazing portals, led*
 576 *To God's eternal house direct the way,*
 577 *A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold*
 578 *And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,*
 579 *Seen in the galaxy, that milky way*
 580 *Which nightly, as a circling zone,*²⁵⁸ *thou see'st*
 581 *Powdered with stars. And now on earth the*
 seventh
 582 *Ev'ning arose in Eden, for the sun*
 583 *Was set, and twilight from the east came on,*

²⁵³ fulfilling

²⁵⁴ [the syntax here is uncertain, though the intended meaning is not]

²⁵⁵ procession

²⁵⁶ heavenly, exalted

²⁵⁷ procession

²⁵⁸ belt, girdle

584 *Forerunning night, when at the holy mount*
 585 *Of Heav'n's high-seated top, the imperial throne*
 586 *Of Godhead, fixed for ever firm and sure,*
 587 *The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down*
 588 *With his great Father, for he also went*
 589 *Invisible, yet stayed²⁵⁹ (such privilege*
 590 *Hath Omnipresence), and the work ordained,*
 591 *Author and End of all things, and from work*
 592 *Now resting, blessed and hallowed the sev'nth*
 day,
 593 *As resting on that day from all His work,*
 594 *But not in silence holy kept. The harp*
 595 *Had work and rested not, the solemn pipe,*
 596 *And dulcimer, all organs of sweet stop,*
 597 *All sounds on fret²⁶⁰ by string or golden wire,*
 598 *Tempered²⁶¹ soft tunings, intermixed with voice*
 599 *Choral or unison. Of incense clouds,*
 600 *Fuming from golden censers, hid the mount.*
 601 *Creation and the six days acts they sung:*
 602 *“Great are thy works, Jehovah! Infinite*
 603 *Thy power! What thought can measure Thee, or*
 tongue
 604 *Relate thee? Greater now in Thy return*
 605 *Than from the giant Angels. Thee that day*
 606 *Thy thunders magnified, but to create*
 607 *Is greater than created²⁶² to destroy.*
 608 *Who can impair²⁶³ Thee, Mighty King, or bound²⁶⁴*
 609 *Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt*
 610 *Of Spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,*

²⁵⁹ abided

²⁶⁰ the stop on a stringed instrument

²⁶¹ produced

²⁶² that which is created

²⁶³ injure

²⁶⁴ limit

611 *Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought*
 612 *Thee to diminish, and from Thee withdraw*
 613 *The number of Thy worshippers. Who seeks*
 614 *To lessen Thee, against his purpose serves*
 615 *To manifest the more Thy might. His evil*
 616 *Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.*
 617 *Witness this new-made world, another Heav'n*
 618 *From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view*
 619 *On the clear hyaline,²⁶⁵ the glassy sea,*
 620 *Of amplitude almost immense,²⁶⁶ with stars*
 621 *Numerous, and every star perhaps a world*
 622 *Of destined habitation. But thou know'st*
 623 *Their seasons. Among²⁶⁷ these the seat of men,*
 624 *Earth, with her nether²⁶⁸ ocean circumfused,²⁶⁹*
 625 *Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy*
 men,
 626 *And sons of men, whom God hath thus*
 advanced!²⁷⁰
 627 *Created in His image, there to dwell*
 628 *And worship Him, and in reward to rule*
 629 *Over His works, on earth, in sea, or air,*
 630 *And multiply a race of worshippers*
 631 *Holy and just. Thrice happy, if they know*
 632 *Their happiness, and persevere upright!'*
 633 *"So sung they, and the empyrean rung*
 634 *With hallelujahs. Thus was sabbath kept.*
 635 *And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked*
 636 *How first this world and face²⁷¹ of things began,*

²⁶⁵ the waters above the firmament

²⁶⁶ boundless, immeasurable: the reference is to the new world, not to the hyaline

²⁶⁷ [first syllable accented]

²⁶⁸ lower

²⁶⁹ surrounded

²⁷⁰ raised

²⁷¹ visible state, external appearance

637 *And what before thy memory was done*
638 *From the beginning, that²⁷² posterity,*
639 *Informed by thee, might know. If else thou seek'st*
640 *Aught, not surpassing human measure,²⁷³ say."*

The End of the Seventh Book

²⁷² so that

²⁷³ need

BOOK VIII

THE ARGUMENT

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

1 *The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear*
 2 *So charming¹ left his voice, that he a while*
 3 *Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed² to*
 hear,
 4 *Then, as new waked, thus gratefully replied:*
 5 *“What thanks sufficient, or what recompence*
 6 *Equal, have I to render thee, divine*
 7 *Historian,³ who thus largely⁴ hast allayed*
 8 *The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed*
 9 *This friendly condescension to relate*
 10 *Things else by me unsearchable?⁵ now heard*
 11 *With wonder, but delight, and as is due*
 12 *With glory attributed to the high*
 13 *Creator! Something yet of doubt remains,*
 14 *Which only thy solution⁶ can resolve.*
 15 *When I behold this goodly frame,⁷ this world,*
 16 *Of Heav'n and earth consisting, and compute*
 17 *Their magnitudes, this earth, a spot, a grain,*
 18 *An atom, with the firmament compared*
 19 *And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll*
 20 *Spaces incomprehensible (for such*
 21 *Their distance argues,⁸ and their swift return*
 22 *Diurnal)⁹ merely to officiate¹⁰ light*
 23 *Round this opaceous¹¹ earth, this punctual¹² spot,*

¹ under a spell: i.e., “charm,” as in magic spells

² immobile

³ (1) teller of history, (2) teller of stories

⁴ amply, fully

⁵ inscrutable

⁶ solving

⁷ structure, fabric

⁸ indicates

⁹ daily

¹⁰ provide, supply

¹¹ dark (“opaque”)

¹² like a point, a dot

- 24 *One day and night, in all her vast survey*¹³
 25 *Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire*¹⁴
 26 *How Nature wise and frugal could commit*
 27 *Such disproportions, with superfluous hand*
 28 *So many nobler bodies to create,*
 29 *Greater so manifold, to this one use*
 30 *(For aught appears), and on their orbs impose*
 31 *Such restless*¹⁵ *revolution*¹⁶ *day by day*
 32 *Repeated, while the sedentary*¹⁷ *earth,*
 33 *That better might with far less compass*¹⁸ *move,*
 34 *Served by more*¹⁹ *noble than herself, attains*
 35 *Her end without least motion, and receives,*
 36 *As tribute, such a sumless*²⁰ *journey brought*²¹
 37 *Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light—*
 38 *Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”*
 39 *So spoke our sire, and by his count'nance*
 seemed
 40 *Entering on studious thoughts abstruse,*²² *which*
 Eve
 41 *Perceiving, where she sat retired in*²³ *sight,*
 42 *With lowliness*²⁴ *majestic from her seat,*
 43 *And grace that won*²⁵ *who*²⁶ *saw to wish her stay,*

¹³ viewing

¹⁴ wonder

¹⁵ constant, unceasing

¹⁶ revolving, turning

¹⁷ inactive

¹⁸ ingenuity, craft, artifice

¹⁹ those more

²⁰ immeasurable

²¹ caused

²² remote from understanding, recondite

²³ from (“out of”)

²⁴ humility

²⁵ won over

²⁶ whoever

44 *Rose and went forth among her fruits and flow'rs,*
 45 *To visit²⁷ how they prospered, bud and bloom,*
 46 *Her nursery. They at her coming sprung*
 47 *And, touched by her fair tendance,²⁸ gladlier grew.*
 48 *Yet went she not, as not with such discourse*
 49 *Delighted, or not capable her ear*
 50 *Of what was high: such pleasure she reserved,²⁹*
 51 *Adam relating,³⁰ she sole auditress.³¹*
 52 *Her husband the relater she preferred*
 53 *Before the Angel, and of him to ask*
 54 *Chose³² rather. He, she knew, would intermix*
 55 *Grateful³³ digressions, and solve high dispute*
 56 *With conjugal caresses: from his lip*
 57 *Not words alone pleased her. (O! when meet³⁴*
 now
 58 *Such pairs, in love and mutual honor joined?)*
 59 *With goddess-like demeanor forth she went,*
 60 *Not unattended, for on her, as queen,*
 61 *A pomp³⁵ of winning graces waited still,*
 62 *And from about her shot darts of desire*
 63 *Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.*
 64 *And Raphael now, to Adam's doubt proposed,*
 65 *Benevolent and facile,³⁶ thus replied:*
 66 *"To ask or search, I blame thee not, for Heav'n*
 67 *Is as the book of God before thee set,*
 68 *Wherein to read His wondrous works, and learn*

²⁷ examine, inspect

²⁸ care

²⁹ held back, kept apart

³⁰ telling

³¹ hearer, listener

³² [verb]

³³ pleasing

³⁴ [verb]

³⁵ procession

³⁶ mild of manner

69 *His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.*
 70 *This to attain,³⁷ whether Heav'n move or earth,*
 71 *Imports³⁸ not if³⁹ thou reckon⁴⁰ right. The rest*
 72 *From man or Angel the great Architect*
 73 *Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge*
 74 *His secrets to be scanned⁴¹ by them who ought*
 75 *Rather admire,⁴² or if they list⁴³ to try*
 76 *Conjecture, He His fabric of the Heav'ns*
 77 *Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move*
 78 *His laughter at their quaint⁴⁴ opinions wide⁴⁵*
 79 *Hereafter. When they come to model⁴⁶ Heav'n*
 80 *And calculate the stars, how they will wield⁴⁷*
 81 *The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive*
 82 *To save⁴⁸ appearances,⁴⁹ how gird⁵⁰ the sphere*
 83 *With centric⁵¹ and eccentric⁵² scribbled o'er,*
 84 *Cycle⁵³ and epicycle,⁵⁴ orb⁵⁵ in orb.*
 85 *Already by thy reasoning this I guess,*

³⁷ find out

³⁸ matters, signifies

³⁹ whether or not

⁴⁰ calculate, estimate

⁴¹ analyze, scrutinize, examine carefully

⁴² wonder, marvel at

⁴³ desire, wish

⁴⁴ clever, ingenious

⁴⁵ mistaken

⁴⁶ portray

⁴⁷ express

⁴⁸ preserve, keep

⁴⁹ likelihood

⁵⁰ encircle

⁵¹ at the center

⁵² not centrally placed

⁵³ recurrent sequence

⁵⁴ small circle, with its center on the circumference of another circle

⁵⁵ circle

86 *Who⁵⁶ art to lead thy offspring, and supposest*
 87 *That bodies bright and greater should not serve*
 88 *The less not bright, nor Heav'n such journeys run,*
 89 *Earth sitting still, when she alone receives*
 90 *The benefit.*

“Consider, first, that great
 91 *Or bright inners⁵⁷ not excellence. The earth,*
 92 *Though in comparison of Heav'n so small,*
 93 *Nor glistening,⁵⁸ may of solid good contain*
 94 *More plenty than the sun that barren shines,*
 95 *Whose virtue⁵⁹ on itself works no effect,*
 96 *But in the fruitful earth, there first received,*
 97 *His beams, unactive⁶⁰ else,⁶¹ their vigor⁶² find.*
 98 *Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries*
 99 *Officious,⁶³ but to thee, earth's habitant.*
 100 *And for the Heav'n's wide circuit, let it speak*
 101 *The Maker's high magnificence, who built*
 102 *So spacious, and His line stretched out so far*
 103 *That man may know he dwells not in his own,*
 104 *An edifice too large for him to fill,*
 105 *Lodged in a small partition,⁶⁴ and the rest*
 106 *Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.*
 107 *The swiftness of those circles attribute,⁶⁵*
 108 *Though numberless, to His Omnipotence,*
 109 *That to corporeal substances could add*

⁵⁶ you who

⁵⁷ implies

⁵⁸ gleaming, bright

⁵⁹ power

⁶⁰ ineffective

⁶¹ otherwise

⁶² active force

⁶³ in service/office

⁶⁴ part

⁶⁵ [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

110 *Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow,*
 111 *Who since the morning-hour set out from Heav'n*
 112 *Where God resides, and ere mid-day arrived*
 113 *In Eden—distance inexpressible*
 114 *By numbers that have name. But this I urge,⁶⁶*
 115 *Admitting⁶⁷ motion in the Heav'ns, to show*
 116 *Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved.⁶⁸*
 117 *Not that I so affirm,⁶⁹ though so it seem*
 118 *To thee who hast thy dwelling here on earth.*
 119 *God, to remove His ways from human sense,*
 120 *Placed Heav'n from earth so far, that earthly*
 sight,
 121 *If it presume, might err in things too high,*
 122 *And no advantage gain. What if the sun*
 123 *Be center to the world? and other stars,*
 124 *By his⁷⁰ attractive⁷¹ virtue⁷² and their own*
 125 *Incited, dance about him various rounds?*
 126 *Their wand'ring course now high, now low, then*
 hid,
 127 *Progressive,⁷³ retrograde,⁷⁴ or standing still,*
 128 *In six⁷⁵ thou see'st? And what if sev'nth to these*
 129 *The planet earth, so steadfast though she seem,*
 130 *Insensibly three different motions move,*
 131 *Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,*

⁶⁶ allege, say

⁶⁷ conceding (arguendo: for the purposes of argument)

⁶⁸ said

⁶⁹ confirm, ratify

⁷⁰ the sun's

⁷¹ magnetic

⁷² power

⁷³ continually moving forward/larger

⁷⁴ continually moving backward/smaller

⁷⁵ six planets

- 132 *Moved contrary with thwart⁷⁶ obliquities,⁷⁷*
 133 *Or save the sun his labor, and that swift*
 134 *Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb⁷⁸ supposed,*
 135 *Invisible⁷⁹ else above all stars, the wheel*
 136 *Of day and night, which needs not thy belief*
 137 *If earth, industrious⁸⁰ of herself, fetch⁸¹ day*
 138 *Travelling east, and with her part averse*
 139 *From the sun's beam meet night, her other part*
 140 *Still luminous by his⁸² ray? What if that light,*
 141 *Sent from her⁸³ through the wide transpicious⁸⁴*
 air;
 142 *To the terrestrial moon be as a star,*
 143 *Enlight'ning her⁸⁵ by day, as she⁸⁶ by night*
 144 *This earth, reciprocal, if land be there,*
 145 *Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou see'st*
 146 *As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain*
 produce
 147 *Fruits in her softened soil for some to eat*
 148 *Allotted⁸⁷ there. And other suns perhaps,*
 149 *With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,*
 150 *Communicating male and female light,⁸⁸*
 151 *Which two great sexes animate the world,*

⁷⁶ transverse, crossways

⁷⁷ angles

⁷⁸ the tenth and outermost sphere, the primum mobile, which kept the other spheres in motion

⁷⁹ [trisyllabic, second accented, "-ible" elided]

⁸⁰ zealous

⁸¹ reaches, meets

⁸² the sun's

⁸³ the earth

⁸⁴ clear, transparent

⁸⁵ the moon

⁸⁶ the moon

⁸⁷ assigned, destined

⁸⁸ male light = original, female light = reflected

152 *Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.*
 153 *For such vast room⁸⁹ in Nature unpossessed*
 154 *By living soul, desert⁹⁰ and desolate,*
 155 *Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute⁹¹*
 156 *Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far*
 157 *Down to this habitable,⁹² which returns*
 158 *Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.⁹³*
 159 *But whether thus these things, or whether not—*
 160 *But whether the sun, predominant in Heav'n,*
 161 *Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the sun—*
 162 *He from the east his flaming road begin,*
 163 *Or she from west her silent course advance,*
 164 *With inoffensive⁹⁴ pace that spinning sleeps*
 165 *On her soft axle, while she paces ev'n,⁹⁵*
 166 *And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—*
 167 *Solicit⁹⁶ not thy thoughts with matters hid.*
 168 *Leave them to God above. Him serve, and fear!*
 169 *Of other creatures, as Him pleases best,*
 170 *Wherever placed, let Him dispose. Joy thou*
 171 *In what He gives to thee, this Paradise*
 172 *And thy fair Eve. Heav'n is for thee too high*
 173 *To know what passes there. Be lowly⁹⁷ wise,*
 174 *Think only what concerns thee, and thy being.*
 175 *Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there*
 176 *Live, in what state,⁹⁸ condition,⁹⁹ or degree,¹⁰⁰*

⁸⁹ space

⁹⁰ deserted [desert]

⁹¹ [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁹² habitable earth [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁹³ obvious to dispute = obviously disputable

⁹⁴ harmless

⁹⁵ evenly

⁹⁶ disturb, make anxious

⁹⁷ humbly

⁹⁸ manner

⁹⁹ circumstances (i.e., rich or poor)

¹⁰⁰ a point on some scale of measurement

177 *Contented that thus far hath been revealed*
 178 *Not of earth only, but of highest Heav'n."*
 179 *To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:*
 180 *"How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure*
 181 *Intelligence of Heav'n, Angel serene!*
 182 *And, freed from intricacies,¹⁰¹ taught to live*
 183 *The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts*
 184 *To interrupt the sweet of life, from which*
 185 *God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,*
 186 *And not molest¹⁰² us, unless we ourselves*
 187 *Seek them with wand'ring thoughts, and notions*
 vain.
 188 *But apt the mind or fancy is to rove*
 189 *Unchecked, and of her roving is no end,*
 190 *Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn*
 191 *That not to know at large¹⁰³ of things remote*
 192 *From use, obscure and subtle,¹⁰⁴ but to know*
 193 *That which before us lies in daily life,*
 194 *Is the prime wisdom. What is more, is fume¹⁰⁵*
 195 *Or emptiness, or fond¹⁰⁶ impertinence,¹⁰⁷*
 196 *And renders us, in things that most concern*
 197 *Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.*
 198 *Therefore from this high pitch¹⁰⁸ let us descend¹⁰⁹*
 199 *A lower flight, and speak of things at hand*

¹⁰¹ complications

¹⁰² afflict, trouble

¹⁰³ at large = fully, amply

¹⁰⁴ abstruse

¹⁰⁵ smoke, vapor

¹⁰⁶ foolish

¹⁰⁷ irrelevance, presumption

¹⁰⁸ point, elevation

¹⁰⁹ descend to

200 *Useful, whence haply,¹¹⁰ mention may arise*
 201 *Of something not unseasonable to ask,*
 202 *By sufferance,¹¹¹ and thy wonted¹¹² favor, deigned.*
 203 *“Thee I have heard relating what was done*
 204 *Ere my remembrance. Now, hear me relate*
 205 *My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard.*
 206 *And day is not yet spent—till then thou see’st*
 207 *How subtly to detain thee I devise,*
 208 *Inviting thee to hear while I relate.*
 209 *Fond!¹¹³ were it not in hope of thy reply,*
 210 *For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav’n,*
 211 *And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear*
 212 *Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst*
 213 *And hunger both, from¹¹⁴ labor, at the hour*
 214 *Of sweet repast.¹¹⁵ They satiate,¹¹⁶ and soon fill,*
 215 *Though pleasant, but thy words, with grace*
 divine
 216 *Imbued,¹¹⁷ bring to their sweetness no satiety.”¹¹⁸*
 217 *To whom thus Raphael answered, Heav’nly*
 meek.¹¹⁹
 218 *“Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,*
 219 *Nor tongue ineloquent. For God on thee*
 220 *Abundantly His gifts hath also poured*
 221 *Inward and outward both, His image fair.*
 222 *Speaking or mute,¹²⁰ all comeliness and grace*

¹¹⁰ perhaps

¹¹¹ permission [bisyllabic: *suffrance*]

¹¹² usual, customary, habitual

¹¹³ foolish

¹¹⁴ after

¹¹⁵ meal, food

¹¹⁶ [bisyllabic: *satiate*]

¹¹⁷ permeated, inspired

¹¹⁸ [trisyllabic, second accented: *satiety*]

¹¹⁹ courteous, indulgent

¹²⁰ silent

- 223 *Attends thee, and each word, each motion*¹²¹
*forms.*¹²²
- 224 *Nor less think we in Heav'n of thee on earth*
 225 *Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire*
 226 *Gladly into the ways of God with man,*
 227 *For God, we see, hath honored thee, and set*
 228 *On man His equal love. Say therefore on,*
 229 *For I that day was absent, as befell,*¹²³
 230 *Bound on a voyage uncouth*¹²⁴ *and obscure,*¹²⁵
 231 *Far on excursion*¹²⁶ *toward the gates of Hell,*
 232 *Squared*¹²⁷ *in full legion*¹²⁸ *(such command we*
had)
- 233 *To see that none thence issued forth a spy*
 234 *Or enemy, while God was in His work,*
 235 *Lest He, incensed at such eruption*¹²⁹ *bold,*
 236 *Destruction with creation might have mixed.*
 237 *Not that they durst without His leave attempt—*
 238 *But us He sends upon His high behests*
 239 *For state, as Sov'reign King, and to inure*¹³⁰
 240 *Our prompt obedience.*¹³¹ *Fast we found, fast shut,*
 241 *The dismal gates, and barricado'd*¹³² *strong,*
 242 *But long ere our approaching heard within*
 243 *Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,*
 244 *Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.*

¹²¹ proposition

¹²² is in order/form/a structure

¹²³ it happened

¹²⁴ unfamiliar, strange [*uncouth*]

¹²⁵ dark, hidden

¹²⁶ a journey

¹²⁷ arranged, formed

¹²⁸ military formation

¹²⁹ breaking out

¹³⁰ accustom

¹³¹ [trisyllabic, second accented, “-ience” elided]

¹³² barricaded

245 *Glad we returned up to the coasts of light*
 246 *Ere sabbath-ev'ning: so we had in charge.*¹³³
 247 *But thy relation*¹³⁴ *now, for I attend,*¹³⁵
 248 *Pleased with thy words no less than thou with*
 mine.”
 249 *So spoke the godlike Power, and thus our sire:*
 250 *“For man to tell how human life began*
 251 *Is hard, for who himself beginning knew?*
 252 *Desire with thee still longer to converse*
 253 *Induced*¹³⁶ *me. As new waked from soundest*
 sleep,
 254 *Soft on the flow'ry herb*¹³⁷ *I found me laid,*
 255 *In balmy*¹³⁸ *sweat, which with his beams the sun*
 256 *Soon dried, and on the reeking*¹³⁹ *moisture fed.*
 257 *Straight toward Heav'n my wond'ring eyes I*
 turned,
 258 *And gazed a while the ample sky, till raised*
 259 *By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,*
 260 *As thitherward endeavoring, and upright*
 261 *Stood on my feet. About me round I saw*
 262 *Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,*
 263 *And liquid lapse*¹⁴⁰ *of murmuring streams. By*¹⁴¹
 these,
 264 *Creatures that lived and moved, and walked, or*
 flew,
 265 *Birds on the branches warbling—all things*
 smiled.

¹³³ ordered, commanded

¹³⁴ narration

¹³⁵ listen

¹³⁶ led, prevailed upon

¹³⁷ herbage, grass

¹³⁸ mild, soft

¹³⁹ steaming

¹⁴⁰ gliding flow

¹⁴¹ near, alongside

266 *With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.*
 267 *Myself I then perused, and limb by limb*
 268 *Surveyed, and sometimes went,¹⁴² and sometimes*
 ran

269 *With supple joints, as lively vigor led.*
 270 *But who I was, or where, or from what cause,*
 271 *Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spoke.*
 272 *My tongue obeyed, and readily could name*
 273 *Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair light,*
 274 *And thou enlight'ned¹⁴³ earth, so fresh and gay,*
 275 *Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,*
 276 *And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,*
 277 *Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?—*
 278 *Not of myself—by some great Maker, then,*
 279 *In goodness and in power preëminent.*
 280 *Tell me, how may I know Him, how adore,*
 281 *From whom I have that thus I move and live,*
 282 *And feel that I am happier than I know.'*
 283 *While thus I called, and strayed I knew not*
 whither

284 *From where I first drew air, and first beheld*
 285 *This happy light—when, answer none returned,*
 286 *On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,*
 287 *Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep*
 288 *First found me, and with soft oppression¹⁴⁴ seized*
 289 *My drowsèd¹⁴⁵ sense, untroubled, though I*
 thought

290 *I then was passing to my former state*
 291 *Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve.*
 292 *When suddenly stood at my head a dream,*
 293 *Whose inward apparition¹⁴⁶ gently moved*

¹⁴² moved, walked

¹⁴³ illuminated (literally: by sunlight)

¹⁴⁴ weight

¹⁴⁵ soporific, sleepy

¹⁴⁶ manifestation

294 *My fancy to believe I yet had being,*
 295 *And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,*
 296 *And said, 'Thy mansion'¹⁴⁷ wants¹⁴⁸ thee, Adam.*
 Rise,
 297 *First man, of men innumerable ordained*
 298 *First father! Called by thee, I come thy guide*
 299 *To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'*
 300 *So saying, by the hand He took me raised,*
 301 *And over fields and waters, as in air*
 302 *Smooth-sliding without step, last led me up*
 303 *A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,*
 304 *A circuit wide, enclosed with goodliest trees*
 305 *Planted, with walks, and bowers, that what I saw*
 306 *Of earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each*
 tree,
 307 *Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye*
 308 *Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite*
 309 *To pluck and eat, whereat I waked, and found*
 310 *Before mine eyes all real,¹⁴⁹ as the dream*
 311 *Had lively¹⁵⁰ shadowed.¹⁵¹ Here had new begun*
 312 *My wand'ring, had not He, who was my guide*
 313 *Up hither, from among the trees appeared,*
 314 *Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,*
 315 *In adoration at His feet I fell*
 316 *Submiss. He reared me, and 'Whom thou sought'st*
 I am,'
 317 *Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou see'st*
 318 *Above, or round about thee, or beneath.*
 319 *This Paradise I give thee, count it thine*

¹⁴⁷ dwelling, habitation

¹⁴⁸ needs, requires

¹⁴⁹ [bisyllabic, first accented]

¹⁵⁰ vividly, lifelike

¹⁵¹ depicted

320 *To till¹⁵² and keep, and of the fruit to eat.*
 321 *Of every tree that in the garden grows*
 322 *Eat freely with glad heart, fear here no dearth.¹⁵³*
 323 *But of the tree whose operation¹⁵⁴ brings*
 324 *Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set*
 325 *The pledge¹⁵⁵ of thy obedience and thy faith,*
 326 *Amid the garden by¹⁵⁶ the Tree of Life,*
 327 *Remember what I warn thee: shun to taste,*
 328 *And shun the bitter consequence. For know,*
 329 *The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command*
 330 *Transgressed, inevitably¹⁵⁷ thou shalt die,*
 331 *From that day mortal, and this happy state*
 332 *Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world*
 333 *Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly He pronounced*
 334 *The rigid interdiction, which resounds*
 335 *Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice*
 336 *Not to incur. But soon His clear aspect¹⁵⁸*
 337 *Returned, and gracious purpose¹⁵⁹ thus renewed:*
 338 *'Not only these fair bounds,¹⁶⁰ but all the earth*
 339 *To thee and to thy race I give. As lords*
 340 *Possess it, and all things that therein live,*
 341 *Or live in sea, or air, beast, fish, and fowl.*
 342 *In sign whereof each bird and beast behold*
 343 *After their kinds; I bring them to receive*
 344 *From thee their names, and pay thee fealty¹⁶¹*
 345 *With low subjection. Understand the same*

¹⁵² cultivate

¹⁵³ famine, shortage

¹⁵⁴ effect, power

¹⁵⁵ guarantee

¹⁵⁶ close by, near

¹⁵⁷ [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹⁵⁸ look, countenance

¹⁵⁹ discourse

¹⁶⁰ lands, territory

¹⁶¹ oath/acknowledgment of loyalty

346 *Of fish within their wat'ry residence,*
 347 *Not hither summoned, since they cannot change*
 348 *Their element, to draw¹⁶² the thinner air.'*
 349 *As thus he spoke, each bird and beast behold*
 350 *Approaching two and two, these¹⁶³ cowering low*
 351 *With blandishment,¹⁶⁴ each bird stooped on his*
 wing.
 352 *I named them, as they passed, and understood*
 353 *Their nature, with such knowledge God endued¹⁶⁵*
 354 *My sudden apprehension.¹⁶⁶ But in these*
 355 *I found not what methought I wanted still,*
 356 *And to the Heav'nly vision thus presumed:¹⁶⁷*
 357 *" 'O by what name, for Thou above all these,*
 358 *Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,*
 359 *Surpassest far my naming? How may I*
 360 *Adore Thee, Author of this universe,*
 361 *And all this good to man? for whose well being*
 362 *So amply, and with hands so liberal,*
 363 *Thou hast provided all things. But with me*
 364 *I see not who partakes. In solitude*
 365 *What happiness? Who can enjoy alone,*
 366 *Or all enjoying, what contentment find?'*
 367 *Thus I presumptuous, and the Vision bright,*
 368 *As with a smile more bright'ned, thus replied:*
 369 *" 'What call'st thou solitude? Is not the earth*
 370 *With various living creatures, and the air*
 371 *Replenished,¹⁶⁸ and all these at thy command*

¹⁶² breathe

¹⁶³ some (the land-bound animals)

¹⁶⁴ whatever please

¹⁶⁵ invested, endowed

¹⁶⁶ understanding

¹⁶⁷ pressed forward, presumptuously

¹⁶⁸ filled, fully stocked

- 372 *To come and play¹⁶⁹ before thee? Know'st thou
not*
- 373 *Their language and their ways? They also know,*
374 *And reason not contemptibly. With these*
375 *Find pastime,¹⁷⁰ and bear¹⁷¹ rule. Thy realm is
large.'*
- 376 *So spoke the Universal Lord, and seemed*
377 *So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,*
378 *And humble deprecation,¹⁷² thus replied:*
379 *“ ‘Let not my words offend Thee, Heav'nly
Power.*
- 380 *My Maker, be propitious¹⁷³ while I speak.*
381 *Hast Thou not made me here Thy substitute,*
382 *And these inferior far beneath me set?*
383 *Among inequals what society*
384 *Can sort,¹⁷⁴ what harmony or true delight?*
385 *Which must be mutual, in proportion due*
386 *Giv'n and received. But in disparity*
387 *The one intense,¹⁷⁵ the other still remiss,¹⁷⁶*
388 *Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove*
389 *Tedious¹⁷⁷ alike.¹⁷⁸ Of fellowship I speak*
390 *Such as I seek, fit to participate¹⁷⁹*
391 *All rational delight, wherein the brute*
392 *Cannot be human consort.¹⁸⁰ They rejoice*

¹⁶⁹ exercise, frolic

¹⁷⁰ diversion, entertainment

¹⁷¹ wield, sustain

¹⁷² intercessory prayer

¹⁷³ favorably inclined

¹⁷⁴ be suitable

¹⁷⁵ eager, ardent

¹⁷⁶ lacking force/energy

¹⁷⁷ wearisome, annoying, disagreeable

¹⁷⁸ mutually, to each

¹⁷⁹ share

¹⁸⁰ companion, partner

393 *Each with their kind, lion with lioness,*
 394 *So fitly¹⁸¹ them in pairs Thou hast combined.*
 395 *Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl*
 396 *So well converse,¹⁸² nor with the ox the ape.*
 397 *Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.’*
 398 *Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeas’d:*
 399 *“ ‘A nice¹⁸³ and subtle happiness, I see,*
 400 *Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice*
 401 *Of thy associates, Adam! And wilt taste*
 402 *No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.*
 403 *What think’st thou then of me, and this my state?*
 404 *Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed*
 405 *Of happiness, or not? who am alone*
 406 *From all eternity? For none I know*
 407 *Second to me or like, equal much less.*
 408 *How have I then with whom to hold converse,¹⁸⁴*
 409 *Save with the creatures which I made, and those*
 410 *To me inferior; infinite descents*
 411 *Beneath what other creatures are to thee?’*
 412 *He ceased; I lowly answered:*
 413 *“ ‘To attain*
 414 *The height and depth of Thy eternal ways*
 415 *All human thoughts come short, Supreme of*
 416 *things!*
 417 *Thou in Thyself art perfect, and in Thee*
 418 *Is no deficiencie found. Not so is man,*
 419 *But in degree, the cause of his desire*
 419 *By conversation¹⁸⁵ with his like to help*
 419 *Or solace¹⁸⁶ his defects. No need that Thou*

¹⁸¹ suitably

¹⁸² live

¹⁸³ closely reasoned, discriminating

¹⁸⁴ communion

¹⁸⁵ discourse, interchange of thoughts and words

¹⁸⁶ comfort, alleviate, soothe

420 *Should'st propagate, already Infinite,*
 421 *And through all numbers Absolute,¹⁸⁷ though One.*
 422 *But man by number is to manifest¹⁸⁸*
 423 *His single imperfection,¹⁸⁹ and beget*
 424 *Like of his like, his image multiplied,*
 425 *In unity defective, which requires*
 426 *Collateral¹⁹⁰ love, and dearest amity.¹⁹¹*
 427 *Thou in Thy secrecy¹⁹² although alone,*
 428 *Best with Thyself accompanied, seek'st not*
 429 *Social communication, yet, so pleased,*
 430 *Canst raise Thy creature to what height Thou wilt*
 431 *Of union or communion, deified.*
 432 *I by conversing cannot these¹⁹³ erect*
 433 *From prone, nor in their ways complacence¹⁹⁴*
 find.'
 434 *Thus I embold'ned spoke, and freedom used*
 435 *Permissive, and acceptance found, which gained*
 436 *This answer from the gracious voice Divine:*
 437 *" 'Thus far to try¹⁹⁵ thee, Adam, I was pleased,*
 438 *And find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,*
 439 *Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself,*
 440 *Expressing well the spirit within thee free,*
 441 *My image, not imparted to the brute,*
 442 *Whose fellowship therefore unmeet¹⁹⁶ for thee*
 443 *Good reason was thou freely should'st dislike,*

¹⁸⁷ complete, perfect

¹⁸⁸ display, prove

¹⁸⁹ imperfection in being single/solitary

¹⁹⁰ parallel

¹⁹¹ friendship

¹⁹² seclusion, mysteriousness

¹⁹³ birds, beasts, fish, etc.

¹⁹⁴ pleasure

¹⁹⁵ test

¹⁹⁶ unsuitable

444 *And be so minded still.¹⁹⁷ I ere thou spok'st*
 445 *Knew it not good for man to be alone,*
 446 *And no such company as then thou saw'st*
 447 *Intended thee—for trial only brought,¹⁹⁸*
 448 *To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet.*
 449 *What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,*
 550 *Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,*
 451 *Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'*
 452 *He ended, or I heard no more, for now*
 453 *My earthly by His Heav'nly overpowered,*
 454 *Which it had long stood¹⁹⁹ under, strained to the*
 height
 455 *In that celestial colloquy²⁰⁰ sublime,²⁰¹*
 456 *As with an object that excels²⁰² the sense,*
 457 *Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought*
 repair²⁰³
 458 *Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called*
 459 *By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.*
 460 *“Mine eyes He closed, but open left the cell*
 461 *Of fancy, my internal sight, by which,*
 462 *Abstract²⁰⁴ as in a trance, methought I saw,²⁰⁵*
 463 *Though sleeping where I lay, and saw the shape*
 464 *Still glorious before whom awake I stood,*
 465 *Who stooping op'ned my left side, and took*
 466 *From thence a rib, with cordial²⁰⁶ spirits warm,*

¹⁹⁷ always

¹⁹⁸ adduced, proposed

¹⁹⁹ remained, endured

²⁰⁰ dialogue

²⁰¹ lofty

²⁰² surpasses, is superior to

²⁰³ restoration

²⁰⁴ held apart, separated

²⁰⁵ was able to see

²⁰⁶ restorative

467 *And life-blood streaming fresh. Wide was the*
 wound,
 468 *But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.*
 469 *The rib He formed and fashioned with His hands.*
 470 *Under His forming hands a creature grew,*
 471 *Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair*
 472 *That what seemed fair in all the world seemed*
 now
 473 *Mean²⁰⁷ or in her summed up, in her contained*
 474 *And in her looks, which from that time infused²⁰⁸*
 475 *Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,*
 476 *And into all things from her air²⁰⁹ inspired*
 477 *The spirit of love and amorous delight.*
 478 *She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked*
 479 *To²¹⁰ find her, or for ever to deplore*
 480 *Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure²¹¹—*
 481 *When, out of hope, behold her, not far off,*
 482 *Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned*
 483 *With what all earth or Heav'n could bestow*
 484 *To make her amiable.²¹² On she came,*
 485 *Led by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen,*
 486 *And guided by His voice, nor uninformed*
 487 *Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.*
 488 *Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her eye,*
 489 *In every gesture dignity and love.*
 490 *I overjoyed could not forbear²¹³ aloud:*
 491 *“ ‘This turn²¹⁴ hath made amends! Thou hast*
 fulfilled

²⁰⁷ inferior, poor

²⁰⁸ instilled, insinuated

²⁰⁹ manner, appearance

²¹⁰ in order to

²¹¹ renounce

²¹² lovable

²¹³ desist

²¹⁴ change

492 *Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,*
 493 *Giver of all things fair! But fairest this*
 494 *Of all Thy gifts, nor enviest.²¹⁵ I now see*
 495 *Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself*
 496 *Before me. Woman is her name, of man*
 497 *Extracted.²¹⁶ For this cause he shall forego*
 498 *Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,*
 499 *And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.'*
 500 *“She heard me thus, and though divinely*
 brought²¹⁷
 501 *Yet innocence, and virgin modesty,*
 502 *Her virtue, and the conscience²¹⁸ of her worth,*
 503 *That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,*
 504 *Not obvious,²¹⁹ not obtrusive,²²⁰ but retired,²²¹*
 505 *The more desirable—or, to say all,*
 506 *Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,*
 507 *Wrought²²² in her so that, seeing me, she turned.*
 508 *I followed her. She what was honor knew,*
 509 *And with obsequious²²³ majesty approved²²⁴*
 510 *My pleaded²²⁵ reason.²²⁶ To the nuptial bow'r*
 511 *I led her blushing like the morn. All Heav'n,*
 512 *And happy constellations, on that hour*
 513 *Shed their selected²²⁷ influence, the earth*

²¹⁵ “given (by You) grudgingly/with reluctance”

²¹⁶ drawn forth, obtained

²¹⁷ brought forth, produced, created

²¹⁸ knowledge

²¹⁹ open, bold

²²⁰ forward

²²¹ reserved

²²² worked

²²³ dutiful, compliant

²²⁴ confirmed

²²⁵ urged

²²⁶ statement/speech/discourse

²²⁷ most choice

514 *Gave sign of gratulation,²²⁸ and each hill;*
 515 *Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs*
 516 *Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings*
 517 *Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy²²⁹ shrub,*
 518 *Disporting,²³⁰ till the amorous bird of night²³¹*
 519 *Sung spousal,²³² and bid haste the ev'ning-star²³³*
 520 *On his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.*
 521 *“Thus have I told thee all my state, and*
 brought
 522 *My story to the sum of earthly bliss*
 523 *Which I enjoy, and must confess to find*
 524 *In all things else delight indeed, but such*
 525 *As, used or not, works in the mind no change,*
 526 *Nor vehement²³⁴ desire—these delicacies*
 527 *I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and*
 flow'rs,
 528 *Walks, and the melody of birds. But here*
 529 *Far otherwise, transported²³⁵ I behold,*
 530 *Transported touch,²³⁶ here passion first I felt,*
 531 *Commotion²³⁷ strange! in all enjoyments else*
 532 *Superior and unmoved, here only weak*
 533 *Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.*
 534 *Or²³⁸ Nature failed in me, and left some part*
 535 *Not proof enough such object to sustain,²³⁹*

²²⁸ joyous feeling

²²⁹ aromatic

²³⁰ frolicking, gamboling

²³¹ nightingale

²³² a marriage poem

²³³ Venus

²³⁴ strong, passionate

²³⁵ enraptured

²³⁶ I touch

²³⁷ agitation

²³⁸ either

²³⁹ support

536 *Or, from my side subducting,²⁴⁰ took perhaps*
 537 *More than enough, at least on her bestowed*
 538 *Too much of ornament, in outward show*
 539 *Elaborate,²⁴¹ of inward less exact.*
 540 *For well I understand in the prime end²⁴²*
 541 *Of Nature her th' inferior, in the mind*
 542 *And inward faculties, which most excel.²⁴³*
 543 *In outward also her resembling less*
 544 *His image who made both, and less expressing*
 545 *The character of that dominion giv'n*
 546 *O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach*
 547 *Her loveliness, so absolute²⁴⁴ she seems*
 548 *And in herself complete, so well to know*
 549 *Her own, that what she wills to do or say*
 550 *Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.*
 551 *All higher knowledge in her presence falls*
 552 *Degraded,²⁴⁵ wisdom in discourse with her*
 553 *Looses²⁴⁶ discount'nanced,²⁴⁷ and like folly*
 shows.²⁴⁸
 554 *Authority and reason on her wait,*
 555 *As²⁴⁹ one intended first, not after made²⁵⁰*
 556 *Occasionally.²⁵¹ And, to consummate²⁵² all,*
 557 *Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat*

²⁴⁰ removing

²⁴¹ highly finished

²⁴² principal goal

²⁴³ which most excel = which are by and large those that are superior

²⁴⁴ perfect

²⁴⁵ reduced, lowered

²⁴⁶ loosens, goes slack

²⁴⁷ shamed

²⁴⁸ appears

²⁴⁹ as if she were

²⁵⁰ created

²⁵¹ incidentally

²⁵² finish, complete

558 *Build in her loveliest, and create an awe*
 559 *About her; as²⁵³ a guard Angelic placed.”*
 560 *To whom the Angel with contracted brow:*
 561 *“Accuse not Nature. She hath done her part;*
 562 *Do thou but thine, and be not diffident²⁵⁴*
 563 *Of wisdom. She deserts thee not, if thou*
 564 *Dismiss²⁵⁵ not her, when most thou need’st her*
 nigh,
 565 *By attributing²⁵⁶ overmuch to things*
 566 *Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv’st.*
 567 *For what admir’st thou, what transports thee so?*
 568 *An outside? Fair, no doubt, and worthy well*
 569 *Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love.*
 570 *Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself,*
 571 *Then value. Oft-times nothing profits more*
 572 *Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right*
 573 *Well managed. Of that skill²⁵⁷ the more thou*
 know’st
 574 *The more she will acknowledge thee her head,²⁵⁸*
 575 *And to realities yield all her shows,²⁵⁹*
 576 *Made so adorn for thy delight the more,*
 577 *So awful²⁶⁰ that with honor thou may’st love*
 578 *Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least*
 wise.
 579 *But if the sense of touch, whereby mankind*
 580 *Is propagated, seem such dear delight*
 581 *Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed*
 582 *To cattle and each beast, which would not be*

²⁵³ like

²⁵⁴ distrusting, lacking confidence in

²⁵⁵ discard, reject, send away

²⁵⁶ ascribing, assigning

²⁵⁷ i.e., self-esteem

²⁵⁸ master

²⁵⁹ appearances

²⁶⁰ worthy of/commanding profound respect

583 *To them made common and divulged, if aught*
 584 *Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue*
 585 *The soul of man, or passion in him move.*
 586 *What higher in her society thou find'st*
 587 *Attractive, human, rational, love still.²⁶¹*
 588 *In loving thou dost well, in passion not,*
 589 *Wherein true love consists not. Love refines*
 590 *The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat*
 591 *In reason, and is judicious, is the scale*
 592 *By which to Heav'nly love thou may'st ascend,*
 593 *Not sunk in carnal pleasure. For which cause*
 594 *Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."*
 595 *To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:*
 596 *"Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught*
 597 *In procreation common to all kinds*
 598 *(Though higher of the genial²⁶² bed by far,*
 599 *And with mysterious reverence, I deem)²⁶³*
 600 *So much delights me as those graceful²⁶⁴ acts,*
 601 *Those thousand decencies,²⁶⁵ that daily flow*
 602 *From all her words and actions, mixed with love*
 603 *And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned*
 604 *Union of mind, or in us both one soul.*
 605 *Harmony to behold in wedded pair*
 606 *More grateful²⁶⁶ than harmonious sound to th'*
 ear.
 607 *Yet these subject²⁶⁷ not. I to thee disclose*
 608 *What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,²⁶⁸*

²⁶¹ always

²⁶² procreative

²⁶³ judge, consider

²⁶⁴ full of divine grace

²⁶⁵ acts of decorum, proprieties

²⁶⁶ pleasing

²⁶⁷ [verb, second syllable accented]

²⁶⁸ frustrated, defeated

609 *Who meet with various objects²⁶⁹ from the sense*
 610 *Variouly representing,²⁷⁰ yet still free*
 611 *Approve the best, and follow what I approve.*
 612 *To love, thou blam'st me not, for love, thou say'st,*
 613 *Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide.*
 614 *Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask:*
 615 *Love not the Heav'nly Spirits, and how their love*
 616 *Express they? by looks only? or do they mix*
 617 *Irradiance,²⁷¹ virtual²⁷² or immediate touch?"*
 618 *To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed*
 619 *Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,*
 620 *Answered:*
 "Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 621 *Us happy, and without love no happiness.*
 622 *Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st*
 623 *(And pure thou wert created), we enjoy*
 624 *In eminence,²⁷³ and obstacle find none*
 625 *Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive²⁷⁴ bars.*
 626 *Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace:*
 627 *Total they mix, union of pure with pure*
 628 *Desiring, nor restrained²⁷⁵ conveyance²⁷⁶ need,*
 629 *As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.*
 630 *But I can now no more. The parting sun*
 631 *Beyond the earth's green cape and verdant isles²⁷⁷*
 632 *Hesperian²⁷⁸ sets: my signal to depart.*

²⁶⁹ statements, arguments

²⁷⁰ lines 609–10: "I who deal with all sorts of arguments, presented to me (my mind) by my bodily senses . . ."

²⁷¹ emitted radiance

²⁷² having virtues/powers

²⁷³ in eminence = in eminent measure (i.e., even more)

²⁷⁴ exclusionary, excluding

²⁷⁵ restricting, limited

²⁷⁶ (1) conducting way, passage, (2) management, skill, artifice

²⁷⁷ Cape Verde Islands, in the Atlantic off northwestern Africa

²⁷⁸ in the west

633 *Be strong, live happy, and love! But first of all*²⁷⁹
 634 *Him whom to love is to obey, and keep*
 635 *His great command. Take heed lest passion sway*
 636 *Thy judgment to do aught which else free will*
 637 *Would not admit.*²⁸⁰ *Thine, and of all thy sons,*
 638 *The weal*²⁸¹ *or woe in thee is placed. Beware!*
 639 *I in thy persevering shall rejoice,*
 640 *And all the Blest. Stand fast! To stand or fall*
 641 *Free in thine own arbitrement*²⁸² *it lies.*
 642 *Perfect*²⁸³ *within, no outward aid require,*
 643 *And all temptation to transgress repel.”*
 644 *So saying, he arose, whom Adam thus*
 645 *Followed with benediction. “Since to part,*
 646 *Go, Heav’nly guest, ethereal messenger,*
 647 *Sent from whose sov’ reign goodness I adore!*
 648 *Gentle*²⁸⁴ *to me and affable hath been*
 649 *Thy condescension, and shall be honored ever*
 650 *With grateful memory. Thou to mankind*
 651 *Be good and friendly still,*²⁸⁵ *and oft return!”*
 652 *So parted they, the Angel up to Heav’n*
 653 *From the thick shade, and Adam to his bow’r.*

The End of the Eighth Book

²⁷⁹ first of all = primarily

²⁸⁰ allow, permit, consent to

²⁸¹ happiness, welfare

²⁸² free choice

²⁸³ [verb]

²⁸⁴ courteous, noble

²⁸⁵ always

BOOK IX

THE ARGUMENT

Satan having compassed¹ the earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise, enters into the serpent sleeping.² Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labors, which Eve proposes to divide in³ several places, each laboring apart. Adam consents not, alleging the danger, lest that enemy, of whom they were forewarned, should attempt⁴ her, found alone. Eve, loath to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength. Adam at last yields.

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

The serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length⁵ to eat. She, pleased with

¹ circled around

² i.e., while the serpent is sleeping

³ among

⁴ attack, assault, try to seduce

⁵ finally

the taste, deliberates awhile whether to impart thereof to Adam or not, at last brings him of the fruit, relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam at first amaz'd, but perceiving her lost, resolves through vehemence⁶ of love to perish with her and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit.

The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness, then fall to variance⁷ and accusation of one another.

⁶ intensity, strength, ardor

⁷ i.e., quarrel, disagree

1 *No more of talk where God or Angel guest*
 2 *With man, as with his⁸ friend, familiar used,⁹*
 3 *To sit indulgent,¹⁰ and with him¹¹ partake*
 4 *Rural¹² repast, permitting him¹³ the while*
 5 *Venial¹⁴ discourse unblamed.¹⁵ I now must change*
 6 *Those notes¹⁶ to tragic, foul distrust, and breach¹⁷*
 7 *Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,*
 8 *And disobedience; on the part of Heav'n,*
 9 *Now alienated,¹⁸ distance and distaste,*
 10 *Anger and just rebuke, and judgment giv'n,*
 11 *That brought into this world a world of woe,*
 12 *Sin and her shadow Death, and misery,*
 13 *Death's harbinger¹⁹—sad task, yet argument²⁰*
 14 *Not less but more heroic than the wrath*
 15 *Of stern²¹ Achilles on his foe²² pursued*
 16 *Thrice fugitive²³ about Troy wall, or rage*
 17 *Of Turnus²⁴ for Lavinia²⁵ disespoused,²⁶*

⁸ i.e., God or an Angel guest “sitting indulgent” with Adam, as with a friend

⁹ familiar used = treated affably, intimately, courteously

¹⁰ good-humored

¹¹ Adam

¹² country-style

¹³ Adam

¹⁴ pardonable

¹⁵ unreprieved

¹⁶ (of poetry/music)

¹⁷ breaking of relations

¹⁸ estranged

¹⁹ forerunner

²⁰ theme, subject

²¹ fierce, hard, merciless

²² Hector, prince of Troy

²³ Hector, in great fear, tried to escape Achilles by running away, and was caught after a chase that went three times around Troy's walls

²⁴ Italian king

²⁵ Turnus' promised bride, given to Aeneas instead

²⁶ betrothal (engagement) broken off

18 *Or Neptune's ire,²⁷ or Juno's,²⁸ that so long*
 19 *Perplexed²⁹ the Greek,³⁰ and Cytherea's son.³¹*
 20 *If answerable³² style I can obtain*
 21 *Of³³ my celestial patroness,³⁴ who deigns³⁵*
 22 *Her nightly visitation unimplored,*
 23 *And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires*
 24 *Easy³⁶ my unpremeditated³⁷ verse,*
 25 *Since first this subject for heroic song*
 26 *Pleased me, long choosing, and beginning late,³⁸*
 27 *Not sedulous³⁹ by nature to indite⁴⁰*
 28 *Wars, hitherto the only argument⁴¹*
 29 *Heroic deemed,⁴² chief mastery⁴³ to dissect⁴⁴*
 30 *With long and tedious havoc⁴⁵ fabled knights*

²⁷ Neptune's ire = Neptune's anger at Odysseus for killing Neptune's son, Polyphemus

²⁸ Juno's anger stems from (1) the beauty contest, which she did not win, and which Venus did, the judge being Aeneas' brother, Paris, and (2) the peril Aeneas poses to Carthage, a city sacred to Juno

²⁹ puzzled, entangled

³⁰ Odysseus

³¹ Cytherea = Venus; Aeneas was her son

³² appropriate [four syllables, first and third accented]

³³ from

³⁴ Urania, muse of epic poetry

³⁵ condescends, vouchsafes

³⁶ quietly, comfortably

³⁷ not planned out in advance

³⁸ i.e., taking a long time to choose his course, his subject matter, and starting late in life

³⁹ diligent, assiduous

⁴⁰ write about, in a literary composition

⁴¹ theme, subject

⁴² judged, considered

⁴³ skill, knowledge

⁴⁴ analyze, anatomize

⁴⁵ destruction

31 *In battles feigned*⁴⁶—*the better fortitude*
 32 *Of patience and heroic martyrdom*
 33 *Unsung—or to describe races and games,*
 34 *Or tilting*⁴⁷ *furniture,*⁴⁸ *emblazoned*⁴⁹ *shields,*
 35 *Impresses*⁵⁰ *quaint,*⁵¹ *caparisons*⁵² *and steeds,*
 36 *Bases*⁵³ *and tinsel*⁵⁴ *trappings, gorgeous*⁵⁵ *knights*
 37 *At joust and tournament, then marshalled*⁵⁶ *feast*
 38 *Served up in hall with sewers*⁵⁷ *and senechals,*⁵⁸
 39 *The skill of artifice*⁵⁹ *or office*⁶⁰ *mean,*⁶¹
 40 *Not that which justly gives heroic name*
 41 *To person or to poem. Me, of these*
 42 *Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument*
 43 *Remains, sufficient of itself to raise*⁶²
 44 *That name,*⁶³ *unless an age too late, or cold*
 45 *Climate, or years, damp my intended wing*⁶⁴
 46 *Depressed.*⁶⁵ *And much they may, if all be mine,*
 47 *Not hers, who brings it nightly to my ear.*

⁴⁶ imaginary, not real

⁴⁷ knightly combat, jousting

⁴⁸ equipment, furnishings

⁴⁹ adorned (painted)

⁵⁰ devices/insignia painted on shields

⁵¹ ingenious, skillful

⁵² harnesses

⁵³ the lower part of a shield

⁵⁴ showy, glittering

⁵⁵ magnificent, rich

⁵⁶ properly ordered

⁵⁷ attendants

⁵⁸ stewards

⁵⁹ clever trickery/devices

⁶⁰ duty, service

⁶¹ low

⁶² inspire

⁶³ i.e., “heroic poem”

⁶⁴ flight

⁶⁵ held/forced down

48 *The sun was sunk, and after him the star*
 49 *Of Hesperus,⁶⁶ whose office⁶⁷ is to bring*
 50 *Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter⁶⁸*
 51 *'Twixt day and night. And now from end to end*
 52 *Night's hemisphere had veiled th' horizon round,*
 53 *When Satan, who late⁶⁹ fled before the threats*
 54 *Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved⁷⁰*
 55 *In meditated fraud and malice, bent*
 56 *On man's destruction, maugre⁷¹ what might hap⁷²*
 57 *Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.*
 58 *By night he fled, and at midnight returned*
 59 *From compassing⁷³ the earth, cautious of day,*
 60 *Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried⁷⁴*
 61 *His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim*
 62 *That kept their watch. Thence full of anguish*
 driv'n,
 63 *The space of seven continued nights he rode⁷⁵*
 64 *With darkness. Thrice the equinoctial⁷⁶ line*
 65 *He circled, four times crossed the car⁷⁷ of night*
 66 *From pole to pole, traversing each colure.⁷⁸*
 67 *On the eighth returned and, on the coast averse⁷⁹*
 68 *From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth*

⁶⁶ evening star

⁶⁷ duty, function

⁶⁸ mediator

⁶⁹ not long before

⁷⁰ enhanced, advanced, made better

⁷¹ despite

⁷² come about, happen

⁷³ circling

⁷⁴ had observed

⁷⁵ traveled

⁷⁶ equatorial

⁷⁷ chariot

⁷⁸ great circle

⁷⁹ coast averse = side opposite

69 *Found unsuspected*⁸⁰ way.⁸¹
There was a place,
70 *Now not, though Sin, not time, first wrought the*
change,
71 *Where Tigris,*⁸² *at the foot of Paradise,*
72 *Into a gulf*⁸³ *shot*⁸⁴ *under ground, till part*
73 *Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.*
74 *In with the river sunk, and with it rose*
75 *Satan, involved*⁸⁵ *in rising mist, then sought*
76 *Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched, and land,*
77 *From Eden over Pontus*⁸⁶ *and the pool*
78 *Maeotis,*⁸⁷ *up beyond the river Ob,*⁸⁸
79 *Downward as far Antarctic, and in length*
80 *West from Orontes*⁸⁹ *to the ocean barred*
81 *At Darien,*⁹⁰ *thence to the land where flows*
82 *Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb*⁹¹ *he roamed*
83 *With narrow*⁹² *search, and with inspection deep*
84 *Considered every creature, which of all*
85 *Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found*
86 *The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field.*
87 *Him after long debate, irresolute*

⁸⁰ that which does not arouse suspicion

⁸¹ path

⁸² Mesopotamian river, which watered Eden

⁸³ profound depth in a body of water

⁸⁴ passing swiftly/suddenly

⁸⁵ enwrapped

⁸⁶ the Black Sea

⁸⁷ the Sea of Azov (a lake, in fact)

⁸⁸ flowing into the Arctic Sea

⁸⁹ Syrian river

⁹⁰ Isthmus of Panama, northeastern (Atlantic) side

⁹¹ sphere, globe

⁹² close, careful

88 *Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence⁹³ chose*
 89 *Fit vessel, fittest imp⁹⁴ of fraud, in whom*
 90 *To enter, and his dark suggestions hide*
 91 *From sharpest sight, for in the wily snake,*
 92 *Whatever sleights,⁹⁵ none would suspicious*
 mark,⁹⁶
 93 *As from his wit and native subtlety*
 94 *Proceeding, which in other beasts observed*
 95 *Doubt might beget⁹⁷ of diabolic power*
 96 *Active within, beyond the sense⁹⁸ of brute.*
 97 *Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief*
 98 *His bursting passion into plaints⁹⁹ thus poured:*
 99 *“O earth, how like to Heav’n, if not preferred*
 100 *More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built*
 101 *With second thoughts, reforming¹⁰⁰ what was old!*
 102 *For what god, after better, worse would build?*
 103 *Terrestrial Heav’n, danced round by other*
 Heav’ns
 104 *That shine, yet bear their bright officious¹⁰¹*
 lamps,
 105 *Light above light, for thee¹⁰² alone, as seems,*
 106 *In thee concent’ring all their precious beams*
 107 *Of sacred influence! As God in Heav’n*
 108 *Is center, yet extends to all, so thou,*
 109 *Cent’ring, receiv’st from all those orbs. In thee,*

⁹³ judgment, opinion

⁹⁴ urchin, little devil/demon

⁹⁵ tricks

⁹⁶ note, notice

⁹⁷ create

⁹⁸ mental capacity

⁹⁹ complaints

¹⁰⁰ correcting

¹⁰¹ dutiful

¹⁰² earth

- 110 *Not in themselves, all their known virtue*¹⁰³
 appears
 111 *Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth*
 112 *Of creatures animate with gradual*¹⁰⁴ *life*
 113 *Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in man.*
 114 *With what delight could I have walked thee*
 round
 115 *(If I could joy in aught), sweet interchange*¹⁰⁵
 116 *Of hill, and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,*
 117 *Now land, now sea and shores with forest*
 crowned,
 118 *Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these*
 119 *Find place or refuge, and the more I see*
 120 *Pleasures about me, so much more I feel*
 121 *Torment within me, as from the hateful siege*
 122 *Of contraries.*¹⁰⁶ *All good to me becomes*
 123 *Bane*¹⁰⁷*—and in Heav'n much worse would be my*
 state,
 124 *“But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heav'n*
 125 *To dwell, unless by mast'ring Heav'n's Supreme,*¹⁰⁸
 126 *Nor hope to be myself less miserable*
 127 *By what I seek, but others to make such*
 128 *As I, though thereby worse to me redound.*¹⁰⁹
 129 *For only in destroying I find ease*
 130 *To my relentless thoughts and, him*¹¹⁰ *destroyed,*
 131 *Or won to what may work his utter loss,*
 132 *For whom all this was made, all this will soon*

¹⁰³ power

¹⁰⁴ graded, degrees of

¹⁰⁵ succession

¹⁰⁶ enemies

¹⁰⁷ destruction, ruin, woe

¹⁰⁸ God

¹⁰⁹ come back

¹¹⁰ i.e., man

133 *Follow, as to him linked in weal¹¹¹ or woe.*
 134 *In woe then. That destruction wide may range:¹¹²*
 135 *To me shall be the glory sole among*
 136 *Th' infernal Powers, in one day to have marred¹¹³*
 137 *What He, Almighty styled, six nights and days*
 138 *Continued making—and who knows how long*
 139 *Before had been contriving? Though perhaps*
 140 *Not longer than since I, in one night, freed*
 141 *From servitude inglorious well nigh half*
 142 *Th' Angelic name, and thinner left the throng*
 143 *Of His adorers. He, to be avenged,*
 144 *And to repair His numbers thus impaired,*
 145 *Whether such virtue spent of old now failed*
 146 *More Angels to create (if they at least*
 147 *Are His created) or, to spite us more,*
 148 *Determined to advance into our room¹¹⁴*
 149 *A creature formed of earth, and him endow,*
 150 *Exalted from so base original,¹¹⁵*
 151 *With Heav'nly spoils—our spoils. What He*
 decreed,
 152 *He effected. Man He made, and for him built*
 153 *Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,*
 154 *Him lord pronounced and, O indignity!*
 155 *Subjected to his service angel-wings,*
 156 *And flaming ministers¹¹⁶ to watch and tend*
 157 *Their earthly charge. Of these the vigilance*
 158 *I dread and, to elude, thus wrapped in mist*
 159 *Of midnight vapor glide obscure,¹¹⁷ and pry¹¹⁸*

¹¹¹ happiness, welfare

¹¹² extend

¹¹³ harmed, spoiled

¹¹⁴ place

¹¹⁵ an origin

¹¹⁶ attendants

¹¹⁷ hidden, secret

¹¹⁸ peer

160 *In every bush and brake,¹¹⁹ where hap¹²⁰ may find*
 161 *The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds¹²¹*
 162 *To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.*
 163 *“O foul descent! that I, who erst contended*
 164 *With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained¹²²*
 165 *Into a beast and, mixed with bestial slime,*
 166 *This essence to incarnate¹²³ and imbrute¹²⁴*
 167 *That¹²⁵ to the height of Deity aspired!*
 168 *But what will not ambition and revenge*
 169 *Descend to? Who¹²⁶ aspires, must down¹²⁷ as low*
 170 *As high he soared, obnoxious,¹²⁸ first or last,*
 171 *To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,*
 172 *Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils.*
 173 *Let it. I reckon¹²⁹ not, so it light¹³⁰ well aimed,*
 174 *Since higher I fall short, on him who next*
 175 *Provokes my envy, this new favorite*
 176 *Of Heav’n, this man of clay, son of despite¹³¹*
 177 *Whom us the more to spite his Maker raised*
 178 *From dust. Spite then with spite is best repaid.”*
 179 *So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,*
 180 *Like a black mist low-creeping, he held¹³² on*
 181 *His midnight-search, where soonest he might*
 find

¹¹⁹ thicket

¹²⁰ chance, fortune

¹²¹ mazy folds = mazelike object, bent/folded

¹²² forcibly compressed

¹²³ convert into flesh

¹²⁴ degrade to the level of an animal

¹²⁵ he whom

¹²⁶ whoever

¹²⁷ go down

¹²⁸ liable, subject

¹²⁹ care

¹³⁰ descend, fall

¹³¹ insult, contempt

¹³² continued

182 *The serpent. Him fast-sleeping soon he found*
 183 *In labyrinth of many a round¹³³ self-rolled,*
 184 *His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles,*
 185 *Not yet in horrid¹³⁴ shade or dismal den,¹³⁵*
 186 *Nor nocent¹³⁶ yet, but on the grassy herb,*
 187 *Fearless unfeared he slept. In at his mouth*
 188 *The Devil entered and his¹³⁷ brutal sense,*
 189 *In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired*
 190 *With act intelligential, but his sleep*
 191 *Disturbed not, waiting close¹³⁸ the approach of*
 morn.
 192 *Now when as sacred light began to dawn*
 193 *In Eden on the humid flow'rs, that breathed*
 194 *Their morning incense,¹³⁹ when all things that*
 breathe
 195 *From th' earth's great altar send up silent praise*
 196 *To the Creator, and His nostrils fill*
 197 *With grateful¹⁴⁰ smell, forth came the human pair*
 198 *And joined their vocal worship to the choir*
 199 *Of creatures wanting¹⁴¹ voice. That done, partake¹⁴²*
 200 *The season prime for sweetest scents and airs,*
 201 *Then commune¹⁴³ how that day they best may ply¹⁴⁴*

¹³³ circle

¹³⁴ frightful, detestable

¹³⁵ wild beast's lair

¹³⁶ harmful

¹³⁷ the serpent's

¹³⁸ secretly

¹³⁹ perfume

¹⁴⁰ (1) pleasing, (2) thankful

¹⁴¹ lacking

¹⁴² they partake, share in

¹⁴³ discuss

¹⁴⁴ work at, continue

202 *Their growing work, for much their work out-grew*
 203 *The hands' dispatch¹⁴⁵ of two gard'ning so wide.¹⁴⁶*
 204 *And Eve first to her husband thus began:*
 205 *“Adam, well may we labor still¹⁴⁷ to dress¹⁴⁸*
 206 *This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flow'r,*
 207 *Our pleasant task enjoined,¹⁴⁹ but till more hands*
 208 *Aid us the work under our labor grows*
 209 *Luxurious¹⁵⁰ by restraint. What we by day*
 210 *Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,*
 211 *One night or two with wanton¹⁵¹ growth derides,¹⁵²*
 212 *Tending¹⁵³ to wild. Thou therefore now advise,¹⁵⁴*
 213 *Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present.*
 214 *Let us divide our labors—thou where choice*
 215 *Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind*
 216 *The woodbine round this arbor, or direct*
 217 *The clasping ivy where to climb, while I,*
 218 *In yonder spring¹⁵⁵ of roses intermixed*
 219 *With myrtle, find what to redress¹⁵⁶ till noon.*
 220 *For while so near each other thus all day*
 221 *Our task we choose, what wonder if so near*
 222 *Looks intervene and smiles, or object new*
 223 *Casual discourse draw on, which intermits¹⁵⁷*
 224 *Our day's work, brought to little, though begun*

¹⁴⁵ getting, doing

¹⁴⁶ widely, extensively

¹⁴⁷ continually

¹⁴⁸ make straight/right

¹⁴⁹ prescribed authoritatively

¹⁵⁰ luxuriant

¹⁵¹ rebellious, unmanageable

¹⁵² mocks us

¹⁵³ inclining

¹⁵⁴ consider

¹⁵⁵ bursting forth

¹⁵⁶ set right

¹⁵⁷ interrupts, stops

225 *Early, and th' hour of supper comes unearned?"*
 226 *To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:*
 227 *“Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond*
 228 *Compare above all living creatures dear!*
 229 *Well hast thou motioned,¹⁵⁸ well thy thoughts*
 employed,
 230 *How we might best fulfil the work which here*
 231 *God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass*
 232 *Unpraised, for nothing lovelier can be found*
 233 *In woman, than to study household good,*
 234 *And good works in her husband to promote.*
 235 *Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed*
 236 *Labor, as to debar us when we need*
 237 *Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,*
 238 *Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse*
 239 *Of looks and smiles, for smiles from reason flow,*
 240 *To brute denied, and are of love the food—*
 241 *Love, not the lowest end¹⁵⁹ of human life.*
 242 *For not to irksome¹⁶⁰ toil, but to delight*
 243 *He made us, and delight to reason joined.*
 244 *These paths and bowers¹⁶¹ doubt not but our joint*
 hands
 245 *Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide*
 246 *As we need walk, till younger hands ere long*
 247 *Assist us. But if much converse perhaps*
 248 *Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield,¹⁶²*
 249 *For solitude sometimes is best society,*
 250 *And short retirement¹⁶³ urges sweet return.*
 251 *“But other doubt possesses me, lest harm*
 252 *Befall thee, severed from me, for thou know'st*

¹⁵⁸ proposed

¹⁵⁹ purpose

¹⁶⁰ tedious

¹⁶¹ shady paths

¹⁶² assent

¹⁶³ withdrawal

253 *What hath been warned us, what malicious foe*
 254 *Envyng our happiness, and of his own*
 255 *Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame*
 256 *By sly assault. And somewhere nigh at hand*
 257 *Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find*
 258 *His wish and best advantage, us asunder.*
 259 *Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each*
 260 *To other speedy aid might lend at need,*
 261 *Whether his first design be to withdraw*
 262 *Our fealty from God, or to disturb*
 263 *Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss*
 264 *Enjoyed by us excites his envy more.*
 265 *Or¹⁶⁴ this, or worse, leave not the faithful side*
 266 *That gave thee being, still shades thee, and*
 protects.
 267 *The wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,*
 268 *Safest and seemliest¹⁶⁵ by her husband stays,*
 269 *Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.”*
 270 *To whom the virgin¹⁶⁶ majesty of Eve,*
 271 *As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,*
 272 *With sweet austere¹⁶⁷ composure thus replied:*
 273 *“Offspring of Heav’n and earth, and all earth’s*
 lord!
 274 *That such an enemy we have, who seeks*
 275 *Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,*
 276 *And from the parting Angel over-heard,*
 277 *As in a shady nook I stood behind,*
 278 *Just then returned at shut of evening flow’rs.*
 279 *But that thou should’st my firmness¹⁶⁸ therefore*
 doubt

¹⁶⁴ whether

¹⁶⁵ most appropriately

¹⁶⁶ pure, innocent, unstained

¹⁶⁷ grave, sober

¹⁶⁸ steadiness, constancy

280 *To God or thee, because we have a foe*
 281 *May tempt it, I expected not to hear.*
 282 *His violence thou fear'st not, being such*
 283 *As we, not capable of death or pain,*
 284 *Can either not receive, or can repel.*
 285 *His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers*
 286 *Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love*
 287 *Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced,*
 288 *Thoughts which how found they harbor in thy*
 breast,
 289 *Adam, mis-thought of her to thee so dear?"*
 290 *To whom with healing words Adam replied:*
 291 *"Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve!*
 292 *For such thou art, from sin and blame entire.¹⁶⁹*
 293 *Not diffident¹⁷⁰ of thee do I dissuade*
 294 *Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid*
 295 *Th' attempt itself, intended by our foe.*
 296 *For he who tempts, though in vain, at least*
 asperses¹⁷¹
 297 *The tempted with dishonor foul, supposed*
 298 *Not incorruptible of faith, not proof*
 299 *Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn*
 300 *And anger would'st resent the offered wrong,*
 301 *Though ineffectual found. Misdemean not, then,*
 302 *If such affront I labor to avert*
 303 *From thee alone, which on us both at once*
 304 *The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare,*
 305 *Or daring, first on me th' assault shall light.*
 306 *Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn.¹⁷²*
 307 *Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce*
 308 *Angels, nor think superfluous others' aid.*

¹⁶⁹ intact, free, untouched

¹⁷⁰ wanting confidence

¹⁷¹ bespatters

¹⁷² despise

309 *I, from the influence of thy looks, receive*
 310 *Access¹⁷³ in every virtue, in thy sight*
 311 *More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were*
 312 *Of outward strength, while shame, thou*
 looking on,
 313 *Shame to be overcome or over-reached,¹⁷⁴*
 314 *Would utmost vigor raise, and raised unite.¹⁷⁵*
 315 *Why should'st not thou like¹⁷⁶ sense within thee*
 feel
 316 *When I am present, and thy trial¹⁷⁷ choose*
 317 *With me, best witness of thy virtue tried? ”*
 318 *So spoke domestic¹⁷⁸ Adam in his care*
 319 *And matrimonial love. But Eve, who thought*
 320 *Less attributed¹⁷⁹ to her faith sincere,*
 321 *Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:*
 322 *“If this be our condition, thus to dwell*
 323 *In narrow circuit, straitened¹⁸⁰ by a foe,*
 324 *Subtle or violent, we not endued*
 325 *Single¹⁸¹ with like¹⁸² defence, wherever met,*
 326 *How are we happy, still in fear of harm?*
 327 *But harm precedes not sin. Only our foe*
 328 *Tempting affronts¹⁸³ us with his foul esteem¹⁸⁴*
 329 *Of our integrity. His foul esteem*

¹⁷³ increase

¹⁷⁴ overpowered

¹⁷⁵ bring to bear

¹⁷⁶ similar, equivalent

¹⁷⁷ test, endeavor, effort

¹⁷⁸ attached to his home

¹⁷⁹ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁸⁰ made narrower

¹⁸¹ alone

¹⁸² equivalent, equal

¹⁸³ insults, confronts

¹⁸⁴ judgment, estimate

330 *Sticks no dishonor on our front,¹⁸⁵ but turns*
 331 *Foul on himself. Then wherefore shunned or*
 feared
 332 *By us? who rather double honor gain*
 333 *From his surmise¹⁸⁶ proved false, find peace*
 within,
 334 *Favor from Heav'n, our witness, from th' event.*
 335 *And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed*
 336 *Alone, without exterior help sustained?*
 337 *Let us not then suspect¹⁸⁷ our happy state*
 338 *Left so imperfect by the Maker wise*
 339 *As not secure¹⁸⁸ to¹⁸⁹ single or combined.*
 340 *Frail is our happiness, if this be so,*
 341 *And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."*
 342 *To whom thus Adam fervently¹⁹⁰ replied:*
 343 *"O woman, best are all things as the will*
 344 *Of God ordained them! His creating hand*
 345 *Nothing imperfect or deficient left*
 346 *Of all that He created, much less man,*
 347 *Or aught that might his¹⁹¹ happy state secure,*
 348 *Secure from outward force. Within himself*
 349 *The danger lies, yet lies within his power.*
 350 *Against his will he can receive no harm.*
 351 *But God left free the will, for what obeys*
 352 *Reason, is free; and reason He made right,*
 353 *But bid her well beware, and still erect,¹⁹²*
 354 *Lest, by some fair-appearing good surprised,*

¹⁸⁵ forehead, face

¹⁸⁶ allegation, suspicion

¹⁸⁷ imagine, fancy

¹⁸⁸ certain, safe

¹⁸⁹ to either

¹⁹⁰ intensely earnest

¹⁹¹ man's

¹⁹² alert

355 *She dictate¹⁹³ false, and mis-inform the will*
 356 *To do what God expressly hath forbid.*
 357 *Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins¹⁹⁴*
 358 *That I should mind¹⁹⁵ thee oft, and mind thou me.*
 359 *Firm we subsist,¹⁹⁶ yet possible to swerve,*
 360 *Since reason not impossibly may meet*
 361 *Some specious¹⁹⁷ object by the foe suborned,¹⁹⁸*
 362 *And fall into deception unaware,*
 363 *Not keeping strictest watch, as she¹⁹⁹ was warned.*
 364 *Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid*
 365 *Were better, and most likely if from me*
 366 *Thou sever not. Trial will come unsought.*
 367 *Would'st²⁰⁰ thou approve²⁰¹ thy constancy, approve*
 368 *First thy obedience. Th' other who can know,*
 369 *Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?*
 370 *But if thou think trial unsought may find*
 371 *Us both securer²⁰² than thus warned thou seem'st,*
 372 *Go, for thy stay not free absents thee more.*
 373 *Go in thy native innocence, rely*
 374 *On what thou hast of virtue, summon all!*
 375 *For God towards thee hath done His part. Do*
 thine."
 376 *So spoke the patriarch of mankind. But Eve*
 377 *Persisted, yet²⁰³ submiss, though last²⁰⁴ replied:*

¹⁹³ prescribe, direct

¹⁹⁴ prescribes

¹⁹⁵ (1) attend to, take care of, (2) remind

¹⁹⁶ remain, exist

¹⁹⁷ outwardly respectable but in fact not

¹⁹⁸ bribed

¹⁹⁹ reason

²⁰⁰ if you would

²⁰¹ attest, demonstrate

²⁰² more certain/confident

²⁰³ though still

²⁰⁴ i.e., Eve has the last word

378 *“With thy permission, then, and thus
forewarned*
379 *Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words*
380 *Touched²⁰⁵ only, that our trial, when least sought,*
381 *May find us both perhaps far less prepared,*
382 *The willinger I go, nor much expect*
383 *A foe so proud will first the weaker seek.*
384 *So bent,²⁰⁶ the more shall shame him his repulse.”*
385 *Thus saying, from her husband’s hand her
hand*
386 *Soft she withdrew and, like a wood-nymph light,*
387 *Oread²⁰⁷ or dryad,²⁰⁸ or of Delia’s²⁰⁹ train,*
388 *Betook her to the groves, but Delia’s self*
389 *In gait surpassed, and goddess-like deport,²¹⁰*
390 *Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,*
391 *But with such gard’ning tools as art²¹¹ yet rude,²¹²*
392 *Guiltless²¹³ of fire, had formed, or Angels brought.*
393 *To Pales,²¹⁴ or Pomona,²¹⁵ thus adorned,*
394 *Likest she seemed, Pomona when she fled*
395 *Vertumnus,²¹⁶ or to Ceres²¹⁷ in her prime,*
396 *Yet virgin²¹⁸ of Proserpina from Jove.*
397 *Her long with ardent look his eye pursued,*
398 *Delighted, but desiring more her stay.*

²⁰⁵ mentioned, noticed in passing

²⁰⁶ inclined, determined

²⁰⁷ a mountain nymph

²⁰⁸ a tree nymph

²⁰⁹ Diana’s

²¹⁰ deportment, manner

²¹¹ skill [noun]

²¹² coarse, inelegant

²¹³ innocent

²¹⁴ goddess of flocks and herds

²¹⁵ goddess of fruit

²¹⁶ god of the orchards and fruit, husband of Pomona

²¹⁷ Ceres/Demeter, goddess of Nature’s generative power

²¹⁸ not maternal/the mother of

399 *Oft he to her his charge²¹⁹ of quick return*
 400 *Repeated; she to him as oft engaged²²⁰*
 401 *To be returned by noon amid the bow'r,*
 402 *And all things in best order to invite²²¹*
 403 *Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.*
 404 *O much deceived, much failing, hapless²²² Eve,*
 405 *Of thy presumed²²³ return! Event perverse!²²⁴*
 406 *Thou never from that hour in Paradise*
 407 *Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose.*
 408 *Such ambush, hid among sweet flow'rs and shades,*
 409 *Waited with hellish rancor²²⁵ imminent*
 410 *To intercept thy way, or send thee back*
 411 *Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss!*
 412 *For now, and since first break of dawn the*
 fiend,
 413 *Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come,*
 414 *And on his quest, where likeliest he might find*
 415 *The only two of mankind, but in them*
 416 *The whole included race, his purposed prey.*
 417 *In bow'r and field he sought, where any tuft*
 418 *Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,*
 419 *Their tendance or plantation²²⁶ for delight.*
 420 *By fountain or by shady rivulet*
 421 *He sought them both, but wished his hap²²⁷ might*
 find
 422 *Eve separate. He wished, but not with hope*
 423 *Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,*

²¹⁹ injunction

²²⁰ promised, pledged

²²¹ ask him to come to

²²² luckless, unfortunate

²²³ anticipated

²²⁴ wicked, wrong, stubborn

²²⁵ bitter grudge

²²⁶ planting

²²⁷ chance, luck, fortune

424 *Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,*
 425 *Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,*
 426 *Half spied, so thick the roses bushing round*
 427 *About her glowed, oft stooping to support*
 428 *Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though*
 gay
 429 *Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,*
 430 *Hung drooping unsustained. Them she upstays*
 431 *Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while*
 432 *Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,*
 433 *From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.*
 434 *Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed*
 435 *Of stateliest covert,²²⁸ cedar, pine, or palm,*
 436 *Then voluble²²⁹ and bold, now hid, now seen*
 437 *Among thick-woven arborets,²³⁰ and flow'rs*
 438 *Imbordered on each bank, the hand²³¹ of Eve—*
 439 *Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned²³²*
 440 *Or²³³ of revived Adonis,²³⁴ or renowned*
 441 *Alcinous,²³⁵ host of old Laertes' son,²³⁶*
 442 *Or that, not mystic,²³⁷ where the sapient²³⁸ king²³⁹*
 443 *Held dalliance²⁴⁰ with his fair Egyptian spouse.²⁴¹*
 444 *Much he the place admired,²⁴² the person more.*

²²⁸ cover, overhang, shelter

²²⁹ gliding

²³⁰ shrubbery

²³¹ work

²³² imaginary, fabled

²³³ whether

²³⁴ for whom, and in whose honor, "gardens of Adonis" were planted

²³⁵ king of the Phaeacians, in Scheria

²³⁶ Odysseus

²³⁷ mythical, fabled

²³⁸ wise

²³⁹ Solomon

²⁴⁰ amorous play

²⁴¹ see 1 Kings 3:1; Solomon's wife is not named

²⁴² marveled at

445 *As one who long in populous city pent,*²⁴³
 446 *Where houses thick and sewers annoy*²⁴⁴ *the air;*
 447 *Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe*
 448 *Among the pleasant villages and farms*
 449 *Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,*
 450 *The smell of grain, or tedded grass,*²⁴⁵ *or kine,*²⁴⁶
 451 *Or dairy,*²⁴⁷ *each rural sight, each rural sound.*
 452 *If chance, with nymph-like step, fair virgin pass,*
 453 *What pleasing seemed, for her*²⁴⁸ *now pleases*
 more,
 454 *She most, and in her look sums all delight.*
 455 *Such pleasure took the serpent to behold*
 456 *This flowery plat,*²⁴⁹ *the sweet recess*²⁵⁰ *of Eve*
 457 *Thus early, thus alone. Her Heav'nly form*
 458 *Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,*
 459 *Her graceful innocence, her every air*
 460 *Of gesture, or least action, overawed*²⁵¹
 461 *His malice, and with rapine*²⁵² *sweet bereaved*²⁵³
 462 *His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.*
 463 *That space*²⁵⁴ *the Evil One abstracted*²⁵⁵ *stood*
 464 *From his own evil, and for the time remained*
 465 *Stupidly*²⁵⁶ *good, of enmity disarmed,*

²⁴³ confined, shut up

²⁴⁴ injure, trouble

²⁴⁵ tedded grass = grass spread out for drying

²⁴⁶ cattle

²⁴⁷ place where milk and cream are stored, butter and cheese are made

²⁴⁸ for her = on her account

²⁴⁹ plot

²⁵⁰ hidden place

²⁵¹ restrained/suppressed/controlled by awe

²⁵² pillage, robbery [noun]

²⁵³ deprived, robbed

²⁵⁴ interval

²⁵⁵ withdrawn, absent in mind

²⁵⁶ dully, stupefiedly

466 *Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.*
 467 *But the hot Hell that always in him burns,*
 468 *Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,*
 469 *And tortures him now more, the more he sees*
 470 *Of pleasure, not for him ordained. Then soon*
 471 *Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts*
 472 *Of mischief, gratulating,²⁵⁷ thus excites:²⁵⁸*
 473 *“Thoughts, whither have ye led me! with what*
 sweet
 474 *Compulsion thus transported, to forget*
 475 *What hither brought us! Hate, not love, nor hope*
 476 *Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste*
 477 *Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,*
 478 *Save what is in destroying. Other joy*
 479 *To me is lost. Then let me not let pass²⁵⁹*
 480 *Occasion²⁶⁰ which now smiles. Behold alone*
 481 *The woman, opportune²⁶¹ to all attempts,*
 482 *Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,*
 483 *Whose higher intellectual²⁶² more I shun,*
 484 *And strength, of courage haughty,²⁶³ and of limb*
 485 *Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,*
 486 *Foe not formidable!²⁶⁴ exempt from wound,*
 487 *I not, so much hath Hell debased, and pain*
 488 *Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heav'n.*
 489 *She fair; divinely fair, fit love for Gods!*
 490 *Not terrible, though terror be in love*

²⁵⁷ (1) in compensation, (2) joyously, welcoming

²⁵⁸ stirs, rouses

²⁵⁹ diverge/depart from

²⁶⁰ opportunity

²⁶¹ convenient

²⁶² mind

²⁶³ exalted, eminent

²⁶⁴ unformidable, to be dreaded

491 *And beauty, not²⁶⁵ approached²⁶⁶ by stronger hate,*
 492 *Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned,*
 493 *The way which to her ruin now I tend."²⁶⁷*
 494 *So spoke the enemy of mankind, enclosed*
 495 *In serpent, inmate²⁶⁸ bad! and toward Eve*
 496 *Addressed²⁶⁹ his way, not with indented²⁷⁰ wave,*
 497 *Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,*
 498 *Circular base of rising folds, that tow' red*
 499 *Fold above fold, a surging maze! His head*
 500 *Crested aloft, and carbuncle²⁷¹ his eyes,*
 501 *With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect*
 502 *Amidst his circling spires,²⁷² that on the grass*
 503 *Floated²⁷³ redundant.²⁷⁴ Pleasing was his shape*
 504 *And lovely, never since of serpent-kind*
 505 *Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed²⁷⁵*
 506 *Hermione²⁷⁶ and Cadmus,²⁷⁷ or the god*
 507 *In Epidaurus,²⁷⁸ nor to which transformed*

²⁶⁵ if not

²⁶⁶ equaled

²⁶⁷ turn

²⁶⁸ lodger

²⁶⁹ directed

²⁷⁰ zigzag, wavy

²⁷¹ fiery red

²⁷² spirals? (spires = stems, stalks)

²⁷³ moved gently

²⁷⁴ copious

²⁷⁵ transformed into serpents

²⁷⁶ Hermione/Harmonia = daughter of Ares/Mars and Aphrodite/Venus; Cadmus' wife [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

²⁷⁷ founder and king of Thebes; he and his wife were both turned into snakes by Zeus

²⁷⁸ Aesculapius, god of healing, portrayed as a serpent at his temple in Epidaurus, in Argos, Greece

508 *Ammonian Jove,*²⁷⁹ *or Capitoline,*²⁸⁰ *was seen,*
 509 *He with Olympias, this with her who bore*
 510 *Scipio, the height*²⁸¹ *of Rome. With tract*²⁸² *oblique*²⁸³
 511 *At first, as one who sought access*²⁸⁴ *but feared*
 512 *To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.*
 513 *As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought*
 514 *Nigh river's mouth or foreland,*²⁸⁵ *where the wind*
 515 *Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,*
 516 *So varied he, and of his tortuous*²⁸⁶ *train*
 517 *Curled many a wanton*²⁸⁷ *wreath*²⁸⁸ *in sight of Eve,*
 518 *To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound*
 519 *Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used*
 520 *To such disport before*²⁸⁹ *her through the field,*
 521 *From every beast, more duteous*²⁹⁰ *at her call*
 522 *Than at Circean call the herd disguised.*²⁹¹
 523 *He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,*
 524 *But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed*
 525 *His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,*
 526 *Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.*
 527 *His gentle dumb expression turned at length*
 528 *The eye of Eve to mark his play. He, glad*
 529 *Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue*

²⁷⁹ Ammonian Jove = Egyptian/African Jove, supposed to be the biological father of Alexander the Great, having slept with Olympias, wife of Philip of Macedonia, in the form of a serpent

²⁸⁰ Capitoline (Jove) = Roman Jove, supposed to have fathered Scipio Africanus

²⁸¹ eminence

²⁸² track

²⁸³ at an angle, indirect

²⁸⁴ a way to approach [second syllable accented]

²⁸⁵ cape, promontory

²⁸⁶ crooked, twisting

²⁸⁷ extravagant

²⁸⁸ ring, band, circle

²⁸⁹ around

²⁹⁰ obedient [bisyllabic, first accented, "-eous" elided]

²⁹¹ herd disguised = Odysseus/Ulysses' men, turned by Circe into swine

530 *Organic,*²⁹² *or impulse*²⁹³ *of vocal air,*
 531 *His fraudulent temptation thus began:*
 532 *“Wonder not, sov’rign mistress, if perhaps*
 533 *Thou canst, who art sole*²⁹⁴ *wonder! Much less arm*
 534 *Thy looks, the Heav’n of mildness, with disdain,*
 535 *Displeas’d that I approach thee thus, and gaze*
 536 *Insatiate,*²⁹⁵ *I thus single, nor have feared*
 537 *Thy awful*²⁹⁶ *brow, more awful thus retired.*²⁹⁷
 538 *Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,*
 539 *Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine*
 540 *By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore*
 541 *With ravishment*²⁹⁸ *beheld! There best beheld,*
 542 *Where universally admired, but here*
 543 *In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,*
 544 *Beholders rude, and shallow*²⁹⁹ *to discern*
 545 *Half what in thee is fair, one man except,*
 546 *Who sees thee? And what is one? Who should be*
 seen
 547 *A goddess among gods, adored and served*
 548 *By Angels numberless, thy daily train.”*
 549 *So glozed*³⁰⁰ *the Tempter, and his proem*³⁰¹
 *tuned.*³⁰²
 550 *Into the heart of Eve his words made way,*
 551 *Though at the voice much marvelling. At length,*
 552 *Not unamazed, she thus in answer spoke:*

²⁹² like an organ or other similar instrument

²⁹³ thrust, force

²⁹⁴ unrivaled

²⁹⁵ insatiable

²⁹⁶ majestic, commanding

²⁹⁷ secluded

²⁹⁸ ecstasy

²⁹⁹ deficient

³⁰⁰ veiled with specious comments

³⁰¹ prelude, preface, introduction

³⁰² uttered, gave forth

553 *“What may this mean? Language of man*
 pronounced
 554 *By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?*
 555 *The first, at least, of these I thought denied*
 556 *To beasts, whom God, on their creation-day,*
 557 *Created mute to all articulate sound.*
 558 *The latter I demur,³⁰³ for in their looks*
 559 *Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.*
 560 *Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field*
 561 *I knew, but not with human voice endued.*
 562 *Redouble then this miracle, and say*
 563 *How cam’st thou speakable³⁰⁴ of³⁰⁵ mute, and how*
 564 *To me so friendly grown above the rest*
 565 *Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?*
 566 *Say, for such wonder³⁰⁶ claims attention due.”*
 567 *To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:*
 568 *“Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!*
 569 *Easy to me it is to tell thee all*
 570 *What thou command’st, and right thou should’st*
 be obeyed.
 571 *I was at first as other beasts that graze*
 572 *The trodden herb, of abject³⁰⁷ thoughts and low,*
 573 *As was my food, nor aught but food discerned,*
 574 *Or sex, and apprehended nothing high.*
 575 *Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced*
 576 *A goodly tree far distant to behold,*
 577 *Loaden with fruit of fairest colors mixed,*
 578 *Ruddy and gold. I nearer drew to gaze,*
 579 *When from the boughs a savory odor blown,*
 580 *Grateful³⁰⁸ to appetite, more pleased my sense*

³⁰³ (1) hesitate, (2) disagree about

³⁰⁴ capable of speech

³⁰⁵ from being

³⁰⁶ a marvel, extraordinary event

³⁰⁷ despicable

³⁰⁸ pleasing

581 *Than smell of sweetest fennel,³⁰⁹ or the teats*
 582 *Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at ev'n,³¹⁰*
 583 *Unucked of lamb or kid, that tend³¹¹ their play.*
 584 *To satisfy the sharp desire I had*
 585 *Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved*
 586 *Not to defer. Hunger and thirst at once,*
 587 *Powerful persuaders, quick'ned at the scent*
 588 *Of that alluring³¹² fruit, urged me so keen.*
 589 *About the mossy trunk I wound me soon,³¹³*
 590 *For high from ground the branches would require*
 591 *Thy utmost reach, or Adam's. Round the tree*
 592 *All other beasts that saw, with like desire*
 593 *Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.*
 594 *Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung*
 595 *Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill*
 596 *I spared not, for such pleasure till that hour,*
 597 *At feed³¹⁴ or fountain never had I found.*
 598 *Sated at length, ere long I might³¹⁵ perceive*
 599 *Strange alteration in me, to degree*
 600 *Of reason in my inward powers, and speech*
 601 *Wanted³¹⁶ not long, though to this shape retained.³¹⁷*
 602 *Thenceforth to speculations high or deep*
 603 *I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind*
 604 *Considered all things visible in Heav'n,*
 605 *Or earth, or middle,³¹⁸ all things fair and good.*

³⁰⁹ snakes were thought to improve their eyesight by rubbing their eyes on fennel

³¹⁰ snakes were reputed to suck milk from sheep and goats

³¹¹ are engaged in

³¹² tempting, charming

³¹³ quickly

³¹⁴ feeding ground

³¹⁵ was able to

³¹⁶ lacked

³¹⁷ kept, confined

³¹⁸ in between

606 *But all that fair and good in thy divine*
 607 *Semblance, and in thy beauty's Heav'nly ray,*
 608 *United I beheld: no fair to thine*
 609 *Equivalent or second! Which compelled*
 610 *Me thus, though importune³¹⁹ perhaps, to come*
 611 *And gaze, and worship thee of right declared*
 612 *Sov'reign of creatures, universal Dame!"³²⁰*
 613 *So talked the spirited³²¹ sly snake, and Eve,*
 614 *Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:*
 615 *"Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt*
 616 *The virtue³²² of that fruit, in thee first proved.³²³*
 617 *But say, where grows the tree? from hence how*
 far?
 618 *For many are the trees of God that grow*
 619 *In Paradise, and various, yet unknown*
 620 *To us. In such abundance lies our choice,*
 621 *As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,*
 622 *Still hanging incorruptible, till men*
 623 *Grow up to their provision,³²⁴ and more hands*
 624 *Help to disburden Nature of her birth."³²⁵*
 625 *To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad:*
 626 *"Empress, the way is ready, and not long.*
 627 *Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,³²⁶*
 628 *Fast³²⁷ by a fountain, one small thicket past*
 629 *Of blowing myrrh and balm. If thou accept*
 630 *My conduct,³²⁸ I can bring thee thither soon."*

³¹⁹ vexatious

³²⁰ mistress, woman of rank and power

³²¹ having a Spirit in his body

³²² power, quality

³²³ demonstrated, tested, learned about

³²⁴ due number

³²⁵ that which is born of Nature, Nature's offspring

³²⁶ a flat = level ground

³²⁷ close, near

³²⁸ guidance [second syllable accented]

- 631 *“Lead then,” said Eve. He, leading, swiftly
rolled*
- 632 *In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,*
633 *To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy*
634 *Bright’ns his crest, as when a wand’ring fire,*
635 *Compact³²⁹ of unctuous³³⁰ vapor, which the night*
636 *Condenses, and the cold environs³³¹ round,*
637 *Kindled through agitation³³² to a flame,*
638 *Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends,³³³*
639 *Hovering and blazing with delusive light,*
640 *Misleads th’ amazed night-wanderer from his
way*
- 641 *To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,*
642 *There swallowed up and lost, from succor far:*
643 *So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud*
644 *Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the tree*
645 *Of prohibition,³³⁴ root of all our woe,*
646 *Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spoke:*
647 *“Serpent, we might have spared our coming
hither,*
- 648 *Fruitless³³⁵ to me, though fruit be here to excess,*
649 *The credit³³⁶ of whose virtue rest with thee,*
650 *Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.*
651 *But of this tree we may not taste nor touch.*
652 *God so commanded, and left that command*
653 *Sole daughter³³⁷ of His voice. The rest, we live*
654 *Law to ourselves. Our reason is our law.”*

³²⁹ composed, made [second syllable accented]

³³⁰ oily

³³¹ envelops

³³² a shaking movement

³³³ accompanies

³³⁴ i.e., the order forbidding that its fruit be eaten

³³⁵ useless, wasted

³³⁶ credibility

³³⁷ offspring

680 *Mother of science!*³⁴⁶ *Now I feel thy power*
 681 *Within me clear, not only to discern*
 682 *Things in their causes, but to trace the ways*
 683 *Of highest agents,³⁴⁷ deemed however³⁴⁸ wise.*
 684 *Queen of this universe! Do not believe*
 685 *Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die.*
 686 *How should you? By the fruit? It gives you life*
 687 *To knowledge. By the threat'ner?³⁴⁹ Look on me,*
 688 *Me, who have touched and tasted, yet both live,*
 689 *And life more perfect have attained than Fate*
 690 *Meant me, by vent'ring³⁵⁰ higher than my lot.*
 691 *Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast*
 692 *Is open? Or will God incense³⁵¹ His ire*
 693 *For such a petty trespass? and not praise*
 694 *Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain*
 695 *Of death denounced,³⁵² whatever thing death be,*
 696 *Deterred not from achieving what might lead*
 697 *To happier life, knowledge of good and evil?*
 698 *Of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil*
 699 *Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?*
 700 *God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just—*
 701 *Not just, not God. Not feared then, nor obeyed:*
 702 *Your fear itself of death removes the fear.*
 703 *Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe?*
 704 *Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,*
 705 *His worshippers? He knows that in the day*
 706 *Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,*
 707 *Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then*
 708 *Op'ned and cleared, and ye shall be as gods,*

³⁴⁶ knowledge

³⁴⁷ natural forces/substances that are productive of active phenomena

³⁴⁸ no matter how

³⁴⁹ God

³⁵⁰ venturing

³⁵¹ kindle

³⁵² uttered denunciations against

- 709 *Knowing both good and evil, as they know.*
 710 *That ye should be as gods, since I as man,*
 711 *Internal man, is but proportion meet—³⁵³*
 712 *I of brute, human; ye of human, gods.*
 713 *So ye shall die, perhaps, by putting off*
 714 *Human, to put on gods—death to be wished,*
 715 *Though threat'ned, which no worse than this can*
 bring.
 716 *And what are gods, that man may not become*
 717 *As they, participating³⁵⁴ godlike food?*
 718 *The gods are first, and that advantage use³⁵⁵*
 719 *On our belief that all from them proceeds.*
 720 *I question it, for this fair earth I see,*
 721 *Warmed by the sun, producing every kind,*
 722 *Them³⁵⁶ nothing. If they all things, who enclosed*
 723 *Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,*
 724 *That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains*
 725 *Wisdom without their leave? And wherein lies*
 726 *Th' offence, that man should thus attain to know?*
 727 *What can your knowledge hurt Him, or this tree*
 728 *Impart against His will, if all be His?*
 729 *Or is it envy? and can envy dwell*
 730 *In Heav'nly breasts? These, these, and many*
 more
 731 *Causes³⁵⁷ import³⁵⁸ your need of this fair fruit.*
 732 *Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste!"*
 733 *He ended, and his words replete³⁵⁹ with guile*
 734 *Into her heart too easy entrance won.*

³⁵³ fitting, suitable, proper

³⁵⁴ sharing

³⁵⁵ they employ/make use of

³⁵⁶ the gods

³⁵⁷ reasons [noun]

³⁵⁸ signify

³⁵⁹ filled

735 *Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold*
 736 *Might tempt alone,³⁶⁰ and in her ears the sound*
 737 *Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd³⁶¹*
 738 *With reason (to her seeming) and with truth.*
 739 *Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked*
 740 *An eager appetite, raised by the smell*
 741 *So savory of that fruit, which with desire,*
 742 *Inclinable³⁶² now grown to touch or taste,*
 743 *Solicited³⁶³ her longing eye. Yet first*
 744 *Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:*
 745 *“Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,*
 746 *Though kept from man, and worthy to be*
 admired,
 747 *Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay³⁶⁴*
 748 *Gave elocution³⁶⁵ to the mute, and taught*
 749 *The tongue not made for speech to speak thy*
 praise.
 750 *Thy praise He also, who forbids thy use,*
 751 *Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree*
 752 *Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil,*
 753 *Forbids us then to taste! But His forbidding*
 754 *Commends thee more, while it infers the good*
 755 *By thee communicated, and our want.³⁶⁶*
 756 *For good unknown sure is not had or, had*
 757 *And yet unknown, is as not had at all.*
 758 *In plain³⁶⁷ then, what forbids He but to know,*
 759 *Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?*
 760 *Such prohibitions bind not. But if death*

³⁶⁰ all by itself

³⁶¹ impregnated

³⁶² favorably disposed, inclining

³⁶³ incited

³⁶⁴ test, taste

³⁶⁵ oral utterance

³⁶⁶ lack, need

³⁶⁷ plain language/terms

761 *Bind us with after-bands, what profits then*
 762 *Our inward freedom? In the day we eat*
 763 *Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die!*
 764 *How dies the serpent? He hath eaten and lives,*
 765 *And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and*
 discerns,
 766 *Irrational³⁶⁸ till then. For us alone*
 767 *Was death invented? Or to us denied*
 768 *This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?*
 769 *For beasts it seems. Yet that one beast which first*
 770 *Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy*
 771 *The good befall'n him, author unsuspect,³⁶⁹*
 772 *Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.*
 773 *What fear I then? Rather, what know to fear*
 774 *Under this ignorance of good and evil,*
 775 *Of God or death, of law or penalty?*
 776 *Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,*
 777 *Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,*
 778 *Of virtue to make wise. What hinders then*
 779 *To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?"*
 780 *So saying, her rash hand in evil hour*
 781 *Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she*
 ate!³⁷⁰
 782 *Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,*
 783 *Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,*
 784 *That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk*
 785 *The guilty³⁷¹ serpent, and well might, for Eve,*
 786 *Intent now wholly on her taste, nought else*
 787 *Regarded.³⁷² Such delight till then, as seemed,*
 788 *In fruit she never tasted, whether true*

³⁶⁸ not rational

³⁶⁹ not to be suspected

³⁷⁰ [pronounced, in British English both then and now, /et/]

³⁷¹ criminal

³⁷² noticed, paid attention to

789 *Or fancied so, through expectation high*
 790 *Of knowledge, nor was godhead from her thought.*
 791 *Greedily she ingorged without restraint,*
 792 *And knew not eating death. Sate at length,*
 793 *And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon,³⁷³*
 794 *Thus to herself she pleasingly began:*
 795 *“O sov’ reign, virtuous, precious of all trees*
 796 *In Paradise! Of operation³⁷⁴ blest*
 797 *To sapience,³⁷⁵ hitherto obscured,³⁷⁶ infamed,³⁷⁷*
 798 *And thy fair fruit let³⁷⁸ hang, as to no end³⁷⁹*
 799 *Created. But henceforth my early care,*
 800 *Not without song, each morning, and due praise,*
 801 *Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease*
 802 *Of thy full branches offered free to all,*
 803 *Till dieted³⁸⁰ by thee I grow mature*
 804 *In knowledge, as the gods, who all things know,*
 805 *Though others envy what they cannot give—*
 806 *For had the gift been theirs, it had not here*
 807 *Thus grown. Experience, next, to thee I owe,*
 808 *Best guide. Not following thee, I had remained*
 809 *In ignorance. Thou op’nest wisdom’s way,*
 810 *And giv’st access, though secret she retire.*
 811 *And I perhaps am secret.³⁸¹ Heav’n is high,*
 812 *High and remote to see from thence distinct*
 813 *Each thing on earth. And other care perhaps*
 814 *May have diverted from continual watch*
 815 *Our great Forbidder, safe with all His spies*

³⁷³ convivial

³⁷⁴ influence, power, effect

³⁷⁵ wisdom, understanding

³⁷⁶ hidden

³⁷⁷ defamed

³⁷⁸ left, allowed to

³⁷⁹ purpose

³⁸⁰ fed

³⁸¹ concealed

816 *About him. But to Adam in what sort*³⁸²
 817 *Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known*
 818 *As yet my change, and give him to partake*³⁸³
 819 *Full happiness with me, or rather not,*
 820 *But keep the odds of knowledge in my power*
 821 *Without co-partner? So to add what wants*³⁸⁴
 822 *In female sex, the more to draw his love,*
 823 *And render me more equal, and perhaps,*
 824 *A thing not undesirable, sometime*
 825 *Superior—for inferior, who is free?*
 826 *This may be well. But what if God have seen,*
 827 *And death ensue?*³⁸⁵ *Then I shall be no more!*
 828 *And Adam, wedded to another Eve,*
 829 *Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct:*
 830 *A death to think!*³⁸⁶ *Confirmed then I resolve,*
 831 *Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe!*
 832 *So dear I love him, that with him all deaths*
 833 *I could endure, without him live no life.”*
 834 *So saying, from the tree her step she turned,*
 835 *But first low reverence done, as to the power*
 836 *That dwelt within, whose presence had infused*
 837 *Into the plant sciential*³⁸⁷ *sap, derived*
 838 *From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while,*
 839 *Waiting desirous her return, had wove*
 840 *Of choicest flow'rs a garland, to adorn*
 841 *Her tresses, and her rural labors crown,*
 842 *As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.*
 843 *Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new*
 844 *Solace in her return, so long delayed,*

³⁸² way

³⁸³ share

³⁸⁴ is lacking

³⁸⁵ follow

³⁸⁶ consider

³⁸⁷ knowledge-containing

845 *Yet oft his heart, divine³⁸⁸ of something ill,*
 846 *Misgave him. He the fault'ring³⁸⁹ measure³⁹⁰ felt,³⁹¹*
 847 *And forth to meet her went, the way she took*
 848 *That morn when first they parted. By the Tree*
 849 *Of Knowledge he must pass. There he her met,*
 850 *Scarce from the tree returning, in her hand*
 851 *A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,*
 852 *New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.*
 853 *To him she hasted. In her face excuse*
 854 *Came prologue,³⁹² and apology too prompt,*
 855 *Which, with bland³⁹³ words at will,³⁹⁴ she thus*
 addressed:
 856 *"Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?*
 857 *Thee I have missed, and thought it long,*
 deprived³⁹⁵
 858 *Thy presence. Agony of love till now*
 859 *Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more*
 860 *Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,*
 861 *The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange*
 862 *Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear.*
 863 *This tree is not, as we are told, a tree*
 864 *Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown*
 865 *Op'ning the way, but of divine effect*
 866 *To open eyes, and make them gods who taste,*
 867 *And hath been tasted such. The serpent wise,*
 868 *Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,*
 869 *Hath eaten of the fruit, and is become—*
 870 *Not dead, as we are threat'ned, but thenceforth*

³⁸⁸ divining, prefiguring

³⁸⁹ wrongdoing

³⁹⁰ action

³⁹¹ perceived, was conscious of

³⁹² preface

³⁹³ soft, coaxing

³⁹⁴ at will = ready

³⁹⁵ deprived of

871 *Endued*³⁹⁶ *with human voice and human sense,*
 872 *Reasoning to admiration,*³⁹⁷ *and with me*
 873 *Persuasively hath so prevailed, that I*
 874 *Have also tasted, and have also found*
 875 *Th' effects to correspond.*³⁹⁸ *Opener mine eyes,*
 876 *Dim erst, dilated*³⁹⁹ *spirits, ampler heart,*
 877 *And growing up to godhead—which for thee*
 878 *Chiefly I sought—without thee can despise.*
 879 *For bliss, as*⁴⁰⁰ *thou hast part,*⁴⁰¹ *to me is bliss.*
 880 *Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.*
 881 *Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot*⁴⁰²
 882 *May join us, equal joy, as equal love,*
 883 *Lest thou not tasting, different degree*
 884 *Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce*
 88 *Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit.”*
 886 *Thus Eve with count'nance blithe*⁴⁰³ *her story*
 told,
 887 *But in her cheek distemper*⁴⁰⁴ *flushing glowed.*
 888 *On th' other side Adam, soon as he heard*
 889 *The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,*
 890 *Astonied*⁴⁰⁵ *stood and blank,*⁴⁰⁶ *while horror chill*
 891 *Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.*⁴⁰⁷
 892 *From his slack hand the garland wreathed for*
 Eve

³⁹⁶ endowed, supplied, invested

³⁹⁷ to admiration = marvelously

³⁹⁸ to be as he has said they would be

³⁹⁹ amplified, expanded

⁴⁰⁰ to the extent that, if

⁴⁰¹ a share

⁴⁰² fortune, destiny

⁴⁰³ cheerful, gay

⁴⁰⁴ intoxication, derangement

⁴⁰⁵ stunned, astonished

⁴⁰⁶ prostrate

⁴⁰⁷ went slack

893 *Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed.*⁴⁰⁸
 89 *Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length*
 895 *First to himself he inward silence broke:*
 896 *“O fairest of Creation, last and best*
 897 *Of all God’s works, creature in whom excelled*
 898 *Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,*
 899 *Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!*
 900 *How art thou lost! How on a sudden lost,*
 901 *Defaced, deflow’red, and now to death devote!*⁴⁰⁹
 902 *Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress*
 903 *The strict forbiddance, how to violate*
 904 *The sacred fruit forbidden! Some cursèd fraud*
 905 *Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,*
 906 *And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee*
 907 *Certain my resolution is to die!*
 908 *How can I live without thee? How forego*
 909 *Thy sweet converse,*⁴¹⁰ *and love so dearly joined,*
 910 *To live again in these wild woods forlorn?*⁴¹¹
 911 *Should God create another Eve, and I*
 912 *Another rib afford, yet loss of thee*
 913 *Would never*⁴¹² *from my heart. No, no, I feel*
 914 *The link of Nature draw me. Flesh of flesh,*
 915 *Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state*⁴¹³
 916 *Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.”*
 917 *So having said, as one from sad dismay*
 918 *Recomforted,*⁴¹⁴ *and after thoughts disturbed*
 919 *Submitting to what seemed remediless,*
 920 *Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:*

⁴⁰⁸ fell off, scattered

⁴⁰⁹ doomed

⁴¹⁰ company

⁴¹¹ abandoned, forsaken, desolate, lost

⁴¹² never be

⁴¹³ condition, manner of existing

⁴¹⁴ strengthened, soothed

921 *“Bold deed thou hast presumed, advent’rous*
 Eve,
 922 *And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,*
 923 *Had it been only coveting to eye*
 924 *That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,*
 925 *Much more to taste it under ban to touch.*
 926 *But past who can recall, or done undo?*
 927 *Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate. Yet so*
 928 *Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact*
 929 *Is not so heinous,⁴¹⁵ now, foretasted⁴¹⁶ fruit,*
 930 *Profaned⁴¹⁷ first by the serpent, by him first*
 931 *Made common⁴¹⁸ and unhallowed,⁴¹⁹ ere our taste,*
 932 *Nor yet on him found deadly. Yet he lives,*
 933 *Lives, as thou said’st, and gains to live, as man,*
 934 *Higher degree of life—inducement strong*
 935 *To us, as likely tasting to attain*
 936 *Proportional ascent, which cannot be*
 937 *But to be gods, or Angels, demi-gods.*
 938 *Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,*
 939 *Though threat’ning, will in earnest so destroy*
 940 *Us His prime creatures, dignified so high,*
 941 *Set over all His works, which in our fall,*
 942 *For us created, needs with us must fail,*
 943 *Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,*
 944 *Be frustrate, do, undo, and labor lose—*
 945 *Not well conceived of God, who though His*
 power
 946 *Creation could repeat, yet would be loath*
 947 *Us to abolish, lest the adversary*
 948 *Triumph, and say: ‘Fickle their state whom God*
 949 *Most favors. Who can please Him long? Me first*

⁴¹⁵ criminal, infamous

⁴¹⁶ already tasted

⁴¹⁷ polluted

⁴¹⁸ accessible, general, free

⁴¹⁹ unsanctified

950 *He ruined, now mankind. Whom will He next?’*
 951 *Matter of scorn, not to be giv’n the foe.*
 952 *However, I with thee have fixed my lot,*
 953 *Certain⁴²⁰ to undergo like⁴²¹ doom. If death*
 954 *Consort⁴²² with thee, death is to me as life,*
 955 *So forcible⁴²³ within my heart I feel*
 956 *The bond of Nature draw me to my own,*
 957 *My own in thee, for what thou art is mine,*
 958 *Our state cannot be severed. We are one,*
 959 *One flesh. To lose thee were to lose myself.”*
 960 *So Adam, and thus Eve to him replied:*
 961 *“O glorious trial of exceeding⁴²⁴ love,*
 962 *Illustrious evidence,⁴²⁵ example high!*
 963 *Engaging me to emulate. But short⁴²⁶*
 964 *Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,⁴²⁷*
 965 *Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,*
 966 *And gladly of our union hear thee speak,*
 967 *One heart, one soul in both—whereof good proof*
 968 *This day affords, declaring thee resolved,*
 969 *Rather than death, or aught than death more*
 dread,
 970 *Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,*
 971 *To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,*
 972 *If any be, of tasting this fair fruit,*
 973 *Whose virtue, for of good still good proceeds,*
 974 *Direct, or by occasion,⁴²⁸ hath presented*

⁴²⁰ resolved, determined

⁴²¹ equivalent, equal

⁴²² accompany, attend

⁴²³ powerful, convincing, unavoidable

⁴²⁴ extremely great, surpassing excellence

⁴²⁵ manifestation

⁴²⁶ but short = but since I am short (have less of)

⁴²⁷ achieve (such emulation)

⁴²⁸ circumstance

975 *This happy trial of thy love, which else*
 976 *So eminently⁴²⁹ never had been known?*
 977 *Were it⁴³⁰ I thought death menaced⁴³¹ would*
 ensue⁴³²
 978 *This my attempt, I would sustain⁴³³ alone*
 979 *The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die*
 980 *Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact⁴³⁴*
 981 *Pernicious⁴³⁵ to thy peace, chiefly assured*
 982 *Remarkably so late⁴³⁶ of thy so true,*
 983 *So faithful, love unequalled. But I feel*
 984 *Far otherwise th' event. Not death, but life*
 985 *Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,*
 986 *Taste so divine, that what of sweet before*
 987 *Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this, and*
 harsh.
 988 *On my experience, Adam, freely taste,*
 989 *And fear of death deliver to the winds.”*
 990 *So saying, she embraced him, and for joy*
 991 *Tenderly wept, much won⁴³⁷ that he his love*
 992 *Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur*
 993 *Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.*
 994 *In recompence (for such compliance bad,*
 995 *Such recompence best merits) from the bough*
 996 *She gave him of that fair enticing fruit*
 997 *With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,*
 998 *Against his better knowledge, not deceived,*

⁴²⁹ conspicuously [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁴³⁰ were it = were it that

⁴³¹ as threatened

⁴³² follow

⁴³³ undergo, endure, bear, experience

⁴³⁴ deed, action

⁴³⁵ destructive, fatal

⁴³⁶ recently

⁴³⁷ influenced, won over

- 999 *But fondly*⁴³⁸ *overcome with female charm.*
 1000 *Earth trembled from her entrails, as again*
 1001 *In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,*
 1002 *Sky loured*⁴³⁹ *and, muttering thunder, some sad*
 drops
 1003 *Wept at completing*⁴⁴⁰ *of the mortal sin*
 1004 *Original*⁴⁴¹—*while Adam took no thought,*
 1005 *Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate*⁴⁴²
 1006 *Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe*
 1007 *Him with her loved society, that now,*
 1008 *As with new wine intoxicated both,*
 1009 *They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel*
 1010 *Divinity within them breeding wings*
 1011 *Wherewith to scorn the earth. But that false fruit*
 1012 *Far other operation*⁴⁴³ *first displayed,*
 1013 *Carnal desire inflaming. He on Eve*
 1014 *Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him*
 1015 *As wantonly repaid. In lust they burn,*
 1016 *Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance*⁴⁴⁴ *move:*
 1017 *"Eve, now I see thou art exact*⁴⁴⁵ *of taste,*
 1018 *And elegant,*⁴⁴⁶ *of*⁴⁴⁷ *sapience*⁴⁴⁸ *no small part.*
 1019 *Since to each meaning savor*⁴⁴⁹ *we apply,*
 1020 *And palate*⁴⁵⁰ *call judicious,*⁴⁵¹ *I the praise*

⁴³⁸ foolishly

⁴³⁹ darkened, threatened

⁴⁴⁰ finishing

⁴⁴¹ primary, first

⁴⁴² repeat

⁴⁴³ effect

⁴⁴⁴ amorous play

⁴⁴⁵ strict

⁴⁴⁶ correct, delicate, graceful, polite

⁴⁴⁷ which is of

⁴⁴⁸ wisdom

⁴⁴⁹ quality, character

⁴⁵⁰ sense of taste

⁴⁵¹ sensible, wise, having sound judgment

IO21 *Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.*⁴⁵²
 IO22 *Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained*
 IO23 *From this delightful fruit, nor known till now*
 IO24 *True relish,*⁴⁵³ *tasting. If such pleasure be*
 IO25 *In things to us forbidden, it might be wished*
 IO26 *For this one tree had been forbidden ten.*
 IO27 *But come, so well refreshed, now let us play,*
 IO28 *As meet is, after such delicious fare,*
 IO29 *For never did thy beauty, since the day*
 IO30 *I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned*
 IO31 *With all perfections, so inflame my sense*
 IO32 *With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now*
 IO33 *Than ever—bounty*⁴⁵⁴ *of this virtuous*⁴⁵⁵ *tree!”*
 IO34 *So said he, and forbore not glance or toy*⁴⁵⁶
 IO35 *Of amorous intent, well understood*
 IO36 *Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.*
 IO37 *Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,*
 IO38 *Thick overhead with verdant roof embow’red,*
 IO39 *He led her, nothing loath. Flow’rs were the couch,*
 IO40 *Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,*
 IO41 *And hyacinth, earth’s freshest softest lap.*⁴⁵⁷
 IO42 *There they their fill of love and love’s disport*⁴⁵⁸
 IO43 *Took largely,*⁴⁵⁹ *of their mutual guilt the seal,*
 IO44 *The solace of their sin, till dewy*⁴⁶⁰ *sleep*
 IO45 *Oppressed*⁴⁶¹ *them, wearied with their amorous*
 play.

⁴⁵² furnished, provided

⁴⁵³ enjoyment of taste

⁴⁵⁴ gift, kindness

⁴⁵⁵ potent, powerful

⁴⁵⁶ caress

⁴⁵⁷ a hollow among hills

⁴⁵⁸ diversion, sport, games

⁴⁵⁹ amply, at length

⁴⁶⁰ moist

⁴⁶¹ pressed down on

- 1046 *Soon as the force of that fallacious⁴⁶² fruit,*
 1047 *That with exhilarating vapor bland⁴⁶³*
 1048 *About their spirits had played, and inmost*
 powers
 1049 *Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,*
 1050 *Bred of unkindly⁴⁶⁴ fumes, with conscious*
 dreams
 1051 *Encumbered,⁴⁶⁵ now had left them, up they rose*
 1052 *As from unrest⁴⁶⁶ and, each the other viewing,*
 1053 *Soon found their eyes how opened, and their*
 minds
 1054 *How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil*
 1055 *Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone,*
 1056 *Just⁴⁶⁷ confidence, and native righteousness,⁴⁶⁸*
 1057 *And honor, from⁴⁶⁹ about them, naked left*
 1058 *To guilty shame. He covered,⁴⁷⁰ but his robe*
 1059 *Uncovered more. So rose the Danite⁴⁷¹ strong,*
 1060 *Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap*
 1061 *Of Philistean⁴⁷² Dalilah,⁴⁷³ and waked*
 1062 *Shorn of his strength. They destitute and bare*
 1063 *Of all their virtue, silent, and in face*
 1064 *Confounded,⁴⁷⁴ long they sat, as stricken mute,*
 1065 *Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,*

⁴⁶² deceitful

⁴⁶³ genial

⁴⁶⁴ unnatural

⁴⁶⁵ burdened, hampered, embarrassed, clogged

⁴⁶⁶ turmoil, disturbance

⁴⁶⁷ rightful, proper

⁴⁶⁸ quality of conforming to moral or divine law

⁴⁶⁹ had gone from

⁴⁷⁰ covered himself

⁴⁷¹ of the tribe of Dan

⁴⁷² Philistine [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁴⁷³ Samson's traitorous wife [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

⁴⁷⁴ defeated, overthrown, brought to nought

- IO66 *At length gave utterance to these words*
 *constrained.*⁴⁷⁵
 IO67 *“O Eve, in evil hour thou did’st give ear*
 IO68 *To that false worm, of whomsoever taught*
 IO69 *To counterfeit man’s voice, true in our fall,*
 IO70 *False in our promised rising, since our eyes*
 IO71 *Op’ned we find, indeed, and find we know*
 IO72 *Both good and evil—good lost, and evil got!*
 IO73 *Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,*
 IO74 *Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,*
 IO75 *Of innocence, of faith, of purity,*
 IO76 *Our wonted*⁴⁷⁶ *ornaments now soiled and stained,*
 IO77 *And in our faces evident the signs*
 IO78 *Of foul concupiscence,*⁴⁷⁷ *whence evil store,*⁴⁷⁸
 IO79 *Ev’n shame, the last*⁴⁷⁹ *of evils. Of the first*
 IO80 *Be sure then. How shall I behold the face*
 IO81 *Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy*
 IO82 *And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heav’nly*
 shapes
 IO83 *Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze*
 IO84 *Insufferably bright. O! might I here*
 IO85 *In solitude live savage, in some glade*
 IO86 *Obscured,*⁴⁸⁰ *where highest woods, impenetrable*
 IO87 *To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage*⁴⁸¹
 broad
 IO88 *And brown as evening. Cover me, ye pines!*
 IO89 *Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs*
 IO90 *Hide me, where I may never see them*⁴⁸² *more!*

⁴⁷⁵ afflicted

⁴⁷⁶ customary

⁴⁷⁷ lust

⁴⁷⁸ evil store = an abundance of evil

⁴⁷⁹ worst, final

⁴⁸⁰ hidden

⁴⁸¹ (1) shade, (2) the foliage that produces shade

⁴⁸² God or Angels

- IO91 *“But let us now, as in bad plight,⁴⁸³ devise*
 IO92 *What best may for the present serve to hide*
 IO93 *The parts of each from other, that seem most*
 IO94 *To shame obnoxious,⁴⁸⁴ and unseemliest⁴⁸⁵ seen.*
 IO95 *Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves together*
 sewed,
 IO96 *And girded on our loins, may cover round*
 IO97 *Those middle parts, that this newcomer, shame,*
 IO98 *There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.”*
 IO99 *So counselled he, and both together went*
 II00 *Into the thickest wood. There soon they chose*
 II01 *The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,*
 II02 *But such⁴⁸⁶ as at this day, to Indians known,*
 II03 *In Malabar⁴⁸⁷ or Deccan⁴⁸⁸ spreads her arms*
 II04 *Branching so broad and long, that in the ground*
 II05 *The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow*
 II06 *About the mother tree, a pillared shade*
 II07 *High over-arched, and echoing walks between.*
 II08 *There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,*
 II09 *Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds*
 II10 *At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those*
 leaves
 III1 *They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe⁴⁸⁹*
 III2 *And, with what skill they had, together sewed,*
 III3 *To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide*
 III4 *Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike*
 III5 *To that first naked glory! Such of late*
 III6 *Columbus found th’ American, so girt⁴⁹⁰*

⁴⁸³ peril, danger

⁴⁸⁴ offensive

⁴⁸⁵ most improperly

⁴⁸⁶ the banyan

⁴⁸⁷ western India

⁴⁸⁸ southern India

⁴⁸⁹ shield

⁴⁹⁰ belted

- III7 *With feathered cincture,⁴⁹¹ naked else, and wild*
 III8 *Among the trees on isles and woody shores.*
 III9 *Thus fenced⁴⁹² and, as they thought, their shame in*
 part
 II20 *Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,*
 II21 *They sat them down to weep, nor only tears*
 II22 *Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within*
 II23 *Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,*
 II24 *Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore*
 II25 *Their inward state of mind, calm region once*
 II26 *And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent,*
 II27 *For understanding ruled not, and the will*
 II28 *Heard not her⁴⁹³ lore,⁴⁹⁴ both⁴⁹⁵ in subjection now*
 II29 *To sensual appetite, who from beneath*
 II30 *Usurping over sov'reign reason claimed*
 II31 *Superior sway.⁴⁹⁶ From thus distempered⁴⁹⁷*
 breast,
 II32 *Adam, estranged⁴⁹⁸ in look and altered style,⁴⁹⁹*
 II33 *Speech intermitted⁵⁰⁰ thus to Eve renewed:*
 II34 *“Would thou had'st hearkened to my words,*
 and stayed
 II35 *With me, as I besought⁵⁰¹ thee, when that strange*
 II36 *Desire of wand'ring, this unhappy morn,*
 II37 *I know not whence possessed thee. We had then*

⁴⁹¹ belt

⁴⁹² screened, shielded, protected

⁴⁹³ understanding's

⁴⁹⁴ counsel, advice

⁴⁹⁵ both of them (Adam and Eve)

⁴⁹⁶ power, authority, rule

⁴⁹⁷ disordered

⁴⁹⁸ alienated

⁴⁹⁹ tone

⁵⁰⁰ interrupted

⁵⁰¹ begged earnestly, supplicated

- II38 *Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled*⁵⁰²
 II39 *Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!*
 II40 *Let none henceforth seek needless cause*
 t' approve
 II41 *The faith they owe!*⁵⁰³ *When earnestly they seek*
 II42 *Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.”*
 II43 *To whom, soon*⁵⁰⁴ *moved with touch of blame, thus*
 Eve:
 II44 *“What words have passed thy lips, Adam*
 severe!
 II45 *Imput'st thou that to my default, or will*
 II46 *Of wand'ring, as thou call'st it, which who knows*
 II47 *But might as ill have happened thou being by—*
 II48 *Or to thyself perhaps? Had'st thou been there,*
 II49 *Or here th' attempt, thou could'st not have*
 discerned
 II50 *Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spoke.*
 II51 *No ground of enmity between us known,*
 II52 *Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm?*
 II53 *Was I t' have never parted from thy side?*
 II54 *As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.*
 II55 *Being as I am, why did'st not thou, the head,*
 II56 *Command me absolutely not to go,*
 II57 *Going into such danger as thou said'st?*
 II58 *Too facile*⁵⁰⁵ *then, thou did'st not much*
 *gainsay—*⁵⁰⁶
 II59 *Nay, did'st permit, approve, and fair*⁵⁰⁷ *dismiss.*⁵⁰⁸
 II60 *Had'st thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,*

⁵⁰² robbed, stripped

⁵⁰³ own

⁵⁰⁴ quickly

⁵⁰⁵ easily persuaded

⁵⁰⁶ oppose, contradict

⁵⁰⁷ clearly, distinctly, openly

⁵⁰⁸ send away

II61 *Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.”*
 II62 *To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:*
 II63 *“Is this the love, is this the recompence*
 II64 *Of mine to thee, ungrateful Eve! expressed*
 II65 *Immutable,⁵⁰⁹ when thou wert lost, not I,*
 II66 *Who might have lived, and joyed⁵¹⁰ immortal*
 bliss,
 II67 *Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?*
 II68 *And am I now upbraided as the cause*
 II69 *Of thy transgressing? Not enough severe,*
 II70 *It seems, in thy restraint. What could I more?*
 II71 *I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold*
 II72 *The danger, and the lurking enemy*
 II73 *That lay in wait. Beyond this had been force,*
 II74 *And force upon free will hath here no place.*
 II75 *But confidence then bore thee on, secure⁵¹¹*
 II76 *Either to meet no danger, or to find*
 II77 *Matter⁵¹² of glorious trial.⁵¹³ And perhaps*
 II78 *I also erred, in overmuch admiring*
 II79 *What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought*
 II80 *No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue⁵¹⁴*
 II81 *The error now, which is become my crime,*
 II82 *And thou th’ accuser. Thus it shall befall⁵¹⁵*
 II83 *Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,*
 II84 *Lets her will⁵¹⁶ rule. Restraint she will not brook*
 II85 *And left t’ herself, if evil thence ensue,⁵¹⁷*

⁵⁰⁹ as unchangeable

⁵¹⁰ enjoyed

⁵¹¹ confident

⁵¹² thing, affair, events, circumstances

⁵¹³ test, endeavor, experiment

⁵¹⁴ regret, repent

⁵¹⁵ happen, occur

⁵¹⁶ [noun]

⁵¹⁷ follow

- 1186 *She first his weak indulgence will accuse.”*
1187 *Thus they in mutual accusation spent*
1188 *The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,*
1189 *And of their vain contest⁵¹⁸ appeared no end.*

The End of the Ninth Book

⁵¹⁸ [contest]

BOOK X

THE ARGUMENT

Man's transgression known, the Guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve¹ their vigilance, and are approved, God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors, who descends and gives sentence accordingly, then in pity clothes them both, and reascends.

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

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

The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretells the

¹ confirm, pronounce

final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things, but for the present commands his Angels to make several alterations in the heavens and elements. Adam more and more perceiving his fallen condition heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve. She persists and at length appeases him, then to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways, which he approves not, but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the serpent, and exhorts her with him to seek peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.

1 *Meanwhile the heinous² and despiteful³ act*
 2 *Of Satan, done in Paradise, and how*
 3 *He, in the serpent, had perverted⁴ Eve,*
 4 *Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,*
 5 *Was known in Heav'n, for what can 'scape the eye*
 6 *Of God all-seeing, or deceive His heart*
 7 *Omniscient? Who, in all things wise and just,*
 8 *Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind*
 9 *Of man, with strength entire⁵ and free will armed,*
 10 *Complete to have discovered and repulsed*
 11 *Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.*
 12 *For still they⁶ knew and ought t' have still'*
 remembered
 13 *The high injunction not to taste that fruit,*
 14 *Whoever tempted, which they not obeying,*
 15 *Incurred (what could they less?) the penalty*
 16 *And, manifold⁸ in sin, deserved to fall.*
 17 *Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste*
 18 *The Angelic guards ascended, mute, and sad*
 19 *For man, for of his state by this they knew,*
 20 *Much wond'ring how the subtle fiend had stol'n*
 21 *Entrance unseen. Soon as th' unwelcome news*
 22 *From earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased*
 23 *All were who heard. Dim sadness did not spare,*
 24 *That time, celestial visages, yet mixed*
 25 *With pity violated⁹ not their bliss.*
 26 *About the new-arrived in multitudes*
 27 *The ethereal people ran, to hear and know*

² infamous

³ spiteful

⁴ corrupted

⁵ complete

⁶ Adam and Eve

⁷ always

⁸ complexly, in multiple fashion

⁹ corrupted, injured, broke, destroyed

28 *How all befell.¹⁰ They towards the Throne*
 Supreme
 29 *Accountable,¹¹ made haste to make appear¹²*
 30 *With righteous¹³ plea their utmost vigilance,*
 31 *And easily approved,¹⁴ when the Most High*
 32 *Eternal Father, from His secret cloud,*
 33 *Amidst in thunder, uttered thus His voice:*
 34 *“Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned*
 35 *From unsuccessful charge,¹⁵ be not dismayed,*
 36 *Nor troubled at these tidings from the earth,*
 37 *Which your sincerest¹⁶ care could not prevent,*
 38 *Foretold¹⁷ so lately¹⁸ what would come to pass,*
 39 *When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from*
 Hell.
 40 *I told ye then he should prevail, and speed¹⁹*
 41 *On his bad errand. Man should²⁰ be seduced*
 42 *And flattered out of all, believing lies*
 43 *Against his Maker, no decree of mine*
 44 *Concurring to necessitate his fall*
 45 *Or touch with lightest moment²¹ of impulse²²*
 46 *His free will, to her²³ own inclining left*
 47 *In ev’n scale. But fall’n he is. And now*

¹⁰ had happened/occurred

¹¹ responsible

¹² clear

¹³ guiltless

¹⁴ demonstrated

¹⁵ responsibility, trust

¹⁶ truest, purest

¹⁷ predicted

¹⁸ recently

¹⁹ succeed

²⁰ had to be

²¹ weight

²² force

²³ his will’s

48 *What rests²⁴ but²⁵ that the mortal²⁶ sentence pass²⁷*
 49 *On his transgression, death denounced²⁸ that day,*
 50 *Which he presumes already vain and void*
 51 *Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,*
 52 *By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find*
 53 *Forbearance²⁹ no acquittance,³⁰ ere day end.*
 54 *Justice shall not return as bounty scorned.³¹*
 55 *But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,*
 56 *Vice-gerent³² Son? To thee I have transferred*
 57 *All judgment, whether in Heav'n, or earth, or Hell.*
 58 *Easy it may be seen that I intend*
 59 *Mercy colleague³³ with justice, sending thee*
 60 *Man's friend, his mediator, his designed³⁴*
 61 *Both ransom and redeemer voluntary,*
 62 *And destined, man himself, to judge man fallen."*
 63 *So spoke the Father and, unfolding bright*
 64 *Toward the right hand His glory, on the Son*
 65 *Blazed forth unclouded Deity. He full*
 66 *Resplendent all his Father manifest*
 67 *Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:*
 68 *"Father Eternal, Thine is to decree,*
 69 *Mine, both in Heav'n and earth, to do Thy will*
 70 *Supreme, that Thou in me, Thy Son beloved,*
 71 *May'st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge*

²⁴ remains

²⁵ except

²⁶ deadly

²⁷ be passed

²⁸ proclaimed

²⁹ lenity, mercy, indulgence

³⁰ release (from a debt)

³¹ "Justice must not be scorned (treated with contempt) as the free gift of kindness (bounty) has been"

³² one who rules by deputed power, appointed by a ruler to exercise certain powers

³³ joined

³⁴ planned, intended

72 *On earth these Thy transgressors, but Thou*
 know'st,
 73 *Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,*³⁵
 74 *When time shall be, for so I undertook*
 75 *Before Thee, and not repenting, this obtain*³⁶
 76 *Of right, that I may mitigate*³⁷ *their doom*³⁸
 77 *On me derived.*³⁹ *Yet I shall temper so*
 78 *Justice with mercy, as may illustrate*⁴⁰ *most*
 79 *Them fully satisfied,*⁴¹ *and Thee appease.*⁴²
 80 *Attendance*⁴³ *none shall need,*⁴⁴ *nor train, where*
 none
 81 *Are to behold the judgment but the judged,*
 82 *Those two. The third,*⁴⁵ *best absent,*⁴⁶ *is*
 condemned,
 83 *Convict*⁴⁷ *by flight, and rebel to all law.*
 84 *Conviction*⁴⁸ *to the serpent*⁴⁹ *none belongs."*
 85 *Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose*
 86 *Of high collateral*⁵⁰ *glory. Him Thrones, and*
 Powers,

³⁵ descend, fall

³⁶ I possess/hold

³⁷ alleviate, abate

³⁸ judgment, sentence

³⁹ conveyed, transferred

⁴⁰ explain, make clear, elucidate

⁴¹ set free from doubt, convinced

⁴² pacify

⁴³ escort, attending company

⁴⁴ be needed

⁴⁵ Satan

⁴⁶ i.e., from the process of judgment, as applied to Adam and Eve

⁴⁷ proved guilty

⁴⁸ proof, demonstration

⁴⁹ i.e., the animal whose body was appropriated, wrongly and without consent, by Satan

⁵⁰ parallel, side by side

87 *Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant*⁵¹
 88 *Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence*
 89 *Eden, and all the coast, in prospect lay.*
 90 *Down he descended straight: the speed of gods*
 91 *Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes*
 winged.
 92 *Now was the sun in western cadence*⁵² *low*
 93 *From noon, and gentle airs, due at their hour,*
 94 *To fan the earth now waked, and usher in*
 95 *The ev'ning cool, when He, from wrath more cool,*
 96 *Came the mild Judge and Intercessor*⁵³ *both,*
 97 *To sentence man. The voice of God they heard*
 98 *Now walking in the garden, by soft winds*
 99 *Brought to their ears, while day decline. They*
 heard,
 100 *And from His presence hid themselves among*
 101 *The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,*
 102 *Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:*
 103 *“Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet*
 104 *My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,*
 105 *Not pleased, thus entertained*⁵⁴ *with solitude,*
 106 *Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.*
 107 *Or*⁵⁵ *come I less conspicuous,*⁵⁶ *or what change*
 108 *Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come*
 forth.”
 109 *He came, and with him Eve, more loath, though*
 first
 110 *T' offend. Discount'nanced*⁵⁷ *both, and*
 *discomposed.*⁵⁸

⁵¹ attendant

⁵² descent

⁵³ mediator

⁵⁴ received

⁵⁵ either

⁵⁶ visible

⁵⁷ disconcerted, abashed

⁵⁸ disturbed, unsettled, agitated

III *Love was not in their looks, either to God*
 II2 *Or to each other, but apparent⁵⁹ guilt,*
 II3 *And shame, and perturbation, and despair,*
 II4 *Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.*
 II5 *Whence Adam, falt'ring long, thus answered*
 brief:
 II6 *“I heard Thee in the garden, and of Thy voice*
 II7 *Afraid, being naked hid myself.” To whom*
 II8 *The gracious Judge, without revile,⁶⁰ replied:*
 II9 *“My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not*
 feared,
 I20 *But still rejoiced, How is it now become*
 I21 *So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked, who*
 I22 *Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree*
 I23 *Whereof I gave thee charge⁶¹ thou should'st not*
 eat?”
 I24 *To whom thus Adam sore beset⁶² replied:*
 I25 *“O Heav'n! In evil strait⁶³ this day I stand*
 I26 *Before my Judge, either to undergo⁶⁴*
 I27 *Myself the total crime, or to accuse*
 I28 *My other self, the partner of my life,*
 I29 *Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,*
 I30 *I should conceal, and not expose to blame*
 I31 *By my complaint. But strict necessity*
 I32 *Subdues me, and calamitous⁶⁵ constraint,*
 I33 *Lest on my head both sin and punishment,*
 I34 *However insupportable,⁶⁶ be all*

⁵⁹ visible

⁶⁰ abusive language

⁶¹ instruction, order, mandate

⁶² assailed

⁶³ narrow pathway

⁶⁴ suffer, bear

⁶⁵ miserable

⁶⁶ (1) unbearable, unendurable, (2) unjustifiable

- 135 *Devolved.*⁶⁷ *Though should I hold my peace, yet*
 Thou
 136 *Would'st easily detect what I conceal.*
 137 *"This woman, whom Thou mad'st to be my*
 help,
 138 *And gav'st me as Thy perfect gift, so good,*
 139 *So fit, so acceptable,*⁶⁸ *so divine,*
 140 *That from her hand I could suspect no ill,*
 141 *And what she did, whatever in itself,*
 142 *Her doing seemed to justify the deed.*
 143 *She gave me of the tree, and I did eat."*
 144 *To whom the sov'reign Presence thus replied:*
 145 *"Was she thy God, that her thou did'st obey*
 146 *Before His voice? Or was she made thy guide,*
 147 *Superior,*⁶⁹ *or but*⁷⁰ *equal, that to her*
 148 *Thou did'st resign thy manhood, and the place*
 149 *Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee*
 150 *And for thee, whose perfection far excelled*
 151 *Hers in all real*⁷¹ *dignity?*⁷² *Adorned*
 152 *She was indeed, and lovely, to attract*
 153 *Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts*
 154 *Were such, as under government*⁷³ *well seemed,*
 155 *Unseemly*⁷⁴ *to bear rule, which was thy part*
 156 *And person,*⁷⁵ *had'st thou known thyself aright."*
 157 *So having said, He thus to Eve in few:*
 158 *"Say, woman, what is this which thou hast*
 done?"

⁶⁷ come upon

⁶⁸ [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁶⁹ [trisyllabic, second accented]

⁷⁰ merely, simply

⁷¹ true

⁷² worth, excellence, honor

⁷³ rule, direction

⁷⁴ unfit, improper

⁷⁵ office, role

159 *To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh
 overwhelmed,*
 160 *Confessing soon,⁷⁶ yet not before her Judge*
 161 *Bold or loquacious,⁷⁷ thus abashed replied:*
 162 *“The serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.”*
 163 *Which when the Lord God heard, without delay*
 164 *To judgment He proceeded on th’ accused*
 165 *Serpent (though brute, unable to transfer*
 166 *The guilt on him who made him instrument*
 167 *Of mischief, and polluted from the end⁷⁸*
 168 *Of his creation), justly then accursed,*
 169 *As vitiated⁷⁹ in Nature. More to know*
 170 *Concerned not man (since he no further knew)*
 171 *Nor altered his offense. Yet God at last⁸⁰*
 172 *To Satan (first in sin) his doom⁸¹ applied,*
 173 *Though in mysterious⁸² terms, judged as then best,*
 174 *And on the serpent thus His curse let fall:*
 175 *“Because thou hast done this, thou art*
 accursed
 176 *Above all cattle,⁸³ each beast of the field.*
 177 *Upon thy belly groveling thou shalt go,*
 178 *And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.*
 179 *Between thee and the woman I will put*
 180 *Enmity, and between thine and her seed.*
 181 *Her seed shall bruise⁸⁴ thy head, thou bruise his*
 heel.”
 182 *So spoke this oracle, then verified*

⁷⁶ quickly

⁷⁷ babbling, talkative

⁷⁸ polluted from the end = corrupted away from the purpose

⁷⁹ faulty, corrupt

⁸⁰ finally

⁸¹ judgment, sentence

⁸² occult, obscure

⁸³ creatures

⁸⁴ crush, smash, break

183 *When Jesus, Son of Mary, second Eve,*
 184 *Saw Satan fall, like lightning, down from Heav'n,*
 185 *Prince of the air. Then rising from his⁸⁵ grave*
 186 *Spoiled⁸⁶ Principalities and Powers, triumphed*
 187 *In open show⁸⁷ and, with ascension bright,*
 188 *Captivity led captive through the air,*
 189 *The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,⁸⁸*
 190 *Whom he⁸⁹ shall tread at last under our feet,*
 191 *Ev'n he,⁹⁰ who now foretold his⁹¹ fatal bruise,⁹²*
 192 *And to the woman thus His sentence turned:*
 193 *“Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply*
 194 *By thy conception.⁹³ Children thou shalt bring*
 195 *In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will*
 196 *Thine shall submit. He over thee shall rule.”*
 197 *On Adam last thus judgment He pronounced:*
 198 *“Because thou hast heark'ned to the voice of*
 thy wife,
 199 *And eaten of the tree, concerning which*
 200 *I charged thee, saying, ‘Thou shalt not eat thereof,’*
 201 *Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thou in sorrow*
 202 *Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life.*
 203 *Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth*
 204 *Unbid,⁹⁴ and thou shalt eat th' herb of the field.*
 205 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,*
 206 *Till thou return unto the ground, for thou*
 207 *Out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth,*

⁸⁵ Christ's

⁸⁶ captured

⁸⁷ display (of force)

⁸⁸ wrongfully appropriated

⁸⁹ Christ

⁹⁰ Christ

⁹¹ the serpent's

⁹² his fatal bruise = the Crucifixion

⁹³ action of conceiving (becoming pregnant)

⁹⁴ unasked, uninvited, uncommanded

208 *For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."*
 209 *So judged He man, both Judge and Savior sent,*
 210 *And th' instant stroke of death denounced⁹⁵ that*
 day,
 211 *Removed far off. Then pitying how they stood*
 212 *Before Him, naked to the air, that now*
 213 *Must suffer change, disdained not to begin*
 214 *Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,*
 215 *As when He washed His servant's feet. So now,*
 216 *As Father of His family, He clad*
 217 *Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,*
 218 *Or as the snake with youthful coat⁹⁶ repaid,⁹⁷*
 219 *And thought not much⁹⁸ to clothe His enemies.*
 220 *Nor He their outward only with the skins*
 221 *Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more*
 222 *Opprobrious,⁹⁹ with His robe of righteousness*
 223 *Arraying, covered from His Father's sight.*
 224 *To Him with swift ascent he up returned,*
 225 *Into His blissful bosom reassumed*
 226 *In glory, as of old. To Him appeased,¹⁰⁰*
 227 *All (though all-knowing) what had passed with man*
 228 *Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.*
 229 *Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on*
 earth,
 230 *Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,*
 231 *In counterview¹⁰¹ within the gates, that now*
 232 *Stood open wide, belching outrageous¹⁰² flame*
 233 *Far into Chaos, since the fiend passed through,*

⁹⁵ proclaimed

⁹⁶ youthful coat = sloughed-off skin

⁹⁷ exchanged

⁹⁸ not much = not at all

⁹⁹ shameful, injurious

¹⁰⁰ satisfied [adjective]

¹⁰¹ view from opposite sides

¹⁰² extraordinary, enormous, excessive, hyperviolent/gross/wrong

234 *Sin opening,*¹⁰³ *who thus now to Death began:*
 235 *“O son, why sit we here, each other viewing*
 236 *Idly, while Satan, our great author, thrives*
 237 *In other worlds, and happier seat*¹⁰⁴ *provides*
 238 *For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be*
 239 *But that success attends him. If mishap,*
 240 *Ere this he had returned, with fury driv’n*
 241 *By his avengers, since no place like this*
 242 *Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.*
 243 *Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,*
 244 *Wings growing, and dominion*¹⁰⁵ *giv’n me large*¹⁰⁶
 245 *Beyond this deep. Whatever draws me on,*¹⁰⁷
 246 *Or*¹⁰⁸ *sympathy,*¹⁰⁹ *or some connatural*¹¹⁰ *force,*
 247 *Powerful*¹¹¹ *at greatest distance to unite,*
 248 *With secret amity, things of like kind,*
 249 *By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade*
 250 *Inseparable, must with me along,*
 251 *For Death from Sin no power can separate.*
 252 *But lest the difficulty of passing back*
 253 *Stay his return, perhaps, over this gulf*¹¹²
 254 *Impassable, impervious,*¹¹³ *let us try*
 255 *Advent’rous*¹¹⁴ *work, yet to thy power and mine*
 256 *Not unagreeable, to found*¹¹⁵ *a path*

¹⁰³ i.e., opening the way (and the gates) for Satan

¹⁰⁴ place, abode

¹⁰⁵ rule, control

¹⁰⁶ [adjective, modifying “dominion”]

¹⁰⁷ draws me on = leads me on

¹⁰⁸ whether, either

¹⁰⁹ affinity, harmony

¹¹⁰ congenial

¹¹¹ is powerful

¹¹² profound depth

¹¹³ not affording passage

¹¹⁴ enterprising

¹¹⁵ create

257 *Over this main¹¹⁶ from Hell to that new world*
 258 *Where Satan now prevails, a monument*
 259 *Of merit high to all th' infernal host,*
 260 *Easing their passage hence, for intercourse¹¹⁷*
 261 *Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.*
 262 *Nor can I miss¹¹⁸ the way, so strongly drawn*
 263 *By this new-felt attraction and instinct."*
 264 *Whom thus the meager shadow answered soon:*
 265 *"Go whither Fate and inclination strong*
 266 *Leads thee. I shall not lag behind, nor err¹¹⁹*
 267 *The way, thou leading—such a scent I draw¹²⁰*
 268 *Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste¹²¹*
 269 *The savor of death from all things there that live.*
 270 *Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest¹²²*
 271 *Be wanting,¹²³ but afford thee equal aid."*
 272 *So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell*
 273 *Of mortal¹²⁴ change on earth. As when a flock*
 274 *Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,*
 275 *Against the day of battle, to a field*
 276 *Where armies lie encamped, come flying, lured*
 277 *With scent of living carcasses designed*
 278 *For death the following day, in bloody fight,*
 279 *So scented the grim feature,¹²⁵ and upturned*
 280 *His nostril wide into the murky air,*
 281 *Sagacious¹²⁶ of his quarry from so far.*

¹¹⁶ mainland

¹¹⁷ communication, passage

¹¹⁸ mistake

¹¹⁹ miss, mistake

¹²⁰ breathe

¹²¹ I taste

¹²² take in hand, attempt

¹²³ absent

¹²⁴ fatal

¹²⁵ shape

¹²⁶ perceiving by smell

282 *Then both from out Hell-gates, into the waste,*
 283 *Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,*
 284 *Flew diverse,¹²⁷ and with power (their power was*
 great)
 285 *Hovering¹²⁸ upon the waters, what¹²⁹ they met*
 286 *Solid or slimy, as in raging sea*
 287 *Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,*
 288 *From each side shoaling¹³⁰ towards the mouth of*
 Hell,
 289 *As when two polar winds, blowing adverse*
 290 *Upon the Cronian¹³¹ sea, together drive*
 291 *Mountains of ice, that stop¹³² th' imagined¹³³ way*
 292 *Beyond Petsora¹³⁴ eastward, to the rich*
 293 *Cathaian¹³⁵ coast. The aggregated soil¹³⁶*
 294 *Death with his mace petrific,¹³⁷ cold and dry,*
 295 *As with a trident,¹³⁸ smote, and fixed as firm*
 296 *As Delos,¹³⁹ floating once. The rest his look*
 297 *Bound with Gorgonian¹⁴⁰ rigor¹⁴¹ not to move,*

¹²⁷ separately

¹²⁸ fluttering, flapping

¹²⁹ whatever

¹³⁰ swimming together

¹³¹ Arctic, Satanian: frozen, northern

¹³² block, close up

¹³³ fancied

¹³⁴ the River Pechora, in Siberia, flowing down from the Urals into the Arctic Ocean

¹³⁵ Cathay = China

¹³⁶ muddy/wet places

¹³⁷ causing things to be petrified/turned to stone

¹³⁸ three-pronged fish spear or scepter: wielded by Neptune in creating the Cyclades (islands in the Aegean)

¹³⁹ one of the Cyclades: it floated until Zeus fixed it in place, for the birth of Apollo and Diana/Artemis

¹⁴⁰ the most famous (and the only mortal) Gorgon, Medusa, turned to stone anyone who looked at her

¹⁴¹ harshness, strictness

- 298 *And with asphaltic¹⁴² slime, broad as the gate,*
 299 *Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach¹⁴³*
 300 *They fastened, and the mole¹⁴⁴ immense wrought¹⁴⁵*
 on
 301 *Over the foaming deep high-arched, a bridge*
 302 *Of length prodigious, joining to the wall*
 303 *Immoveable¹⁴⁶ of this now fenceless¹⁴⁷ world,*
 304 *Forfeit¹⁴⁸ to Death. From hence a passage broad,*
 305 *Smooth, easy, inoffensive,¹⁴⁹ down to Hell.*
 306 *So (if great things to small may be compared)*
 307 *Xerxes,¹⁵⁰ the liberty of Greece to yoke,*
 308 *From Susa,¹⁵¹ his Memnonian palace high,*
 309 *Came to the sea, and over Hellespont¹⁵²*
 310 *Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,*
 311 *And scourged¹⁵³ with many a stroke th' indignant*
 waves.
 312 *Now had they brought the work by wondrous*
 art
 313 *Pontifical,¹⁵⁴ a ridge of pendant¹⁵⁵ rock*
 314 *Over the vexed¹⁵⁶ abyss, following the track*
 315 *Of Satan to the self-same place where he*

¹⁴² blackish mineral, containing among other things pitch

¹⁴³ seashore

¹⁴⁴ mass, massive structure

¹⁴⁵ worked

¹⁴⁶ the primum mobile or other shell of the universe

¹⁴⁷ (1) without a safeguarding fence, (2) defenseless

¹⁴⁸ given up

¹⁴⁹ easy

¹⁵⁰ Persian king who invaded Greece in 480 B.C.

¹⁵¹ biblical Shushan, founded by Tithonus, Memnon's father

¹⁵² the Dardenelles, the strait between Turkey and southeastern Europe

¹⁵³ beat, whip

¹⁵⁴ bridge-making

¹⁵⁵ suspended, hanging

¹⁵⁶ disturbed

316 *First lighted*¹⁵⁷ *from his wing,*¹⁵⁸ *and landed safe*
 317 *From out of Chaos, to the outside bare*
 318 *Of this round world. With pins of adamant*
 319 *And chains they made all fast—too fast they made*
 320 *And durable! And now in little space*
 321 *The confines*¹⁵⁹ *met of empyrean Heav'n*
 322 *And of this world, and on the left hand Hell*
 323 *With long reach interposed.*¹⁶⁰ *Three sev'ral*¹⁶¹
 *ways*¹⁶²
 324 *In sight, to each of these three places led.*
 325 *And now their way to earth they had descried,*¹⁶³
 326 *To Paradise first tending*¹⁶⁴—*when, behold!*
 327 *Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,*
 328 *Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering*
 329 *His zenith,*¹⁶⁵ *while the sun in Aries rose.*¹⁶⁶
 330 *Disguised he came, but those his children dear*
 331 *Their parent soon discerned,*¹⁶⁷ *though in disguise.*
 332 *He, after Eve seduced, unminded*¹⁶⁸ *slunk*
 333 *Into the wood fast by and, changing shape*
 334 *T' observe the sequel, saw his guileful act*
 335 *By Eve, though all unweeting,*¹⁶⁹ *seconded*
 336 *Upon her husband, saw their shame that sought*

¹⁵⁷ descended

¹⁵⁸ flying, flight

¹⁵⁹ regions, borders

¹⁶⁰ pushed itself in

¹⁶¹ different

¹⁶² roads, paths

¹⁶³ discovered

¹⁶⁴ turning, moving

¹⁶⁵ i.e., steering a central course, through the high point of the sky

¹⁶⁶ the sun (Uriel) rises under the sign of Aries; it is opposite to Scorpio, which is near Centaurus

¹⁶⁷ recognized

¹⁶⁸ unnoticed

¹⁶⁹ unknowing

337 *Vain covertures,*¹⁷⁰ *but when he saw descend*
 338 *The Son of God to judge them, terrified*
 339 *He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun*
 340 *The present, fearing, guilty, what His*¹⁷¹ *wrath*
 341 *Might suddenly inflict. That past, returned*¹⁷²
 342 *By night, and list'ning where the hapless*¹⁷³ *pair*
 343 *Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,*
 344 *Thence gathered his own doom, which understood*
 345 *Not instant, but of future time. With joy*
 346 *And tidings fraught,*¹⁷⁴ *to Hell he now returned,*
 347 *And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot*
 348 *Of this new wondrous pontifice, unhop'd*
 349 *Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.*
 350 *Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight*
 351 *Of that stupendious bridge his joy increased.*
 352 *Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair*
 353 *Enchanting daughter, thus the silence broke:*
 354 *"O parent, these are thy magnific deeds,*
 355 *Thy trophies! which thou view'st as not thine own.*
 356 *Thou art their author and prime architect,*
 357 *For I no sooner in my heart divin'd*
 358 *(My heart, which by a secret harmony*
 359 *Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet)*
 360 *That thou on earth had'st prospered, which thy*
 looks
 361 *Now also evidence, but straight I felt*
 362 *(Though distant from thee worlds between), yet*
 felt
 363 *That I must after*¹⁷⁵ *thee, with this thy son,*

¹⁷⁰ covering

¹⁷¹ Christ's/God's

¹⁷² he (Satan) returned

¹⁷³ luckless

¹⁷⁴ filled

¹⁷⁵ follow after

364 *Such fatal¹⁷⁶ consequence¹⁷⁷ unites us three!*
 365 *Hell could no longer hold us in our bounds,*
 366 *Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure*
 367 *Detain from following thy illustrious track.*
 368 *Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined*
 369 *Within Hell-gates till now. Thou us empowered*
 370 *To fortify¹⁷⁸ thus far, and overlay,*
 371 *With this portentous¹⁷⁹ bridge, the dark abyss.*
 372 *Thine now is all this world. Thy virtue hath won*
 373 *What thy hands builded not, thy wisdom gained*
 374 *With odds¹⁸⁰ what war hath lost, and fully avenged*
 375 *Our foil¹⁸¹ in Heav'n. Here thou shalt monarch*
 reign,
 376 *There did'st not. There let Him still victor sway,¹⁸²*
 377 *As battle hath adjudged, from this new world*
 378 *Retiring, by His own doom¹⁸³ alienated,¹⁸⁴*
 379 *And henceforth monarchy with thee divide*
 380 *Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,*
 381 *His quadrature,¹⁸⁵ from thy orbicular¹⁸⁶ world—*
 382 *Or try¹⁸⁷ thee, now more dang'rous to His throne.”*
 383 *Whom thus the Prince of darkness answered glad:*
 384 *“Fair daughter, and thou son and grandchild*
 both:
 385 *High proof ye now have giv'n to be the race*

¹⁷⁶ inevitable, deadly

¹⁷⁷ relationship, connection

¹⁷⁸ (1) to build/establish a position/structure of defense, (2) to become powerful

¹⁷⁹ (1) marvelous, prodigious, (2) bearing portents, omens, signs

¹⁸⁰ with odds = and more (“and then some!”)

¹⁸¹ defeat, repulse

¹⁸² rule

¹⁸³ decision, judgment

¹⁸⁴ turned away

¹⁸⁵ Heaven is square

¹⁸⁶ the earth and all our world/universe is round/globular

¹⁸⁷ test

386 *Of Satan (for I glory in the name,*
 387 *Antagonist of Heaven's Almighty King).*
 388 *Amply have merited of me, of all*
 389 *Th' infernal empire, that so near Heav'n's door*
 390 *Triumphal with triumphal act have met,*
 391 *Mine¹⁸⁸ with this glorious work, and made one*
 realm,
 392 *Hell and this world, one realm, one continent*
 393 *Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I*
 394 *Descend through darkness, on your road with*
 ease,
 395 *To my associate Powers, them to acquaint*
 396 *With these successes, and with them rejoice,*
 397 *You two this way, among these numerous orbs,*
 398 *All yours, right down to Paradise descend.*
 399 *There dwell, and reign in bliss, thence on the*
 earth
 400 *Dominion exercise and in the air,*
 401 *Chiefly on man, sole lord of all declared.*
 402 *Him first make sure your thrall,¹⁸⁹ and lastly*
 kill.
 403 *My substitutes I send ye, and create*
 404 *Plenipotent¹⁹⁰ on earth, of matchless might*
 405 *Issuing from me. On your joint vigor now*
 406 *My hold of this new kingdom all depends,*
 407 *Through Sin to Death exposed¹⁹¹ by my exploit.¹⁹²*
 408 *If your joint power prevail, th' affairs of Hell*
 409 *No detriment¹⁹³ need fear. Go, and be strong!"*
 410 *So saying he dismissed them. They with speed*
 411 *Their course through thickest constellations held,*

¹⁸⁸ i.e., on earth

¹⁸⁹ slave

¹⁹⁰ invested with full power/authority

¹⁹¹ i.e., the "new kingdom" has, by his action, been exposed to sin and death

¹⁹² action

¹⁹³ loss, damage

4I2 *Spreading their bane.*¹⁹⁴ *The blasted*¹⁹⁵ *stars looked*
wan,
 4I3 *And planets, planet-struck,*¹⁹⁶ *real*¹⁹⁷ *eclipse*¹⁹⁸
 4I4 *Then suffered. Th' other way Satan went down*
 4I5 *The causey*¹⁹⁹ *to Hell-gate. On either side*
 4I6 *Disparted*²⁰⁰ *Chaos overbuilt exclaimed*²⁰¹
 4I7 *And with rebounding surge the bars*²⁰² *assailed,*
 4I8 *That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,*
 4I9 *Wide open and unguarded, Satan passed,*
 420 *And all about found desolate, for those*
 421 *Appointed to sit there had left their charge,*
 422 *Flown to the upper world. The rest were all*
 423 *Far to the inland retired,*²⁰³ *about the walls*
 424 *Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat*
 425 *Of Lucifer, so by allusion called*
 426 *Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.*²⁰⁴
 427 *There kept their watch the legions, while the grand*
 428 *In council sat, solicitous*²⁰⁵ *what chance*
 429 *Might intercept*²⁰⁶ *their emperor sent.*²⁰⁷ *So he*
 430 *Departing gave*²⁰⁸ *command, and they observed.*
 431 *As when the Tartar from his Russian foe*

¹⁹⁴ poison, destruction

¹⁹⁵ suddenly infected

¹⁹⁶ (though planets usually influence the earth, they are now struck, in their turn, by the activities of Sin and Death)

¹⁹⁷ [bisyllabic, second accented]

¹⁹⁸ darkening, loss of splendor

¹⁹⁹ causeway

²⁰⁰ divided-into-parts

²⁰¹ cried out

²⁰² walls, gates

²⁰³ withdrawn

²⁰⁴ compared

²⁰⁵ anxious, apprehensive

²⁰⁶ cut off, stop, hinder

²⁰⁷ [adjective, modifying "emperor"]

²⁰⁸ i.e., had earlier commanded

432 *By Astrakhan*²⁰⁹ *over the snowy plains*
 433 *Retires, or Bactrin Sophi,*²¹⁰ *from the horns*
 434 *Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond*
 435 *The realm of Aladule,*²¹¹ *in his retreat*
 436 *To Tauris*²¹² *or Casbeen,*²¹³ *so these, the late*²¹⁴
 437 *Heav'n-banished host left desert*²¹⁵ *utmost*²¹⁶ *Hell*
 438 *Many a dark league, reduced*²¹⁷ *in careful watch*
 439 *Round their metropolis, and now expecting*
 440 *Each hour their great adventurer, from the search*
 441 *Of foreign worlds. He through the midst*
 *unmarked,*²¹⁸
 442 *In show*²¹⁹ *plebeian*²²⁰ *Angel militant*²²¹
 443 *Of lowest order, passed, and from the door*
 444 *Of that Plutonian hall, invisible*
 445 *Ascended his high throne, which under state*²²²
 446 *Of richest texture spread, at th' upper end*
 447 *Was placed in regal luster. Down a while*
 448 *He sat, and round about him saw unseen.*
 449 *At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent*²²³ *head*
 450 *And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad*
 451 *With what permissive glory since his fall*
 452 *Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed*

²⁰⁹ near the mouth of the Volga

²¹⁰ Persian ruler

²¹¹ greater Armenia

²¹² Tabriz, in northwestern Persia

²¹³ Kazvin, in northern Persia

²¹⁴ recently

²¹⁵ deserted

²¹⁶ outermost

²¹⁷ drawing together

²¹⁸ unnoticed

²¹⁹ appearance

²²⁰ of low rank

²²¹ soldier

²²² canopy

²²³ gleaming

453 *At that so sudden blaze, the Stygian²²⁴ throng*
 454 *Bent²²⁵ their aspect,²²⁶ and whom they wished*
 beheld,
 455 *Their mighty chief returned. Loud was th'*
 acclaim!
 456 *Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers,*
 457 *Raised from their dark divan,²²⁷ and with like joy*
 458 *Congratulant approached him, who with hand*
 459 *Silence, and with these words attention won:*
 460 *"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,*
 Powers!
 461 *For in possession such, not only of right,*
 462 *I call ye and declare ye now, returned*
 463 *Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth*
 464 *Triumphant out of this infernal pit*
 465 *Abominable, accursed, the house of woe*
 466 *And dungeon of our tyrant. Now possess,*
 467 *As lords, a spacious world, t' our native Heav'n*
 468 *Little inferior, by my adventure hard*
 469 *With peril great achieved. Long were to tell*
 470 *What I have done, what suffered, with what pain*
 471 *Voyaged th' unreal,²²⁸ vast, unbounded deep*
 472 *Of horrible confusion, over which*
 473 *By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,*
 474 *To expedite your glorious march. But I*
 475 *Toiled out my uncouth²²⁹ passage, forced to ride²³⁰*
 476 *The untractable²³¹ abyss, plunged in the womb*

²²⁴ hellish

²²⁵ directed, turned

²²⁶ gaze

²²⁷ (1) hall of state, (2) raised floor area, used (with pillows) as a kind of couch or sofa

²²⁸ unformed

²²⁹ unknown

²³⁰ travel

²³¹ stubborn, difficult, unmanageable

477 *Of unoriginal*²³² *Night and Chaos wild*
 478 *That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed*
 479 *My journey strange,*²³³ *with clamorous uproar*
 480 *Protesting Fate supreme. Thence how I found*
 481 *The new created world, which fame*²³⁴ *in Heav'n*
 482 *Long had foretold, a fabric*²³⁵ *wonderful*
 483 *Of absolute*²³⁶ *perfection, therein man*
 484 *Placed in a Paradise, by our exile*
 485 *Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced*²³⁷
 486 *From his Creator and, the more to increase*
 487 *Your wonder, with an apple.*²³⁸ *He,*²³⁹ *thereat*
 488 *Offended (worth your laughter!) hath given up*
 489 *Both His belovèd man and all his world*
 490 *To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,*
 491 *Without our hazard, labor, or alarm,*²⁴⁰
 492 *To range*²⁴¹ *in, and to dwell, and over man*
 493 *To rule, as over all He should have ruled.*
 494 *“True is, me also He hath judged, or rather*
 495 *Me not, but the brute serpent in whose shape*
 496 *Man I deceived. That which to me belongs*
 497 *Is enmity, which He will put between*
 498 *Me and mankind. I am to bruise*²⁴² *his heel.*

²³² possessing no creator, since existing from the very beginning

²³³ unfamiliar

²³⁴ rumor, report

²³⁵ product

²³⁶ complete

²³⁷ beguiled, led astray

²³⁸ (although there are no stage directions, this being an epic poem and not a drama, Milton clearly intends at this point a burst of laughter from Satan's devilish audience)

²³⁹ God

²⁴⁰ sudden attack

²⁴¹ move hither and thither

²⁴² break, smash, crush

499 *His seed (when is not set²⁴³) shall bruise my*
head.

500 *A world who would not purchase with a bruise,*
 501 *Or much more grievous pain?*

“Ye have th’ account

502 *Of my performance. What remains, ye Gods,*
 503 *But up, and enter now into full bliss?”*

504 *So having said, a while he stood, expecting*
 505 *Their universal shout and high applause*
 506 *To fill his ear—when, contrary, he hears*
 507 *On all sides, from innumerable tongues,*
 508 *A dismal universal hiss, the sound*
 509 *Of public scorn. He wondered, but not long*
 510 *Had leisure, wond’ring at himself now more.*
 511 *His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare;*
 512 *His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining*
 513 *Each other, till supplanted²⁴⁴ down he fell,*
 514 *A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,*
 515 *Reluctant,²⁴⁵ but in vain. A greater power*
 516 *Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,*
 517 *According to his doom.²⁴⁶ He would have spoke,*
 518 *But hiss for hiss returned with forkèd tongue*
 519 *To forkèd tongue, for now were all transformed*
 520 *Alike, to serpents all, as accessories*
 521 *To his bold²⁴⁷ riot.²⁴⁸ Dreadful was the din*
 522 *Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now*
 523 *With complicated²⁴⁹ monsters head and tail,*
 524 *Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena²⁵⁰ dire,*

²⁴³ ordained, established, fixed

²⁴⁴ brought low, stumbling

²⁴⁵ struggling

²⁴⁶ sentence

²⁴⁷ presumptuous, audacious

²⁴⁸ tumult, disorder, violence

²⁴⁹ twisted/twined together

²⁵⁰ mythical serpent with a head at each end

525 *Cerastes hornèd, hydrus,²⁵¹ and elops²⁵² drear,²⁵³*
 526 *And dipsas²⁵⁴ (not so thick swarmed once the soil*
 527 *Bedropped with blood of Gorgon,²⁵⁵ or the isle*
 528 *Ophiusa),²⁵⁶ but still greatest he the midst,*
 529 *Now dragon grown, larger than whom²⁵⁷ the sun*
 530 *Engendered in the Pythian²⁵⁸ vale on slime,²⁵⁹*
 531 *Huge python, and his²⁶⁰ power no less he seemed*
 532 *Above the rest still to retain. They all*
 533 *Him followed, issuing forth to th' open field,*
 534 *Where all yet left of that revolted rout,²⁶¹*
 535 *Heav'n-fall'n, in station²⁶² stood or just²⁶³*
 array,
 536 *Sublime²⁶⁴ with expectation when to see*
 537 *In triumph issuing forth their glorious chief.*
 538 *They saw, but other sight instead! a crowd*
 539 *Of ugly serpents. Horror on them fell,*
 540 *And horrid sympathy, for what they saw*
 541 *They felt themselves now changing. Down their*
 arms,
 542 *Down fell both spear and shield, down they as*
 fast,
 543 *And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form*

²⁵¹ mythical water snake

²⁵² swordfish?

²⁵³ dismal, melancholy

²⁵⁴ the bite of which caused intense thirst

²⁵⁵ serpents grew from Gorgon blood

²⁵⁶ "full of snakes": one of the Balearic Islands

²⁵⁷ the dragon whom

²⁵⁸ the Pythia = the prophetess of Apollo

²⁵⁹ i.e., the sun's heat engenders the monster in the mud ("slime") of the Nile River

²⁶⁰ Satan

²⁶¹ mob, crowd

²⁶² in station = at their proper post

²⁶³ proper

²⁶⁴ proud, erect

- 544 *Catched by contagion,²⁶⁵ like²⁶⁶ in punishment*
 545 *As in their crime. Thus was th' applause they*
meant
- 546 *Turned to exploding hiss, triumph to shame*
 547 *Cast on themselves from their own mouths.*
There stood
- 548 *A grove hard by, sprung up with²⁶⁷ this their*
change
- 549 *(His will who reigns above, to aggravate²⁶⁸*
 550 *Their penance), laden with fair fruit, like that*
 551 *Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve*
 552 *Used by the Tempter. On that prospect²⁶⁹*
strange²⁷⁰
- 553 *Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining*
 554 *For one forbidden tree a multitude*
 555 *Now ris'n, to work them further woe or shame.*
 556 *Yet parched with scalding thirst and hunger*
fierce,
- 557 *Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,*
 558 *But on they rolled in heaps, and up the trees*
 559 *Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks*
 560 *That curled Megaera.²⁷¹ Greedily they plucked*
 561 *The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew*
 562 *Near that bituminous²⁷² lake²⁷³ where Sodom*
flamed—
- 563 *This more delusive, not the touch, but taste*

²⁶⁵ corruption

²⁶⁶ alike

²⁶⁷ along with

²⁶⁸ make worse, weigh down, exasperate

²⁶⁹ view

²⁷⁰ unfamiliar

²⁷¹ a Fury, all three of whom had snakes in their hair

²⁷² pitchy

²⁷³ the Dead Sea

564 *Deceived. They fondly²⁷⁴ thinking to allay*
 565 *Their appetite with gust,²⁷⁵ instead of fruit*
 566 *Chewed bitter ashes, which th' offended taste*
 567 *With spattering noise rejected. Oft they assayed,*
 568 *Hunger and thirst constraining, drugged²⁷⁶ as*
 oft,
 569 *With hatefullest disrelish²⁷⁷ writhed their jaws,*
 570 *With soot and cinders filled. So oft they fell*
 571 *Into the same illusion, not as man*
 572 *Whom they triumphed²⁷⁸ once²⁷⁹ lapsed. Thus were*
 they plagued
 573 *And worn with famine,²⁸⁰ long and ceaseless hiss,*
 574 *Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed,*
 575 *Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo*
 576 *This annual humbling certain²⁸¹ numbered days,*
 577 *To dash²⁸² their pride and joy for man seduced.*
 578 *However; some tradition²⁸³ they dispersed²⁸⁴*
 579 *Among the heathen, of their purchase²⁸⁵ got,*
 580 *And fabled how the serpent, whom they called*
 581 *Ophion,²⁸⁶ with Eurynome²⁸⁷ (the wide-*
 582 *Encroaching Eve,²⁸⁸ perhaps), had first the rule*

²⁷⁴ foolishly

²⁷⁵ gusto

²⁷⁶ nauseated

²⁷⁷ aversion, disgust

²⁷⁸ triumphed over

²⁷⁹ i.e., only once

²⁸⁰ extreme hunger

²⁸¹ on certain

²⁸² depress, frustrate

²⁸³ relate/transmit as a tradition [verb]

²⁸⁴ spread about

²⁸⁵ booty

²⁸⁶ "snake": a Titan, first ruler of Olympus

²⁸⁷ "wide-ruling": Ophion's wife

²⁸⁸ i.e., more or less the pagan equivalent of Eve?

- 583 *Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv'n*
 584 *And Ops,²⁸⁹ ere yet Dictæan Jove²⁹⁰ was born.*
 585 *Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair*
 586 *Too soon arrived, Sin there in power before,*
 587 *Once²⁹¹ actual,²⁹² now in body, and to dwell*
 588 *Habitual habitant; behind her Death,*
 589 *Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet*
 590 *On his pale horse.²⁹³ To whom Sin thus began:*
 591 *“Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering*
 Death!
 592 *What think'st thou of our empire now, though*
 earned
 593 *With travel difficult, not better far*
 594 *Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat*
 watch,
 595 *Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half starved?”*
 596 *Whom thus the Sin-born monster answered*
 soon.²⁹⁴
 597 *“To me, who with eternal famine pine,²⁹⁵*
 598 *Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven—*
 599 *There best, where most with ravine²⁹⁶ I may meet,*
 600 *Which here, though plenteous, all too little*
 seems
 601 *To stuff this maw, this vast unhide-bound²⁹⁷*
 corpse.”²⁹⁸
 602 *To whom th' incestuous mother thus replied:*

²⁸⁹ Ops/Rhea/Cybele: wife of Cronos

²⁹⁰ Dictæan Jove = Dicte, mountain in Crete, where Jove/Jupiter/Zeus grew up

²⁹¹ at one time

²⁹² actuated/made actual by Adam and Eve

²⁹³ see Revelation 6:8

²⁹⁴ quickly

²⁹⁵ suffer, am tormented/troubled

²⁹⁶ prey

²⁹⁷ not limited/bound by his body

²⁹⁸ a body, living or dead

- 603 *“Thou therefore on these herbs, and fruits, and
flow’rs*
- 604 *Feed first. On each beast next, and fish, and
fowl—*
- 605 *No homely²⁹⁹ morsels! And whatever thing*
- 606 *The scythe of Time mows down, devour
unspared,³⁰⁰*
- 607 *Till I, in man residing through the race,*
- 608 *His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,*
- 609 *And season him thy last and sweetest prey.”*
- 610 *This said, they both betook them several³⁰¹
ways,*
- 611 *Both to destroy, or unimmortal make*
- 612 *All kinds, and for destruction to mature³⁰²*
- 613 *Sooner or later.*
- Which th’ Almighty seeing,*
- 614 *From His transcendent seat the Saints among,*
- 615 *To those bright orders uttered thus His voice:*
- 616 *“See with what heat these dogs of Hell
advance*
- 617 *To waste³⁰³ and havoc³⁰⁴ yonder world, which I*
- 618 *So fair and good created, and had still*
- 619 *Kept in that state, had not the folly of man*
- 620 *Let in these wasteful Furies, who impute³⁰⁵*
- 621 *Folly to me! So doth the Prince of Hell*
- 622 *And his adherents, that with so much ease*
- 623 *I suffer³⁰⁶ them to enter and possess*

²⁹⁹ plain, rude

³⁰⁰ mercilessly

³⁰¹ in different

³⁰² ripen

³⁰³ consume, diminish, destroy

³⁰⁴ devastate, destroy

³⁰⁵ attribute, ascribe

³⁰⁶ permit, allow

- 624 *A place so Heav'nly, and conniving³⁰⁷ seem*
 625 *To gratify³⁰⁸ my scornful enemies,*
 626 *That laugh, as if transported³⁰⁹ with some fit*
 627 *Of passion, I to them had quitted³¹⁰ all,*
 628 *At random³¹¹ yielded up to their misrule,*
 629 *And know not that I called, and drew them thither,*
 630 *My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff³¹² and filth*
 631 *Which man's polluting sin with taint hath shed*
 632 *On what was pure, till³¹³ crammed³¹⁴ and gorged,³¹⁵*
 night³¹⁶ burst
 633 *With sucked³¹⁷ and glutted³¹⁸ offal,³¹⁹ at one sling³²⁰*
 634 *Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,*
 635 *Both Sin and Death, and yawning³²¹ grave at last*
 636 *Through Chaos hurled, obstruct³²² the mouth of*
 Hell
 637 *Forever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.*
 638 *Then Heav'n and earth renewed shall be made*
 pure
 639 *To sanctity³²³ that shall receive no stain:*

³⁰⁷ winking, tactly permitting

³⁰⁸ reward, oblige

³⁰⁹ carried away

³¹⁰ renounced, abandoned

³¹¹ at random = without consideration/care/control, purposelessly, heedlessly

³¹² dregs, refuse

³¹³ till the time when

³¹⁴ filled/stuffed to excess

³¹⁵ glutted, satiated

³¹⁶ almost

³¹⁷ sucked-dry?

³¹⁸ chokingly/sickeningly overfilled

³¹⁹ garbage, rubbish, putrid flesh

³²⁰ throw, fling

³²¹ gaping

³²² will obstruct

³²³ saintliness, holiness

640 *Till then, the curse pronounced on both*
*precedes.*³²⁴

641 *He ended, and the Heav'nly audience loud*
 642 *Sung Hallelujah, as*³²⁵ *the sound of seas,*
 643 *Through multitude that sung:*

“Just are Thy ways,
 644 *Righteous are Thy decrees on all Thy works.*
 645 *Who can extenuate*³²⁶ *Thee?” Next,*³²⁷ *to the Son,*
 646 *Destined Restorer of mankind, by whom*
 647 *New Heav'n and earth shall to the ages rise,*
 648 *Or down from Heav'n descend.*

Such was their song,

649 *While the Creator, calling forth by name*
 650 *His mighty Angels, gave them several charge*³²⁸
 651 *As sorted*³²⁹ *best with present things. The sun*
 652 *Had first his precept*³³⁰ *so to move, so shine,*
 653 *As might affect the earth with cold and heat*
 654 *Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call*
 655 *Decrepit*³³¹ *winter, from the south to bring*
 656 *Solstitial*³³² *summer's heat. To the blanc*³³³ *moon*
 657 *Her office they prescribed; to th' other five*³³⁴
 658 *Their planetary motions, and aspects,*³³⁵

³²⁴ takes precedence

³²⁵ like

³²⁶ weaken, lessen

³²⁷ i.e., next they sang

³²⁸ different tasks/responsibilities/mandates

³²⁹ fitted

³³⁰ order, authoritative command

³³¹ feeble, worn out

³³² connected with the solstice, i.e., when the sun is halfway between the two equinoxes and, in the summer, at its farthest point from the equator

³³³ pale, white

³³⁴ planets

³³⁵ relative positions of the planets, as seen from the earth

659 *In sextile,³³⁶ square,³³⁷ and trine,³³⁸ and opposite,³³⁹*
 660 *Of noxious³⁴⁰ efficacy, and when to join*
 661 *In synod³⁴¹ unbenign, and taught the fixed³⁴²*
 662 *Their influence malignant when to shower,*
 663 *Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,*
 664 *Should prove tempestuous.³⁴³ To the winds they set*
 665 *Their corners,³⁴⁴ when with bluster³⁴⁵ to confound³⁴⁶*
 666 *Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll*
 667 *With terror through the dark aerial hall.*
 668 *Some say He bid his Angels turn askance³⁴⁷*
 669 *The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more*
 670 *From the sun's axle. They with labor pushed*
 671 *Oblique³⁴⁸ the centric globe.³⁴⁹ Some say the sun³⁵⁰*
 672 *Was bid turn reins from th' equinoctial³⁵¹ road*
 673 *Like³⁵² distant breadth to Taurus³⁵³ with the Sev'n*
 674 *Atlantic Sisters,³⁵⁴ and the Spartan Twins,³⁵⁵*

³³⁶ two heavenly bodies at 60-degree angles from one another (60 degrees = one-sixth of the whole zodiac)

³³⁷ two heavenly bodies at 90-degree angles from one another

³³⁸ two heavenly bodies at 120-degree angles from one another

³³⁹ two heavenly bodies at 180-degree angles from one another

³⁴⁰ harmful, unwholesome

³⁴¹ conjunction

³⁴² the fixed = the fixed stars, in the eighth of the heavenly spheres

³⁴³ stormy, passionate [trissyllabic, second accented, "-uous" elided]

³⁴⁴ north, east, south, west

³⁴⁵ storming, raging

³⁴⁶ throw into confusion/disorder

³⁴⁷ sideways

³⁴⁸ at a slanting angle

³⁴⁹ centric globe = the earth, which was at the center

³⁵⁰ Apollo's chariot

³⁵¹ celestial equator

³⁵² equally

³⁵³ the Bull

³⁵⁴ the Pleiades

³⁵⁵ Gemini

675 *Up to the Tropic Crab,*³⁵⁶ *thence down amain*³⁵⁷
 676 *By Leo,*³⁵⁸ *and the Virgin,*³⁵⁹ *and the Scales,*³⁶⁰
 677 *As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change*
 678 *Of seasons to each clime. Else*³⁶¹ *had the Spring*
 679 *Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant*³⁶²
 flowers,
 680 *Equal in days and nights, except to those*
 681 *Beyond the polar circles: to them day*
 682 *Had unbenighted*³⁶³ *shone, while the low sun,*
 683 *To recompense*³⁶⁴ *his distance, in their sight*
 684 *Had rounded still the horizon, and not known*
 685 *Or east or west, which had forbid the snow*
 686 *From cold Estotiland,*³⁶⁵ *and south as far*
 687 *Beneath Magellan.*³⁶⁶ *At that tasted fruit*³⁶⁷
 688 *The sun, as from Thyestean banquet,*³⁶⁸ *turned*
 689 *His course intended: else how had the world*
 690 *Inhabited,*³⁶⁹ *though sinless more than now,*
 691 *Avoided pinching*³⁷⁰ *cold and scorching heat?*
 692 *These changes in the heav'ns, though slow,*
 produced

³⁵⁶ Cancer

³⁵⁷ (1) without delay, rapidly, (2) exceedingly

³⁵⁸ the Lion

³⁵⁹ Virgo

³⁶⁰ Libra

³⁶¹ otherwise

³⁶² blossoming

³⁶³ undarkened

³⁶⁴ make up for

³⁶⁵ Labrador

³⁶⁶ strait at the extreme southern tip of South America

³⁶⁷ i.e., when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit

³⁶⁸ Atreus, Thyestes' brother, killed Thyestes' sons and served them to their father at a banquet

³⁶⁹ world inhabited = inhabited world

³⁷⁰ nipping, painful

693 *Like³⁷¹ change on sea and land, sideral³⁷² blast,*
 694 *Vapor, and mist, and exhalation hot,*
 695 *Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north*
 696 *Of Norumbega,³⁷³ and the Samoed shore,³⁷⁴*
 697 *Bursting their brazen dungeon,³⁷⁵ armed with ice,*
 698 *And snow, and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,³⁷⁶*
 699 *Boreas,³⁷⁷ and Caecias,³⁷⁸ and Argestes³⁷⁹ loud,*
 700 *And Thrascias,³⁸⁰ rend the woods, and seas upturn.*
 701 *With adverse³⁸¹ blast upturns them from the south*
 702 *Notus,³⁸² and Afer,³⁸³ black with thund'rous clouds*
 703 *From Serraliona.³⁸⁴ Thwart of³⁸⁵ these, as³⁸⁶ fierce,*
 704 *Forth rush the Levant³⁸⁷ and the Ponent³⁸⁸ winds,*
 705 *Eurus and Zephyr, with their lateral³⁸⁹ noise,³⁹⁰*

³⁷¹ equivalent

³⁷² from the malign stars

³⁷³ New England

³⁷⁴ Samoed shore = Siberia

³⁷⁵ i.e., the cave of the winds, in which Aeolus, god of the winds, kept the winds in confinement, when they were not blowing

³⁷⁶ burst of wind

³⁷⁷ a north wind

³⁷⁸ a north wind

³⁷⁹ a north wind

³⁸⁰ a north wind

³⁸¹ the opposite

³⁸² a south wind

³⁸³ a south wind

³⁸⁴ Sierra Leone, in Africa

³⁸⁵ thwart of = across

³⁸⁶ equally

³⁸⁷ Euras/Levant is an east wind

³⁸⁸ Ponent/Zephyr is a west wind

³⁸⁹ coming from the horizon: east/west rather than north/south

³⁹⁰ clamor, loud/harsh sound

706 *Sirocco*³⁹¹ and *Libecchio*.³⁹²

Thus began

707 *Outrage*³⁹³ from lifeless things, but *Discord* first,
 708 *Daughter of Sin, among th' irrational*³⁹⁴
 709 *Death introduced, through fierce antipathy.*³⁹⁵
 710 *Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,*
 711 *And fish with fish. To graze the herb all leaving,*³⁹⁶
 712 *Devoured each other, nor stood much in awe*
 713 *Of man, but fled him or, with count'nance grim,*³⁹⁷
 714 *Glared on him passing.*

*These were from without*³⁹⁸

715 *The growing miseries, which Adam saw*
 716 *Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,*
 717 *To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,*
 718 *And in a troubled sea of passion tossed,*
 719 *Thus to disburden sought*³⁹⁹ *with sad complaint:*
 720 *“O miserable of*⁴⁰⁰ *happy! Is this the end*
 721 *Of this new glorious world, and me so late*⁴⁰¹
 722 *The glory of that glory, who now become*
 723 *Accursed, of*⁴⁰² *blessèd? Hide me from the face*
 724 *Of God, whom to behold was then my height*
 725 *Of happiness! Yet well,*⁴⁰³ *if here would end*

³⁹¹ a southeast wind

³⁹² a southwest wind

³⁹³ riot, violence

³⁹⁴ irrational creatures [probably, from Latin influence, four syllables, first and third accented]

³⁹⁵ settled aversion, contrariety of feeling/disposition

³⁹⁶ leaving off

³⁹⁷ fierce, savage

³⁹⁸ from without = in addition to

³⁹⁹ “he, Adam, sought”

⁴⁰⁰ from, instead of

⁴⁰¹ recently

⁴⁰² from, instead of

⁴⁰³ it would be well/all right

726 *The misery. I deserved it, and would⁴⁰⁴ bear*
 727 *My own deservings. But this will not serve:⁴⁰⁵*
 728 *All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,*
 729 *Is propagated⁴⁰⁶ curse. O voice, once heard*
 730 *Delightfully, 'Increase and multiply,'*
 731 *Now death to hear! For what can I increase*
 732 *Or multiply, but curses on my head?*
 733 *Who of all ages to succeed,⁴⁰⁷ but feeling*
 734 *The evil on him brought by me, will curse*
 735 *My head? 'Ill fare our ancestor impure,*
 736 *For this we may thank Adam!' But his thanks*
 737 *Shall be the execration.⁴⁰⁸ So, besides*
 738 *Mine own⁴⁰⁹ that bide⁴¹⁰ upon me, all from me*
 739 *Shall with a fierce reflux⁴¹¹ on me redound—⁴¹²*
 740 *On me, as on their natural center, light⁴¹³*
 741 *Heavy, though in their place.⁴¹⁴ O fleeting joys*
 742 *Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!*
 743 *Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay*
 744 *To mould me man? Did I solicit Thee*
 745 *From darkness to promote⁴¹⁵ me, or here place*
 746 *In this delicious⁴¹⁶ garden? As my will*
 747 *Concurred⁴¹⁷ not to my being, it were but right*
 748 *And equal to reduce me to my dust,*

⁴⁰⁴ want to

⁴⁰⁵ satisfy, be useful, answer the requirements, meet the needs of the case, suit, fit

⁴⁰⁶ multiplied, spread

⁴⁰⁷ follow

⁴⁰⁸ curse

⁴⁰⁹ mine own = mine own curses

⁴¹⁰ remain, continue

⁴¹¹ flowing back

⁴¹² surge, turn back

⁴¹³ fall, descend

⁴¹⁴ proper order

⁴¹⁵ advance

⁴¹⁶ luxurious, highly pleasing

⁴¹⁷ agreed

749 *Desirous to resign⁴¹⁸ and render back*
 750 *All I received, unable to perform*
 751 *Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold*
 752 *The good I sought not. To the loss of that,*
 753 *Sufficient penalty: why hast Thou added*
 754 *The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable*
 755 *Thy Justice seems. Yet to say truth, too late*
 756 *I thus contest. Then should have been refused*
 757 *Those terms whatever, when they were proposed.*
 758 *Thou⁴¹⁹ didst accept them. Wilt thou⁴²⁰ enjoy the*
 good,
 759 *Then cavil⁴²¹ the conditions? And though God*
 760 *Made thee without thy leave,⁴²² what if thy⁴²³ son*
 761 *Prove disobedient, and reprov'd, retort,*
 762 *'Wherefore did'st thou beget me? I sought it not.'*
 763 *Would'st thou admit⁴²⁴ for his contempt of thee*
 764 *That proud excuse? Yet him not thy election⁴²⁵*
 765 *But natural necessity begot.⁴²⁶*
 766 *God made thee of choice His own, and of His own*
 767 *To serve Him: thy reward was of His grace,*
 768 *Thy punishment then justly is at His will.*
 769 *"Be it so, for I submit: His doom⁴²⁷ is fair,*
 770 *That dust I am, and shall to dust return.*
 771 *O welcome hour whenever! Why delays*
 772 *His hand to execute what His decree*

⁴¹⁸ surrender

⁴¹⁹ himself, Adam

⁴²⁰ himself, Adam

⁴²¹ captiously object to/find fault with

⁴²² permission

⁴²³ himself, Adam

⁴²⁴ receive, permit

⁴²⁵ choice

⁴²⁶ procreated, generated

⁴²⁷ judgment

773 *Fixed*⁴²⁸ *on this day?*⁴²⁹ *Why do I overlive,*⁴³⁰
 774 *Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out*
 775 *To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet*
 776 *Mortality, my sentence, and be earth*
 777 *Insensible!*⁴³¹ *How glad would lay me down*
 778 *As in my mother's lap! There I should rest,*
 779 *And sleep secure.*⁴³² *His dreadful voice no more*
 780 *Would thunder in my ears. No fear of worse*
 781 *To me, and to my offspring, would torment me*
 782 *With cruel expectation.*

“Yet one doubt

783 *Pursues me still, lest all*⁴³³ *I cannot die,*
 784 *Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man*
 785 *Which God inspired, cannot together perish*
 786 *With this corporeal clod.*⁴³⁴ *Then in the grave,*
 787 *Or in some other dismal place, who knows*
 788 *But I shall die a living death? O thought*
 789 *Horrid, if true! Yet why? It was but breath*
 790 *Of life that sinned. What dies but what had life*
 791 *And sin? The body properly had neither.*
 792 *All of me then shall die: let this appease*⁴³⁵
 793 *The doubt, since human reach no further knows.*
 794 *For though the Lord of all be infinite,*
 795 *Is His wrath also? Be it, man is not so,*
 796 *But mortal doomed.*⁴³⁶ *How can He exercise*
 797 *Wrath without end on man, whom death must*
 end?

⁴²⁸ settled, determined

⁴²⁹ this day = today

⁴³⁰ live too long

⁴³¹ deprived of sensation, unconscious

⁴³² confident, safe, free from fear/anxiety

⁴³³ completely, entirely

⁴³⁴ corporeal clod = earthen body

⁴³⁵ relieve, calm

⁴³⁶ fated, destined

798 *Can He make deathless death? That were to make*
 799 *Strange contradiction, which to God Himself*
 800 *Impossible is held,⁴³⁷ as argument⁴³⁸*
 801 *Of weakness, not of power. Will He draw out,*
 802 *For anger's sake, finite to infinite,*
 803 *In punished man, to satisfy His rigor,⁴³⁹*
 804 *Satisfied never? That were to extend*
 805 *His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law,*
 806 *By which all causes else,⁴⁴⁰ according still*
 807 *To the reception⁴⁴¹ of their matter, act,⁴⁴²*
 808 *Not to th' extent of their own sphere.*

“But say

809 *That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,*
 810 *Bereaving⁴⁴³ sense, but endless misery*
 811 *From this day onward, which I feel begun*
 812 *From in⁴⁴⁴ me, and without⁴⁴⁵ me—and so last*
 813 *To perpetuity. Aye me, that fear*
 814 *Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution⁴⁴⁶*
 815 *On my defenceless head. Both Death and I*
 816 *Am found eternal, and incorporate⁴⁴⁷ both,*
 817 *Nor I on my part single.⁴⁴⁸ In me all*
 818 *Posterity stands cursed: fair patrimony*
 819 *That I must leave ye, sons. O were I able*

⁴³⁷ considered, thought

⁴³⁸ fact, proof

⁴³⁹ severity

⁴⁴⁰ all causes else = all other causes

⁴⁴¹ absorption, taking in

⁴⁴² i.e., causes act according to the capacity of what they *work upon*; what the *cause* of something may be capable of is, in this sense, irrelevant

⁴⁴³ depriving, taking away

⁴⁴⁴ inside

⁴⁴⁵ outside

⁴⁴⁶ turning/spinning motion

⁴⁴⁷ immaterial (spiritual) rather than material (bodily)

⁴⁴⁸ alone

- 820 *To waste⁴⁴⁹ it all myself, and leave ye none!*
 821 *So disinherited, how would you bless*
 822 *Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind,*
 823 *For one man's fault, thus guiltless be*
 condemned—
 824 *If guiltless? But from me what can proceed,*
 825 *But all corrupt, both mind and will depraved⁴⁵⁰*
 826 *Not to do only, but to will the same*
 827 *With⁴⁵¹ me? How can they then acquitted stand*
 828 *In sight of God? Him after all disputes,*
 829 *Forced⁴⁵² I absolve. All my evasions vain,*
 830 *And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me*
 still
 831 *But to my own conviction: first and last*
 832 *On me, me only, as the source and spring*
 833 *Of all corruption, all the blame lights⁴⁵³ due.*
 834 *So might the wrath. Fond⁴⁵⁴ wish! Could'st thou⁴⁵⁵*
 support
 835 *That burden, heavier than the earth to bear,*
 836 *Than all the world much heavier, though divided⁴⁵⁶*
 837 *With that bad woman?⁴⁵⁷ Thus what thou desir'st,*
 838 *And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope*
 839 *Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable*
 840 *Beyond all past example and future.*
 841 *To Satan only like⁴⁵⁸ both crime and doom.⁴⁵⁹*

⁴⁴⁹ use up, consume

⁴⁵⁰ corrupted

⁴⁵¹ along with me, just as I do/have

⁴⁵² of necessity

⁴⁵³ falls

⁴⁵⁴ foolish

⁴⁵⁵ himself, Adam

⁴⁵⁶ shared

⁴⁵⁷ Eve

⁴⁵⁸ similar

⁴⁵⁹ sentence, judgment

842 *O Conscience! Into what abyss of fears*
 843 *And horrors hast thou⁴⁶⁰ driv'n me, out of which*
 844 *I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"*
 845 *Thus Adam to himself lamented loud*
 846 *Through the still night—not now, as ere⁴⁶¹ man fell,*
 847 *Wholesome, and cool, and mild, but with black air*
 848 *Accompanied, with damps,⁴⁶² and dreadful gloom,*
 849 *Which to his⁴⁶³ evil conscience represented⁴⁶⁴*
 850 *All things with double terror. On the ground*
 851 *Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft*
 852 *Cursed his creation, Death as oft accused*
 853 *Of tardy execution, since denounced⁴⁶⁵*
 854 *The day of his offence. "Why comes not Death,"*
 855 *Said he, "with one thrice-acceptable⁴⁶⁶ stroke*
 856 *To end me? Shall truth fail to keep her word,*
 857 *Justice Divine not hasten to be just?*
 858 *But Death comes not at call, Justice Divine*
 859 *Mends⁴⁶⁷ not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.*
 860 *O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bow'rs!*
 861 *With other echo late⁴⁶⁸ I taught your shades*
 862 *To answer, and resound⁴⁶⁹ far other song!"*
 863 *Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,*
 864 *Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh*
 865 *Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed,⁴⁷⁰*
 866 *But her with stern regard he thus repelled:*

⁴⁶⁰ conscience

⁴⁶¹ before

⁴⁶² noxious exhalations/vapors

⁴⁶³ Adam's

⁴⁶⁴ exhibited, showed

⁴⁶⁵ already announced/proclaimed

⁴⁶⁶ [four syllables, first and third accented: ACCepTABLE]

⁴⁶⁷ sets right

⁴⁶⁸ not long ago

⁴⁶⁹ ring out, reëcho

⁴⁷⁰ attempted

867 “*Out of my sight, thou serpent! That name best*
 868 *Befits*⁴⁷¹ *thee, with him leagued,*⁴⁷² *thyself as false*
 869 *And hateful.*⁴⁷³ *Nothing wants,*⁴⁷⁴ *but that thy shape,*
 870 *Like his, and color serpentine, may show*
 871 *Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee*
 872 *Henceforth, lest that too Heav’nly form,*
 *pretended*⁴⁷⁵
 873 *To hellish falsehood, snare them! But*⁴⁷⁶ *for thee*
 874 *I had*⁴⁷⁷ *persisted*⁴⁷⁸ *happy, had not thy pride*
 875 *And wand’ring*⁴⁷⁹ *vanity, when least was safe,*
 876 *Rejected my forewarning and disdained*
 877 *Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,*
 878 *Though by the Devil himself, him overweening*⁴⁸⁰
 879 *To over-reach,*⁴⁸¹ *but with the serpent meeting*
 880 *Fooled and beguiled. By him, thou, I by thee.*
 881 *To trust thee from my side, imagined*⁴⁸² *wise,*
 882 *Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,*
 883 *And understood not*⁴⁸³ *all was but a show*
 884 *Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib*
 885 *Crookèd by nature, bent, as now appears,*
 886 *More to the part sinister,*⁴⁸⁴ *from me drawn,*⁴⁸⁵

471 suits

472 allied

473 as Satan is

474 is missing

475 held, as if a mask or screen, in front of her, to conceal the “hellish falsehood” behind it

476 except

477 would have

478 remained

479 vagrant, wanton, uncertain

480 thinking arrogantly/presumptuously

481 overpower, outdo, get the better of

482 imagined by me

483 not understood by me

484 (1) the left side, (2) darkly suspicious/dishonest/corrupt

485 withdrawn, taken

887 *Well if thrown out, as supernumerary*⁴⁸⁶
 888 *To my just number found.*⁴⁸⁷ *O why did God,*
 889 *Creator wise, that peopled highest Heav'n*
 890 *With Spirits masculine, create at last*
 891 *This novelty on earth, this fair defect*
 892 *Of Nature, and not fill the world at once*
 893 *With men, as*⁴⁸⁸ *Angels without feminine,*
 894 *Or find some other way to generate*⁴⁸⁹
 895 *Mankind? This mischief had not been befallen,*⁴⁹⁰
 896 *And more that shall befall, innumerable*
 897 *Disturbances on earth through female snares,*
 898 *And strait conjunction*⁴⁹¹ *with this sex. For either*
 899 *He never shall find out fit*⁴⁹² *mate, but such*
 900 *As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,*
 901 *Or whom*⁴⁹³ *he wishes most shall seldom gain,*
 902 *Through her perverseness,*⁴⁹⁴ *but shall see her*
 gained
 903 *By a far worse,*⁴⁹⁵ *or if she love,*⁴⁹⁶ *withheld*
 904 *By parents, or his happiest choice too late*
 905 *Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound*
 906 *To a fell*⁴⁹⁷ *adversary,*⁴⁹⁸ *his hate or shame.*
 907 *Which infinite calamity shall cause*

⁴⁸⁶ unnecessary, superfluous [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

⁴⁸⁷ i.e., his correct/right/true number is one (only himself), not two (with her—superfluously—added)

⁴⁸⁸ like

⁴⁸⁹ procreate

⁴⁹⁰ been befallen = happened, occurred

⁴⁹¹ strait conjunction = narrow connection (“conjunction” carrying heavy sexual overtones)

⁴⁹² proper, suitable

⁴⁹³ the woman

⁴⁹⁴ obstinacy, contrariness, wickedness

⁴⁹⁵ a far worse = a far worse man than himself

⁴⁹⁶ him

⁴⁹⁷ (1) fierce, cruel, (2) clever

⁴⁹⁸ antagonist, enemy

908 *To human life, and household peace confound.*⁴⁹⁹
 909 *He added not, and from her turned, but Eve,*
 910 *Not so⁵⁰⁰ repulsed, with tears that ceased not*
 flowing
 911 *And tresses all disordered, at his feet*
 912 *Fell humble and, embracing them, besought⁵⁰¹*
 913 *His peace,⁵⁰² and thus proceeded in her plaint:*
 914 *“Forsake⁵⁰³ me not thus, Adam! Witness Heav’n*
 915 *What love sincere, and reverence in my heart*
 916 *I bear thee, and unweeting⁵⁰⁴ have offended,*
 917 *Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant*
 918 *I beg, and clasp thy knees. Bereave⁵⁰⁵ me not*
 919 *Whereon I live,⁵⁰⁶ thy gentle⁵⁰⁷ looks, thy aid,*
 920 *Thy counsel, in this uttermost⁵⁰⁸ distress,*
 921 *My only strength and stay.⁵⁰⁹ Forlorn⁵¹⁰ of thee,*
 922 *Whither shall I betake⁵¹¹ me, where subsist?⁵¹²*
 923 *While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,*
 924 *Between us two let there be peace, both joining,*
 925 *As joined in injuries, one enmity*
 926 *Against a foe by doom express⁵¹³ assigned us,*
 927 *That cruel serpent. On me exercise not*

⁴⁹⁹ destroy

⁵⁰⁰ thus, thereby

⁵⁰¹ begged earnestly for

⁵⁰² amity, end of hostilities

⁵⁰³ renounce, abandon

⁵⁰⁴ unknowingly

⁵⁰⁵ deprive

⁵⁰⁶ whereon I live = of that upon which I live

⁵⁰⁷ mild, generous, courteous

⁵⁰⁸ extreme, greatest

⁵⁰⁹ support

⁵¹⁰ forsaken, abandoned

⁵¹¹ go, turn

⁵¹² exist, live

⁵¹³ definite, fixed, exact

928 *Thy hatred for this misery befall'n,*
 929 *On me already lost, me than thyself*
 930 *More miserable! Both have sinned, but thou*
 931 *Against God only, I against God and thee,*
 932 *And to the place of judgment will return,*
 933 *There with my cries importune Heav'n that all*
 934 *The sentence, from thy head removed, may light⁵¹⁴*
 935 *On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe—*
 936 *Me, me only, just object of His ire!”*
 937 *She ended weeping, and her lowly⁵¹⁵ plight,⁵¹⁶*
 938 *Immoveable,⁵¹⁷ till peace obtained from fault*
 939 *Acknowledged and deplored,⁵¹⁸ in Adam wrought⁵¹⁹*
 940 *Commiseration.⁵²⁰ Soon his heart relented*
 941 *Towards her, his life so late,⁵²¹ and sole delight,*
 942 *Now at his feet submissive in distress,*
 943 *Creature so fair his reconcilment seeking,*
 944 *His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid.*
 945 *As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,*
 946 *And thus with peaceful words upraised her*
 soon.⁵²²
 947 *“Unwary, and too desirous, as before,*
 948 *So now of what thou know'st not, who desir'st*
 949 *The punishment all on thyself! Alas!*
 950 *Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain*
 951 *His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,*
 952 *And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers*
 953 *Could alter high decrees, I to that place*

⁵¹⁴ fall, descend

⁵¹⁵ abject, humble

⁵¹⁶ (1) condition, state, (2) pledge, undertaking

⁵¹⁷ (1) stationary, fixed, (2) unalterable, not subject to change

⁵¹⁸ lamented, deeply regretted

⁵¹⁹ worked

⁵²⁰ compassion, pity, sorrow

⁵²¹ recently

⁵²² quickly

954 *Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,*
 955 *That on my head all might be visited,*
 956 *Thy frailty⁵²³ and infirmer⁵²⁴ sex forgiv'n,*
 957 *To me committed⁵²⁵ and by me exposed.⁵²⁶*
 958 *But rise, let us no more contend,⁵²⁷ nor blame*
 959 *Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive*
 960 *In offices⁵²⁸ of love, how we may lighten*
 961 *Each other's burden in our share of woe,*
 962 *Since this day's death denounced,⁵²⁹ if aught I*
 see,⁵³⁰
 963 *Will prove no sudden but a slow-paced evil,*
 964 *A long day's dying, to augment our pain,*
 965 *And to our seed (O hapless Seed!) derived."⁵³¹*
 966 *To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:*
 967 *"Adam, by sad experiment I know*
 968 *How little weight my words with thee can find,*
 969 *Found so erroneous, thence by just event⁵³²*
 970 *Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless,*
 971 *Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place*
 972 *Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain*
 973 *Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart*
 974 *Living or dying, from thee I will not hide*
 975 *What thoughts in my unquiet breast are ris'n,*
 976 *Tending to some relief of our extremes,*
 977 *Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,*

⁵²³ moral weakness, instability of mind

⁵²⁴ weaker

⁵²⁵ entrusted

⁵²⁶ imperiled, made subject/open to danger (since he allowed her to go to her labor alone that day)

⁵²⁷ fight

⁵²⁸ services, duties, attentions

⁵²⁹ proclaimed

⁵³⁰ apprehend, understand

⁵³¹ transmitted

⁵³² just event = equitable/impartial/rightful result/outcome

978 *As in our evils, and of easier choice.*
 979 *If care of our descent perplex us most,*
 980 *Which must be born to certain woe, devoured*
 981 *By Death at last (and miserable it is*
 982 *To be to others cause of misery,*
 983 *Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring*
 984 *Into this cursèd world a woeful race,*
 985 *That after wretched life must be at last*
 986 *Food for so foul a monster), in thy power*
 987 *It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent*
 988 *The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.*
 989 *Childless thou art: childless remain. So Death*
 990 *Shall be deceived⁵³³ his glut, and with us two*
 991 *Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.*
 992 *But if thou judge it hard and difficult,*
 993 *Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain*
 994 *From love's due⁵³⁴ rites, nuptial embraces sweet,*
 995 *And with desire to languish⁵³⁵ without hope,*
 996 *Before the present object⁵³⁶ languishing*
 997 *With like desire, which would be misery*
 998 *And torment less than none of what we dread,*
 999 *Then both ourselves and seed at once to free*
 1000 *From what we fear for both, let us make short⁵³⁷—*
 1001 *Let us seek Death, or he not found, supply*
 1002 *With our own hands his office⁵³⁸ on ourselves.*
 1003 *Why stand we longer shivering under fears*
 1004 *That show no end but death, and have the power*
 1005 *Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,*
 1006 *Destruction with destruction to destroy?"*

⁵³³ defrauded, beguiled of

⁵³⁴ (1) proper, (2) necessary, (3) owed

⁵³⁵ to be depressed/sick/weak

⁵³⁶ person, body: Eve herself

⁵³⁷ short work (of it)

⁵³⁸ function, service

IO07 *She ended here, or vehement*⁵³⁹ *despair*
 IO08 *Broke off the rest: so much of death her thoughts*
 IO09 *Had entertained*⁵⁴⁰ *as dyed her cheeks with pale.*
 IO10 *But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,*⁵⁴¹
 IO11 *To better hopes his more attentive*⁵⁴² *mind*
 IO12 *Laboring had raised, and thus to Eve replied:*
 IO13 *“Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems*
 IO14 *To argue in thee something more sublime*
 IO15 *And excellent than what thy mind contemns.*⁵⁴³
 IO16 *But self-destruction therefore sought refutes*
 IO17 *That excellence thought in thee, and implies,*
 IO18 *Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret*
 IO19 *For loss of life and pleasure overloved.*
 IO20 *Or if thou covet death, as utmost end*
 IO21 *Of misery, so thinking to evade*
 IO22 *The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God*
 IO23 *Hath wiselier armed His vengeful ire, than so*
 IO24 *To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death,*
 IO25 *So snatched, will not exempt us from the pain*
 IO26 *We are by doom*⁵⁴⁴ *to pay. Rather, such acts*
 IO27 *Of contumacy*⁵⁴⁵ *will provoke the Highest*
 IO28 *To make death in us live. Then let us seek*
 IO29 *Some safer resolution, which methinks*
 IO30 *I have in view, calling to mind with heed*
 IO31 *Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise*⁵⁴⁶
 IO32 *The serpent’s head. Piteous amends! unless*
 IO33 *Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,*
 IO34 *Satan, who in the serpent hath contrived*

⁵³⁹ intense, passionate, excited

⁵⁴⁰ maintained, experienced

⁵⁴¹ moved, ruled, diverted (turned)

⁵⁴² more attentive = steadier

⁵⁴³ despises

⁵⁴⁴ sentence, judgment

⁵⁴⁵ willful disobedience, perversity

⁵⁴⁶ smash, destroy, break

IO35 *Against us this deceit. To crush his head*
 IO36 *Would be revenge indeed! Which will be lost*
 IO37 *By death brought on ourselves, or childless days*
 IO38 *Resolved,⁵⁴⁷ as thou proposest. So⁵⁴⁸ our foe*
 IO39 *Shall 'scape his punishment ordained, and we*
 IO40 *Instead shall double ours upon our heads.*
 IO41 *No more be mentioned then of violence*
 IO42 *Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness,*
 IO43 *That cuts us off from hope, and savors⁵⁴⁹ only*
 IO44 *Rancor⁵⁵⁰ and pride, impatience and despise,⁵⁵¹*
 IO45 *Reluctance⁵⁵² against God and His just yoke*
 IO46 *Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild*
 IO47 *And gracious temper He both heard and judged,*
 IO48 *Without wrath or reviling. We expected*
 IO49 *Immediate dissolution,⁵⁵³ which we thought*
 IO50 *Was meant by death that day, when lo, to thee*
 IO51 *Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,*
 IO52 *And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,*
 IO53 *Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope⁵⁵⁴*
 IO54 *Glanced⁵⁵⁵ on the ground: with labor I must earn*
 IO55 *My bread. What harm? Idleness had been worse.*
 IO56 *My labor will sustain me and, lest cold*
 IO57 *Or heat should injure us, His timely⁵⁵⁶ care*
 IO58 *Hath, unbesought, provided, and His hands*
 IO59 *Clothed us unworthy, pitying while He judged.*
 IO60 *How much more, if we pray Him, will His ear*

⁵⁴⁷ resolved/decided on

⁵⁴⁸ thus

⁵⁴⁹ (1) concerns [verb], (2) pleases [verb]

⁵⁵⁰ bitterness, spitefulness

⁵⁵¹ spite

⁵⁵² resistance

⁵⁵³ disintegration, decomposition

⁵⁵⁴ slantwise

⁵⁵⁵ struck and glided, passed quickly

⁵⁵⁶ (1) well-timed, (2) early

- IO61 *Be open, and His heart to pity incline,*
 IO62 *And teach us further by what means to shun*
 IO63 *Th' inclement⁵⁵⁷ seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow,*
 IO64 *Which now the sky, with various⁵⁵⁸ face, begins*
 IO65 *To show us in this mountain, while the winds*
 IO66 *Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks*
 IO67 *Of these fair spreading trees—which bids us seek*
 IO68 *Some better shroud,⁵⁵⁹ some better warmth to*
 cherish
 IO69 *Our limbs benumbed, ere this diurnal⁵⁶⁰ star⁵⁶¹*
 IO70 *Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams*
 IO71 *Reflected may with matter sere⁵⁶² foment⁵⁶³*
 IO72 *Or, by collision of two bodies, grind⁵⁶⁴*
 IO73 *The air attrite⁵⁶⁵ to fire; as late⁵⁶⁶ the clouds*
 IO74 *Jostling,⁵⁶⁷ or pushed with winds, rude⁵⁶⁸ in their*
 shock,
 IO75 *Tine⁵⁶⁹ the slant lightning, whose thwart⁵⁷⁰ flame,*
 driv'n down,
 IO76 *Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine*
 IO77 *And sends a comfortable heat from far,*
 IO78 *Which might supply the sun. Such fire to use,*
 IO79 *And what may else be remedy or cure*
 IO80 *To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,*

⁵⁵⁷ harsh, pitiless

⁵⁵⁸ unstable, changeable

⁵⁵⁹ dwelling, cover

⁵⁶⁰ of/belonging to the day

⁵⁶¹ the sun

⁵⁶² dry

⁵⁶³ rouse, excite

⁵⁶⁴ rub, harass

⁵⁶⁵ by friction

⁵⁶⁶ recently

⁵⁶⁷ pushing, shoving, knocking against

⁵⁶⁸ violent, harsh

⁵⁶⁹ kindle

⁵⁷⁰ transverse

1081 *He will instruct us, praying,⁵⁷¹ and of grace*
 1082 *Beseeching Him, so as we need not fear*
 1083 *To pass commodiously⁵⁷² this life, sustained*
 1084 *By Him with many comforts, till we end*
 1085 *In dust, our final rest and native home.*
 1086 *What better can we do than, to the place*
 1087 *Repairing⁵⁷³ where He judged us, prostrate fall*
 1088 *Before Him reverent, and there confess*
 1089 *Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears*
 1090 *Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air*
 1091 *Frequenting,⁵⁷⁴ sent from hearts contrite, in sign*
 1092 *Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation⁵⁷⁵ meek?*
 1093 *Undoubtedly He will relent and turn*
 1094 *From His displeasure, in whose look serene,*
 1095 *When angry most He seemed, and most severe,*
 1096 *What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone? ”*
 1097 *So spoke our father penitent, nor Eve*
 1098 *Felt less remorse. They forthwith to the place*
 1099 *Repairing where He judged them, prostrate fell*
 1100 *Before Him reverent, and both confessed*
 1101 *Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with*
 tears
 1102 *Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air*
 1103 *Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign*
 1104 *Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.*

The End of the Tenth Book

⁵⁷¹ if we pray to Him

⁵⁷² conveniently

⁵⁷³ going

⁵⁷⁴ often, habitually

⁵⁷⁵ [four syllables, first and third accented]

BOOK XI

THE ARGUMENT

The son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents, now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them,¹ but declares they² must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things.

Michael's coming down.

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

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

¹ i.e., the prayers

² i.e., Adam and Eve

1 *Thus they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood*
 2 *Praying, for from the mercy-seat³ above*
 3 *Prevenient⁴ grace descending had removed*
 4 *The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh*
 5 *Regenerate⁵ grow instead, that sighs now*
 breathed
 6 *Unutterable,⁶ which the spirit of prayer*
 7 *Inspired, and winged for Heav'n with speedier*
 flight
 8 *Than loudest oratory. Yet their port⁷*
 9 *Not of mean⁸ suitors, nor important less*
 10 *Seemed their petition than when the ancient pair*
 11 *In fables old, less ancient yet than these,*
 12 *Deucalion⁹ and chaste Pyrrha,¹⁰ to restore*
 13 *The race of mankind drowned,¹¹ before the shrine*
 14 *Of Themis¹² stood devout. To Heav'n their*
 prayers
 15 *Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds*
 16 *Blown vagabond¹³ or frustrate. In they¹⁴ passed*
 17 *Dimensionless¹⁵ through Heav'nly doors, then*
 clad
 18 *With incense, where the golden altar fumed¹⁶*

³ golden covering placed over the Ark of the Covenant; regarded as God's resting place and thus the seat of mercy

⁴ anticipatory

⁵ reborn, reformed, restored

⁶ [five syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁷ demeanor

⁸ inferior, poor

⁹ Prometheus' son, and the "Noah" of classical myth

¹⁰ Deucalion's wife

¹¹ [adjective]

¹² a Titan, daughter of Gaia (earth) by Zeus: goddess of justice

¹³ straying, wandering

¹⁴ the prayers

¹⁵ having no material being/body

¹⁶ smoked

19 *By¹⁷ their great Intercessor,¹⁸ came in sight*
 20 *Before the Father's throne. Them the glad Son*
 21 *Presenting, thus to intercede began:*
 22 *“See, Father, what first-fruits on earth are*
 sprung
 23 *From Thy implanted grace in man! These sighs*
 24 *And prayers, which in this golden censer¹⁹ mixed*
 25 *With incense, I Thy priest, before Thee bring,*
 26 *Fruits of more pleasing savor (from Thy seed,*
 27 *Sown with contrition in his heart) than those*
 28 *Which, his own hand manuring,²⁰ all the trees*
 29 *Of Paradise could have produced, ere fall'n*
 30 *From innocence. Now therefore bend Thine ear*
 31 *To supplication. Hear his sighs, though mute.*
 32 *Unskilful with what words to pray, let me*
 33 *Interpret for him—me, his advocate*
 34 *And propitiation.²¹ All his works on me,*
 35 *Good, or not good, engraft.²² My merit those²³*
 36 *Shall perfect, and for these²⁴ my death shall pay.*
 37 *Accept me²⁵ and, in me, from these receive*
 38 *The smell of peace toward mankind. Let him live*
 39 *Before Thee reconciled, at least his days*
 40 *Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom*
 (which I
 41 *To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse),*
 42 *To better life shall yield him, where with me*
 43 *All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,*

¹⁷ near

¹⁸ Christ

¹⁹ container in which incense is burned

²⁰ tilling, cultivating

²¹ atonement, expiation, sacrifice

²² implant, transfer

²³ i.e., the good works of man

²⁴ i.e., the not good works of man

²⁵ accept me = receive me with favor

44 *Made one with me, as I with Thee am one."*
 45 *To whom the Father, without cloud,²⁶ serene:*
 46 *"All thy request for man, accepted, Son,*
 47 *Obtain. All thy request was my decree.*
 48 *But longer in that Paradise to dwell*
 49 *The law I gave to Nature him²⁷ forbids.*
 50 *Those pure immortal elements that know*
 51 *No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,*
 52 *Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off²⁸*
 53 *As a distemper,²⁹ gross—to air as gross,*
 54 *And mortal food—as may dispose him³⁰ best*
 55 *For dissolution, wrought by sin, that first*
 56 *Distempered all things, and of incorrupt*
 57 *Corrupted. I, at first, with two fair gifts*
 58 *Created him endowed: with happiness*
 59 *And immortality. That³¹ fondly³² lost,*
 60 *This other³³ served but to eternize³⁴ woe,*
 61 *Till I provided death. So death becomes*
 62 *His final remedy and, after life*
 63 *Tried³⁵ in sharp tribulation,³⁶ and refined*
 64 *By faith and faithful works, to second life,*
 65 *Waked in the renovation³⁷ of the just,*
 66 *Resigns³⁸ him up with Heav'n and earth renewed.*
 67 *"But let us call to synod all the Blest*

²⁶ darkening of His countenance

²⁷ Adam

²⁸ purge him off = purify him away

²⁹ disorder, derangement

³⁰ dispose him = make him fit

³¹ happiness

³² foolishly

³³ immortality

³⁴ make eternal/everlasting

³⁵ tested

³⁶ misery, distress, vexation

³⁷ renewal of the body at the Resurrection

³⁸ restores (yields up), repays, rewards, produces

68 *Through Heav'n's wide bounds. From them I will
not hide*

69 *My judgments, how with mankind I proceed,*
70 *As how with peccant³⁹ Angels late⁴⁰ they saw,*
71 *And in their state,⁴¹ though firm, stood more
confirmed."*

72 *He ended, and the Son gave signal high*
73 *To the bright minister that watched. He blew*
74 *His trumpet, heard in Oreb⁴² since perhaps*
75 *When God descended, and perhaps once more*
76 *To sound at general doom.⁴³ The Angelic blast*
77 *Filled all the regions. From their blissful bow'rs*
78 *Of amarantine⁴⁴ shade, fountain or spring,*
79 *By the waters of life, where'er they sat*
80 *In fellowships of joy, the sons of light*
81 *Hasted, resorting⁴⁵ to the summons high,*
82 *And took their seats, till from His throne
supreme*

83 *Th' Almighty thus pronounced His sov'reign will:*
84 *"O Sons, like one of us man is become*
85 *To know both good and evil, since his taste*
86 *Of that defended⁴⁶ fruit. But let him boast*
87 *His knowledge of good lost, and evil got,*
88 *Happier, had it sufficed him to have known*
89 *Good by itself, and evil not at all.*
90 *He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,*

³⁹ sinning

⁴⁰ not long ago

⁴¹ rank, position

⁴² Horeb/Mt. Sinai

⁴³ general doom = Judgment Day

⁴⁴ mythical flower that never fades

⁴⁵ going, proceeding

⁴⁶ forbidden

91 *My motions*⁴⁷ *in him. Longer*⁴⁸ *than they move,*
 92 *His heart I know,*⁴⁹ *how variable and vain,*
 93 *Self-left.*⁵⁰ *Lest therefore his now bolder hand*
 94 *Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,*
 95 *And live forever—dream at least to live*
 96 *Forever—to remove him I decree,*
 97 *And send him from the Garden forth to till*
 98 *The ground whence he was taken: fitter soil.*
 99 *“Michael, this my behest”*⁵¹ *have thou in*
 charge.
 100 *Take to thee from among the Cherubim*
 101 *Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the fiend,*
 102 *Or in*⁵² *behalf of man, or to invade*
 103 *Vacant possession,*⁵³ *some new trouble raise.*
 104 *Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God*
 105 *Without remorse*⁵⁴ *drive out the sinful pair,*
 106 *From hallowed ground th’ unholy, and denounce*⁵⁵
 107 *To them, and to their progeny, from thence*
 108 *Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint*⁵⁶
 109 *At the sad*⁵⁷ *sentence rigorously urged*⁵⁸
 110 *(For I behold them softened, and with tears*
 111 *Bewailing their excess), all terror hide.*
 112 *If patiently thy bidding they obey,*
 113 *Dismiss them not disconsolate.*⁵⁹ *Reveal*

⁴⁷ inward promptings, workings

⁴⁸ but for a longer period

⁴⁹ have known

⁵⁰ left to itself

⁵¹ command

⁵² or in = whether on

⁵³ i.e., the Garden of Eden, about to become vacant

⁵⁴ pity

⁵⁵ proclaim, announce

⁵⁶ lose heart/courage, droop

⁵⁷ mournful

⁵⁸ stated, pressed

⁵⁹ miserable

- 114 *To Adam what shall come in future days,*
 115 *As I shall thee enlighten; intermix⁶⁰*
 116 *My cov'nant in the Woman's seed renewed.*
 117 *So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in*
 peace,
 118 *And on the east side of the garden place,*
 119 *Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,*
 120 *Cherubic watch, and of a sword the flame*
 121 *Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,*
 122 *And guard all passage to the Tree of Life,*
 123 *Lest Paradise a receptacle⁶¹ prove*
 124 *To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,*
 125 *With those stolen fruit man once more to*
 delude."
 126 *He ceased, and th' Arch-Angelic Power*
 prepared
 127 *For swift descent, with him the cohort⁶² bright*
 128 *Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each*
 129 *Had, like a double Janus,⁶³ all their shape*
 130 *Spangled with eyes more numerous than those*
 131 *Of Argus,⁶⁴ and more wakeful than to drowse,*
 132 *Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed*
 133 *Of Hermes,⁶⁵ or his opiate rod.⁶⁶ Meanwhile,*
 134 *To re-salute the world with sacred light,*
 135 *Leucothea⁶⁷ waked, and with fresh dews*
 embalmed⁶⁸

⁶⁰ intermingle, blend in

⁶¹ welcoming place [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁶² band

⁶³ double-faced god of gates

⁶⁴ hundred-eyed spy for Jove/Jupiter/Zeus

⁶⁵ messenger of Jove

⁶⁶ opiate rod = sleep-inducing staff

⁶⁷ goddess of dawn [trisyllabic, second accented, "-thea" elided]

⁶⁸ anointed

136 *The earth, when Adam and first matron Eve*
 137 *Had ended now their orisons,⁶⁹ and found*
 138 *Strength added from above, new hope to spring*
 139 *Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked,*
 140 *Which thus to Eve his⁷⁰ welcome words renewed:*
 141 *“Eve, easily may faith admit that all*
 142 *The good which we enjoy from Heav’n descends;*
 143 *But that from us aught should ascend to Heav’n*
 144 *So prevalent⁷¹ as to concern the mind*
 145 *Of God high-blest, or to incline His will,*
 146 *Hard to belief may seem, yet this will⁷² prayer*
 147 *Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne*
 148 *Ev’n to the seat of God. For since I sought*
 149 *By prayer th’offended⁷³ Deity to appease,*
 150 *Kneeled and before Him humbled all my heart,*
 151 *Methought I saw him placable⁷⁴ and mild,*
 152 *Bending his ear. Persuasion in me grew*
 153 *That I was heard with favor, peace returned*
 154 *Home to my breast, and to my memory*
 155 *His promise, that thy seed shall bruise⁷⁵ our foe—*
 156 *Which, then not minded⁷⁶ in dismay, yet now*
 157 *Assures me that the bitterness of death*
 158 *Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,*
 159 *Eve rightly called, mother of all mankind,*
 160 *Mother of all things living, since by thee*
 161 *Man is to live, and all things live for man.”*
 162 *To whom thus Eve, with sad⁷⁷ demeanor meek:*

⁶⁹ prayers

⁷⁰ Adam’s

⁷¹ efficaciously, powerfully

⁷² will do

⁷³ sinned against

⁷⁴ gentle, forgiving

⁷⁵ smash, crush, destroy

⁷⁶ thought of, remembered

⁷⁷ (1) sad, (2) sober

- 163 *“Ill-worthy I such title should belong,*
 164 *To me transgressor, who for thee ordained*
 165 *A help, became thy snare. To me reproach*
 166 *Rather belongs, distrust, all dispraise.*
 167 *But infinite in pardon was my Judge,*
 168 *That I, who first brought death on all, am graced*
 169 *The source of life, next favorable⁷⁸ thou,⁷⁹*
 170 *Who highly⁸⁰ thus to entitle⁸¹ me vouchsaf’st,⁸²*
 171 *Far other name deserving. But the field*
 172 *To labor calls us, now⁸³ with sweat imposed,*
 173 *Though after sleepless night, for see! the morn,*
 174 *All unconcerned with our unrest, begins*
 175 *Her rosy progress smiling. Let us forth,*
 176 *I never from thy side henceforth to stray,*
 177 *Where’er our day’s work lies, though now*
 enjoined⁸⁴
 178 *Laborious, till day droop. While here we dwell,*
 179 *What can be toilsome⁸⁵ in these pleasant walks?*
 180 *Here let us live, though in fall’n state, content.”*
 181 *So spoke, so wished much humbled Eve, but*
 Fate
 182 *Subscribed⁸⁶ not. Nature first gave signs,*
 impressed⁸⁷
 183 *On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,⁸⁸*

⁷⁸ pleasing, gracious

⁷⁹ to thou

⁸⁰ so high, thus high

⁸¹ title

⁸² granted, deigned, condescended

⁸³ “now the labor is . . .”

⁸⁴ imposed

⁸⁵ tired, laborious

⁸⁶ assented, agreed

⁸⁷ produced on, communicated through

⁸⁸ darkened, obscured

184 *After short blush⁸⁹ of morn. Nigh in her sight*
 185 *The bird of Jove,⁹⁰ stooped⁹¹ from his airy tour;⁹²*
 186 *Two birds of gayest plume before him drove.*
 187 *Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,⁹³*
 188 *First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,⁹⁴*
 189 *Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind.⁹⁵*
 190 *Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.*
 191 *Adam observed, and with his eye the chase*
 192 *Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spoke:*
 193 *“O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,*
 194 *Which Heav’n, by these mute signs in Nature,*
 shows
 195 *Forerunners of His purpose, or to warn*
 196 *Us, haply⁹⁶ too secure⁹⁷ of⁹⁸ our discharge⁹⁹*
 197 *From penalty, because from death released*
 198 *Some days. How long, and what till then our*
 life,
 199 *Who knows? Or more than this, that we are dust,*
 200 *And thither must return, and be no more?*
 201 *Why else this double object in our sight*
 202 *Of flight pursued in th’ air, and o’er the ground,*
 203 *One way the self-same hour? Why in the east*
 204 *Darkness ere day’s mid-course, and morning-*
 light
 205 *More orient¹⁰⁰ in yon western cloud, that draws*

⁸⁹ rosy gleam

⁹⁰ the eagle

⁹¹ swiftly descended

⁹² circuit

⁹³ the lion

⁹⁴ pair

⁹⁵ hart and hind = stag and doe (male and female deer)

⁹⁶ perhaps

⁹⁷ confident

⁹⁸ because of

⁹⁹ liberation

¹⁰⁰ more bright = brighter

206 *O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,*
 207 *And slow descends with something Heavenly*
 fraught? ”¹⁰¹
 208 *He erred not, for by this¹⁰² the Heav'nly bands*
 209 *Down from a sky of jasper¹⁰³ lighted now*
 210 *In Paradise, and on a hill made halt—*
 211 *A glorious apparition,¹⁰⁴ had not doubt*
 212 *And carnal¹⁰⁵ fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.*
 213 *Not that more glorious¹⁰⁶ when the Angels met*
 214 *Jacob in Mahanaim,¹⁰⁷ where he saw*
 215 *The field pavilioned¹⁰⁸ with His¹⁰⁹ guardians bright,*
 216 *Nor that, which on the flaming mount appeared*
 217 *In Dothan,¹¹⁰ covered with a camp of fire,*
 218 *Against the Syrian king, who to surprise*
 219 *One man,¹¹¹ assassin-like,¹¹² had levied¹¹³ war,*
 220 *War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch¹¹⁴*
 221 *In their bright stand¹¹⁵ there left his Powers, to*
 seize
 222 *Possession of the Garden. He alone,*
 223 *To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,*

¹⁰¹ filled

¹⁰² this time

¹⁰³ jasper is a highly variegated colored form of quartz

¹⁰⁴ manifestation, appearance

¹⁰⁵ bodily

¹⁰⁶ “that ‘apparition’ was not more glorious when . . .”

¹⁰⁷ “tents of angels”

¹⁰⁸ pavilioned = covered with the tents of

¹⁰⁹ “And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host”—Genesis 32:1–2

¹¹⁰ see 2 Kings 6

¹¹¹ the prophet Elisha

¹¹² treacherously

¹¹³ made, commenced

¹¹⁴ Michael

¹¹⁵ the formation in which the Cherubim had halted

224 *Not unperceived of Adam, who to Eve,*
 225 *While the great visitant approached, thus spoke:*
 226 *“Eve, now expect great tidings, which*
 perhaps
 227 *Of us will soon determine,¹¹⁶ or impose*
 228 *New laws to be observed, for I descry,*
 229 *From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,*
 230 *One of the Heav’nly host and, by his gait,*
 231 *None of the meanest,¹¹⁷ some great Potentate*
 232 *Or of the Thrones above, such majesty*
 233 *Invests¹¹⁸ him coming, yet not terrible*
 234 *(That I should fear) nor sociably¹¹⁹ mild*
 235 *As Raphael (that I should much confide)¹²⁰*
 236 *But solemn and sublime,¹²¹ whom not t’ offend*
 237 *With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.”*
 238 *He ended, and the Arch-Angel soon drew*
 nigh,
 239 *Not in his shape celestial, but as man*
 240 *Clad to meet man. Over his lucid¹²² arms¹²³*
 241 *A military vest¹²⁴ of purple flowed,*
 242 *Livelier¹²⁵ than Meliboean¹²⁶ or the grain¹²⁷*
 243 *Of Sarra,¹²⁸ worn by kings and heroes old*

¹¹⁶ decide, resolve, end

¹¹⁷ lowest rank

¹¹⁸ clothes

¹¹⁹ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹²⁰ trust, have confidence in

¹²¹ lofty, exalted

¹²² luminous, bright

¹²³ armor

¹²⁴ loose robe

¹²⁵ more brilliant/vivid

¹²⁶ Thessalian town famous for its bright purple dye

¹²⁷ dyed cloth

¹²⁸ Tyre, Phoenician seaport, now in Lebanon

- 244 *In time of truce. Iris¹²⁹ had dipped the woof.¹³⁰*
 245 *His starry helm,¹³¹ unbuckled, showed him prime*
 246 *In manhood where youth ended; by his side,*
 247 *As in a glistering zodiac,¹³² hung the sword,*
 248 *Satan's dire dread,¹³³ and in his hand the spear.*
 249 *Adam bowed low; he,¹³⁴ kingly, from his state¹³⁵*
 250 *Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:*
 251 *“Adam, Heav'n's high beh'est¹³⁶ no preface*
 needs.
 252 *Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,*
 253 *Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,*
 254 *Defeated of his seizure many days*
 255 *Giv'n thee of grace, wherein thou may'st repent,*
 256 *And one bad act with many deeds well done*
 257 *May'st cover.¹³⁷ Well may then thy Lord,*
 appeased,
 258 *Redeem thee quite¹³⁸ from Death's rapacious¹³⁹*
 claim.
 259 *But longer in this Paradise to dwell*
 260 *Permits not: to remove thee I am come,*
 261 *And send thee from the garden forth to till¹⁴⁰*
 262 *The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.”*
 263 *He added not, for Adam at the news*
 264 *Heart-struck with chilling grip of sorrow stood,*

¹²⁹ goddess of the rainbow

¹³⁰ thread

¹³¹ helmet

¹³² belt of stars

¹³³ see Book 6, lines 320–27, above

¹³⁴ i.e., the archangel Michael

¹³⁵ high rank, dignity

¹³⁶ command

¹³⁷ compensate for

¹³⁸ completely

¹³⁹ greedy, grasping

¹⁴⁰ cultivate

265 *That all his senses bound.¹⁴¹ Eve, who unseen*
 266 *Yet all had heard, with audible lament*
 267 *Discovered¹⁴² soon¹⁴³ the place of her retire.¹⁴⁴*
 268 *“O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!*
 269 *Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? Thus leave*
 270 *Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,*
 271 *Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hope to spend,*
 272 *Quiet though sad, the respite¹⁴⁵ of that day*
 273 *That must be mortal¹⁴⁶ to us both. O flow’rs*
 274 *That never will in other climate grow,*
 275 *My early visitation,¹⁴⁷ and my last*
 276 *At ev’n, which I bred up with tender¹⁴⁸ hand*
 277 *From the first op’ning bud, and gave ye names,*
 278 *Who now shall rear ye to the sun? or rank¹⁴⁹*
 279 *Your tribes, and water¹⁵⁰ from th’ ambrosial fount?*
 280 *Thee lastly, nuptial bow’r, by me adorned*
 281 *With what to sight or smell was sweet: from thee*
 282 *How shall I part? and whither wander down*
 283 *Into a lower world, to¹⁵¹ this obscure¹⁵²*
 284 *And wild? How shall we breathe in other air*
 285 *Less pure, accustomed¹⁵³ to immortal fruits?”*
 286 *Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:*
 287 *“Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign*

¹⁴¹ held fast, tied up

¹⁴² disclosed, revealed

¹⁴³ quickly

¹⁴⁴ withdrawal

¹⁴⁵ delay, temporary extension of time

¹⁴⁶ fatal

¹⁴⁷ stop, visit

¹⁴⁸ gentle

¹⁴⁹ arrange

¹⁵⁰ water you

¹⁵¹ compared to

¹⁵² dark

¹⁵³ accustomed as we are

288 *What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,*
 289 *Thus over-fond,¹⁵⁴ on that which is not thine.*
 290 *Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes*
 291 *Thy husband, whom to follow thou art bound.*
 292 *Where he abides, think there thy native soil.”*
 293 *Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp¹⁵⁵*
 294 *Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,*
 295 *To Michael thus his humble words addressed:*
 296 *“Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or*
 named
 297 *Of them the highest, for such of shape may seem*
 298 *Prince above Princes, gently hast thou told*
 299 *Thy message, which might else in telling wound,*
 300 *And in performing¹⁵⁶ end us. What besides*
 301 *Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,*
 302 *Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,*
 303 *Departure from this happy place, our sweet*
 304 *Recess,¹⁵⁷ and only consolation left*
 305 *Familiar to our eyes. All places else*
 306 *Inhospitable appear, and desolate,*
 307 *Nor knowing us, nor known. And if by prayer*
 308 *Incessant I could hope to change the will*
 309 *Of Him who all things can, I would not cease*
 310 *To weary Him with my assiduous¹⁵⁸ cries.*
 311 *But prayer against His absolute decree*
 312 *No more avails than breath against the wind,*
 313 *Blown stifling¹⁵⁹ back on him that breathes it*
 forth.
 314 *Therefore to His great bidding I submit.*

¹⁵⁴ over-fond = over-affectionate

¹⁵⁵ daze, stupor, depression

¹⁵⁶ carrying out, executing

¹⁵⁷ secluded place

¹⁵⁸ persistent

¹⁵⁹ smothering

315 *“This most afflicts me that, departing hence,*
 316 *As from His face I shall be hid, deprived*
 317 *His blessèd count’nance. Here I could frequent¹⁶⁰*
 318 *With worship place by place where He*
 vouchsafed
 319 *Presence Divine, and to my sons relate*
 320 *On this mount He appeared, under this tree*
 321 *Stood visible, among these pines His voice*
 322 *I heard, here with Him at this fountain talked.*
 323 *So many grateful¹⁶¹ altars I would rear*
 324 *Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone*
 325 *Of luster from the brook, in memory,*
 326 *Or monument to ages, and thereon*
 327 *Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and*
 flow’rs.
 328 *In yonder nether¹⁶² world where shall I seek*
 329 *His bright appearances, or foot-step trace?*
 330 *For though I fled Him angry, yet recalled*
 331 *To life, prolonged and promised race,¹⁶³ I now*
 332 *Gladly behold though but His utmost¹⁶⁴ skirts¹⁶⁵*
 333 *Of glory, and far off His steps adore.”*
 334 *To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:*
 335 *“Adam, thou know’st Heav’n His, and all the*
 earth,
 336 *Not this rock only. His omnipresence fills*
 337 *Land, sea, and air, and every kind¹⁶⁶ that lives,*
 338 *Fomented¹⁶⁷ by His virtual¹⁶⁸ power and warmed.*

¹⁶⁰ visit often [verb, second syllable accented]

¹⁶¹ (1) pleasing, (2) feeling gratitude

¹⁶² lower

¹⁶³ offspring, descendants

¹⁶⁴ outermost

¹⁶⁵ (1) bottom part of God’s robe, (2) outlying boundaries of His kingdom

¹⁶⁶ species

¹⁶⁷ bathed with warm lotions, cherished/roused/stirred up

¹⁶⁸ nourishing

339 *All th' earth He gave thee to possess and rule:*
 340 *No despicable¹⁶⁹ gift. Surmise not then*
 341 *His presence to these narrow bounds confined*
 342 *Of Paradise, or Eden. This had been*
 343 *Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had*
 spread
 344 *All generations, and had hither come*
 345 *From all the ends of th' earth, to celebrate*
 346 *And reverence thee, their great progenitor.*
 347 *But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought*
 down
 348 *To dwell on even¹⁷⁰ ground now with thy sons.*
 349 *Yet doubt not but in valley, and in plain,*
 350 *God is as here, and will be found alike*
 351 *Present, and of His presence many a sign*
 352 *Still following thee, still compassing thee round*
 353 *With goodness and paternal love, His face*
 354 *Express,¹⁷¹ and of His steps the track divine.*
 355 *Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirmed*
 356 *Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent*
 357 *To show thee what shall come in future days*
 358 *To thee, and to thy offspring. Good with bad*
 359 *Expect to hear, supernal¹⁷² grace contending¹⁷³*
 360 *With sinfulness of men, thereby to learn*
 361 *True patience, and to temper¹⁷⁴ joy with fear*
 362 *And pious sorrow, equally inured*
 363 *By moderation either state to bear,*
 364 *Prosperous or adverse. So shalt thou lead*
 365 *Safest thy life, and best prepared endure*

¹⁶⁹ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁷⁰ flat, level

¹⁷¹ exact, unmistakable

¹⁷² lofty, exalted

¹⁷³ disputing, struggling, fighting

¹⁷⁴ alloy

- 366 *Thy mortal*¹⁷⁵ *passage when it comes.*
“Ascend
 367 *This hill. Let Eve (for I have drenched*¹⁷⁶ *her eyes)*
 368 *Here sleep below, while thou to foresight*¹⁷⁷ *wak’st,*
 369 *As once thou slept’st, while she to life was*
formed.”
 370 *To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:*
 371 *“Ascend, I follow thee, safe guide, the path*
 372 *Thou lead’st me, and to th’ hand of Heav’n submit,*
 373 *However chast’ning. To the evil turn*¹⁷⁸
 374 *My obvious*¹⁷⁹ *breast, arming to overcome*
 375 *By suffering, and earn rest from labor won,*
 376 *If so I may attain.”*
So both ascend
 377 *In the visions of God.*¹⁸⁰ *It was a hill,*
 378 *Of Paradise the highest, from whose top*
 379 *The hemisphere of earth, in clearest ken,*¹⁸¹
 380 *Stretched out*¹⁸² *to amplest reach of prospect*¹⁸³ *lay.*
 381 *Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,*
 382 *Whereon, for different cause, the Tempter set*
 383 *Our second Adam,*¹⁸⁴ *in the wilderness,*
 384 *To show him all earth’s kingdoms, and their*
glory.
 385 *His*¹⁸⁵ *eye might there command wherever stood*

¹⁷⁵ fatal

¹⁷⁶ steeped (drugged)

¹⁷⁷ sight of the future

¹⁷⁸ [verb]

¹⁷⁹ open, visible

¹⁸⁰ “. . . the hand of the Lord was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain . . .”—Ezekiel 40:1–2

¹⁸¹ range of vision

¹⁸² [the full verb is “lay stretched out”]

¹⁸³ view

¹⁸⁴ Christ

¹⁸⁵ Adam’s

- 386 *City of old or modern fame, the seat*
 387 *Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls*
 388 *Of Cambalu,¹⁸⁶ seat of Cathaian Can,¹⁸⁷*
 389 *And Samarchand¹⁸⁸ by Oxus,¹⁸⁹ Temir's throne,*
 390 *To Paquin¹⁹⁰ of Sinaean¹⁹¹ kings, and thence*
 391 *To Agra¹⁹² and Lahor¹⁹³ of great Mogul,*
 392 *Down to the golden Chersonese,¹⁹⁴ or where*
 393 *The Persian in Ecbatan¹⁹⁵ sat, or since*
 394 *In Hispahan,¹⁹⁶ or where the Russian Tsar*
 395 *In Moscow, or the Sultan in Bizance,¹⁹⁷*
 396 *Turkestan-born,¹⁹⁸ nor could his eye not ken¹⁹⁹*
 397 *The empire of Negus²⁰⁰ to his utmost port*
 398 *Ercoco,²⁰¹ and the less maritime kings*
 399 *Mombaza,²⁰² and Quiloa,²⁰³ and Melind,²⁰⁴*

¹⁸⁶ Peiping (Beijing), capital of Cathay/China

¹⁸⁷ khan, emperor

¹⁸⁸ capital of Temir/Tamerlane's Tatar empire

¹⁸⁹ Asian river, flowing from Turkey/Afghanistan to the Aral Sea in Siberia

¹⁹⁰ Peiping (Beijing)

¹⁹¹ Chinese

¹⁹² a Mogul capital in southern India

¹⁹³ a Mogul capital in northern India

¹⁹⁴ Malacca

¹⁹⁵ Hamadan, ancient summer capital of Persian kings

¹⁹⁶ Isfahan, city in what is now Malaysia

¹⁹⁷ Byzantium/Istanbul

¹⁹⁸ Turkestan is a country in central Asia

¹⁹⁹ see

²⁰⁰ name of Abyssinian king

²⁰¹ now Archico, port city on the Red Sea

²⁰² Mombasa, in modern Kenya

²⁰³ Kilwa, in modern Tanzania

²⁰⁴ Malindi, in modern Kenya

400 *And Sofala,²⁰⁵ thought²⁰⁶ Ophir,²⁰⁷ to the realm*
 401 *Of Congo, and Angola farthest south,*
 402 *Or thence, from Niger flood²⁰⁸ to Atlas²⁰⁹ mount,*
 403 *The kingdoms of Almansor,²¹⁰ Fez and Sus,²¹¹*
 404 *Morocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen,²¹²*
 405 *On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway*
 406 *The world. In spirit perhaps he also saw*
 407 *Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,²¹³*
 408 *And Cusco²¹⁴ in Peru, the richer seat*
 409 *Of Atabalipa,²¹⁵ and yet unspoiled*
 410 *Guiana, whose great city Geryon's²¹⁶ sons*
 411 *Call El Dorado. But to nobler sights*
 412 *Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,*
 413 *Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight*
 414 *Had bred, then purged with euphrasy²¹⁷ and rue²¹⁸*
 415 *The visual nerve, for he had much to see,*
 416 *And from the well of life three drops instilled.*
 417 *So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,*
 418 *Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight,*
 419 *That Adam, now enforced²¹⁹ to close his eyes,*

²⁰⁵ port city in what is now Mozambique

²⁰⁶ thought to be

²⁰⁷ biblical land from which King Solomon obtained gold for the building of the Temple

²⁰⁸ river

²⁰⁹ in modern Mauritania

²¹⁰ d. 1002, Muslim ruler in Spain and northern Africa

²¹¹ Fez and Sus are both in Morocco

²¹² modern Tlemcen, in Algeria

²¹³ Montezuma, Aztec emperor of Mexico

²¹⁴ capital of the Inca empire; now Cuzco, in modern Peru

²¹⁵ Atahualpa, Inca ruler [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

²¹⁶ the Spanish: Geryon = monster, native to Cadiz, in Spain, who was killed by Hercules

²¹⁷ herb used for treatment of eye diseases

²¹⁸ medicinal herb

²¹⁹ obliged, forced

- 420 *Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced.*
 421 *But him the gentle Angel by the hand*
 422 *Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:*
 423 *“Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold*
 424 *Th’ effects, which thy original crime hath*
 wrought
 425 *In some to spring from thee, who never touched*
 426 *Th’ excepted²²⁰ tree, nor with the snake conspired,*
 427 *Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin derive²²¹*
 428 *Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.”*
 429 *His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,*
 430 *Part arable²²² and tilth,²²³ whereon were sheaves*
 431 *New reaped, the other part sheep-walks and*
 folds.
 432 *In th’ midst an altar as the landmark stood,*
 433 *Rustic, of grassy sord.²²⁴ Thither²²⁵ anon²²⁶*
 434 *A sweaty reaper²²⁷ from his tillage brought*
 435 *First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,*
 436 *Unculled,²²⁸ as²²⁹ came to hand. A shepherd next,*
 437 *More meek,²³⁰ came with the firstlings of his*
 flock,
 438 *Choicest and best, then sacrificing, laid*
 439 *The inwards²³¹ and their fat, with incense strewn,*
 440 *On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed.*

²²⁰ forbidden

²²¹ obtain by descent

²²² ploughland

²²³ under cultivation

²²⁴ sward, turf

²²⁵ to the altar

²²⁶ at once

²²⁷ Cain

²²⁸ unselected, a random choice

²²⁹ such as first “came to hand”

²³⁰ courteous

²³¹ internal organs, entrails

- 441 *His offering soon propitious²³² fire from Heav'n*
 442 *Consumed with nimble²³³ glance²³⁴ and grateful*
 steam;
 443 *The other's²³⁵ not, for his was not sincere,*
 444 *Whereat he inly raged and, as they talked,*
 445 *Smote him²³⁶ into the midriff with a stone*
 446 *That beat out life. He fell, and deadly pale*
 447 *Groaned out his soul with gushing blood*
 effused.²³⁷
 448 *Much at that sight was Adam in his heart*
 449 *Dismayed, and thus in haste to th' Angel cried:*
 450 *"O Teacher, some great mischief²³⁸ hath*
 befall'n
 451 *To that meek man, who well had sacrificed.*
 452 *Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?"*
 453 *T' whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:*
 454 *"These two are brethren, Adam, and to come*
 455 *Out of thy loins. Th' unjust the just hath slain,*
 456 *For envy that his brother's offering found*
 457 *From Heav'n acceptance. But the bloody fact²³⁹*
 458 *Will be avenged, and th' other's faith, approved,²⁴⁰*
 459 *Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,*
 460 *Rolling in dust and gore."²⁴¹*
- To which our sire:*
 461 *"Alas! both for the deed, and for the cause!*
 462 *But have I now seen Death? Is this the way*

²³² favorable, gracious

²³³ quick, sudden

²³⁴ flash/movement

²³⁵ other's (Cain's) = other's offering

²³⁶ Abel

²³⁷ poured out freely

²³⁸ harm, evil, misfortune

²³⁹ (1) action, deed, (2) crime

²⁴⁰ attested, confirmed

²⁴¹ thickened blood

463 *I must return to native²⁴² dust? O sight*
 464 *Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,*
 465 *Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!"*
 466 *To whom thus Michael.²⁴³*

"Death thou hast seen
 467 *In his first shape on man, but many shapes²⁴⁴*
 468 *Of Death, and many are the ways that lead*
 469 *To his grim cave, all dismal, yet to sense*
 470 *More terrible at th' entrance, than within.*
 471 *Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,*
 472 *By fire, flood, famine, by intemperance more*
 473 *In meats and drinks, which on the earth shall*
 bring
 474 *Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew*
 475 *Before thee shall appear, that thou may'st know*
 476 *What misery th' inabstinence²⁴⁵ of Eve*
 477 *Shall bring on men."*

Immediately a place
 478 *Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome,²⁴⁶ dark,*
 479 *A lazar²⁴⁷-house it seemed, wherein were laid*
 480 *Numbers of all diseased, all maladies*
 481 *Of ghastly spasm, or racking²⁴⁸ torture, qualms²⁴⁹*
 482 *Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,*
 483 *Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,²⁵⁰*
 484 *Intestine stone and ulcer, colic²⁵¹ pangs,*
 485 *Daemoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,*

²⁴² (1) natural, (2) of his birthplace

²⁴³ [here, though usually bisyllabic, trisyllabic, first and third accented]

²⁴⁴ "but there are many shapes"

²⁴⁵ failure to abstain

²⁴⁶ noxious, ill-smelling, offensive

²⁴⁷ leper

²⁴⁸ violent stretching/straining

²⁴⁹ fits

²⁵⁰ nasal discharge

²⁵¹ belly

486 *And moon-struck²⁵² madness, pining²⁵³ atrophy,²⁵⁴*
 487 *Marasmus,²⁵⁵ and wide-wasting pestilence,²⁵⁶*
 488 *Dropsies,²⁵⁷ and asthmas, and joint-racking*
 rheums.
 489 *Dire was the tossing, deep the groans. Despair*
 490 *Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch,*
 491 *And over them triumphant Death his dart*
 492 *Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked*
 493 *With vows, as their chief good and final hope.*
 494 *Sight so deform²⁵⁸ what heart of rock could long*
 495 *Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,*
 496 *Though not of woman born. Compassion*
 quelled²⁵⁹
 497 *His best of man, and gave him up to tears*
 498 *A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess*
 499 *And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:*
 500 *“O miserable mankind, to what fall*
 501 *Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!*
 502 *Better end here unborn. Why is life giv’n*
 503 *To be thus wrested²⁶⁰ from us? Rather, why*
 504 *Obtruded²⁶¹ on us thus? Who, if we knew*
 505 *What we receive, would either not accept*
 506 *Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,*
 507 *Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus*
 508 *The image of God in man, created once*

²⁵² deranged, lunatic

²⁵³ languishing, wasting

²⁵⁴ wasting, emaciation

²⁵⁵ a wasting disease

²⁵⁶ bubonic plague

²⁵⁷ swelling up of body parts

²⁵⁸ hideous

²⁵⁹ overcame

²⁶⁰ dragged, wrenched

²⁶¹ thrust

509 *So goodly²⁶² and erect, though faulty since,*
 510 *To such unsightly sufferings be debased*
 511 *Under inhuman pains? Why should not man,*
 512 *Retaining still divine similitude²⁶³*
 513 *In part, from such deformities be free*
 514 *And, for his Maker's image sake, exempt?"*
 515 *"Their Maker's image," answered Michael,*
 "then
 516 *Forsook them, when themselves they vilified²⁶⁴*
 517 *To serve ungoverned appetite, and took*
 518 *His image whom they served, a brutish²⁶⁵ vice,*
 519 *Inductive²⁶⁶ mainly to the sin of Eve.*
 520 *Therefore so abject is their punishment,*
 521 *Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own,*
 522 *Or if His likeness, by themselves defaced,*
 523 *While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules*
 524 *To loathsome sickness—worthily, since they*
 525 *God's image did not reverence in themselves."*
 526 *"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit.*
 527 *But is there yet no other way, besides*
 528 *These painful passages,²⁶⁷ how we may come*
 529 *To Death, and mix with our connatural²⁶⁸ dust?"*
 530 *"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe*
 531 *The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,*
 532 *In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from*
 thence
 533 *Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,*

²⁶² beautiful, graceful

²⁶³ likeness

²⁶⁴ degraded

²⁶⁵ animal-like

²⁶⁶ due

²⁶⁷ transitions, journeys

²⁶⁸ natural, congenital

534 *Till many years over thy head return.*²⁶⁹
 535 *So may'st thou live till, like ripe fruit, thou drop*
 536 *Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease*
 537 *Gathered, nor harshly plucked, for Death mature:*
 538 *This is old age. But then thou must outlive*
 539 *Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will*
 change
 540 *To withered, weak, and gray. Thy senses, then*
 541 *Obtuse,*²⁷⁰ *all taste of pleasure must forego,*²⁷¹
 542 *To what thou hast*²⁷² *and, for the air of youth,*
 543 *Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign*
 544 *A melancholy damp*²⁷³ *of cold and dry*
 545 *To weigh thy spirits down, and last*²⁷⁴ *consume*
 546 *The balm of life." To whom our ancestor:*
 547 *"Henceforth I fly not Death, nor would prolong*
 548 *Life much, bent*²⁷⁵ *rather how I may be quit,*²⁷⁶
 549 *Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous*²⁷⁷ *charge,*²⁷⁸
 550 *Which I must keep till my appointed day*
 551 *Of rend'ring up,*²⁷⁹ *and patiently attend*²⁸⁰
 552 *My dissolution." Michael*²⁸¹ *replied:*
 553 *"Nor*²⁸² *love thy life, nor hate, but what thou*
 liv'st

²⁶⁹ come, go

²⁷⁰ blunted

²⁷¹ go/leave first

²⁷² now has (in old age)

²⁷³ depression, stupor

²⁷⁴ finally

²⁷⁵ concerned, intending

²⁷⁶ released, freed

²⁷⁷ oppressive

²⁷⁸ duty, responsibility

²⁷⁹ rendering up = giving back

²⁸⁰ wait for

²⁸¹ [trisyllabic]

²⁸² neither

554 *Live well. How long, or short, permit²⁸³ to Heav'n.*
 555 *And now prepare thee for another sight."*
 556 *He looked, and saw a spacious plain whereon*
 557 *Were tents of various hue. By some,²⁸⁴ were herds*
 558 *Of cattle grazing; others, whence the sound*
 559 *Of instruments, that made melodious chime,²⁸⁵*
 560 *Was heard, of harp and organ, and who²⁸⁶ moved*
 561 *Their stops and chords was seen, his volant²⁸⁷*
 touch,
 562 *Instinct²⁸⁸ through all proportions, low and high,*
 563 *Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.*
 564 *In other part stood one who, at the forge*
 565 *Laboring, two massy clods of iron and brass*
 566 *Had melted (whether found where casual²⁸⁹ fire*
 567 *Had wasted woods on mountain or in vale,*
 568 *Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot*
 569 *To some cave's mouth, or whether washed by*
 stream
 570 *From underground). The liquid ore he drained*
 571 *Into fit moulds prepared, from which he formed*
 572 *First his own tools, then what might else be*
 wrought,²⁹⁰
 573 *Fusil²⁹¹ or graven²⁹² in metal. After these,*
 574 *But on the hither²⁹³ side, a different sort*
 575 *From the high neighboring hills, which was their*
 seat,

²⁸³ submit, allow

²⁸⁴ "near some of the tents"

²⁸⁵ harmony, accord

²⁸⁶ he who

²⁸⁷ rapid, flying

²⁸⁸ imbued

²⁸⁹ accidental

²⁹⁰ worked

²⁹¹ fused, cast

²⁹² carved

²⁹³ other

- 576 *Down to the plain descended. By their guise*²⁹⁴
 577 *Just*²⁹⁵ *men they seemed, and all their study bent*
 578 *To worship God aright, and know His works*
 579 *Not hid, nor those things last*²⁹⁶ *which might*
 preserve
- 580 *Freedom and peace to men. They on the plain*
 581 *Long had not walked when, from the tents,*
 behold!
- 582 *A bevy*²⁹⁷ *of fair women, richly gay*
 583 *In gems and wanton*²⁹⁸ *dress! To th' harp they*
 sung
- 584 *Soft amorous ditties,*²⁹⁹ *and in dance came on.*³⁰⁰
 585 *The men, though grave,*³⁰¹ *eyed them, and let their*
 eyes
- 586 *Rove without rein till, in the amorous net*
 587 *Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose,*
 588 *And now of love they treat,*³⁰² *till the ev'ning-*
 *star,*³⁰³
- 589 *Love's harbinger,*³⁰⁴ *appeared. Then all in heat*
 590 *They light the nuptial torch, and bid*³⁰⁵ *invoke*³⁰⁶
 591 *Hymen,*³⁰⁷ *then first*³⁰⁸ *to marriage rites invoked:*
 592 *With feast and music all the tents resound.*

²⁹⁴ appearance

²⁹⁵ upright, righteous

²⁹⁶ final

²⁹⁷ company

²⁹⁸ frivolous, lewd, unchaste

²⁹⁹ songs

³⁰⁰ came on = advanced, came forward

³⁰¹ serious, weighty, somber

³⁰² negotiate, deal

³⁰³ Venus

³⁰⁴ forerunner

³⁰⁵ offered to

³⁰⁶ summon

³⁰⁷ god of marriage

³⁰⁸ before anything else?

593 *Such happy³⁰⁹ interview³¹⁰ and fair event³¹¹*
 594 *Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands,*
 flow'rs,
 595 *And charming symphonies,³¹² attached³¹³ the heart*
 596 *Of Adam, soon inclined t' admit³¹⁴ delight,*
 597 *The bent³¹⁵ of Nature, which he thus expressed:*
 598 *"True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,*
 599 *Much better seems this vision, and more hope*
 600 *Of peaceful days portends,³¹⁶ than those two past.*
 601 *Those were of hate and Death, or pain much*
 worse.
 602 *Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends."³¹⁷*
 603 *To whom thus Michael:*
 "Judge not what is best
 604 *By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,³¹⁸*
 605 *Created, as thou art, to nobler end*
 606 *Holy and pure, conformity³¹⁹ divine.*
 607 *Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant were the tents*
 608 *Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race*
 609 *Who slew his brother. Studious they appear*
 610 *Of arts that polish³²⁰ life, inventors rare,³²¹*
 611 *Unmindful of their Maker, though His Spirit*
 612 *Taught them, but they His gifts acknowledged*
 none.

³⁰⁹ fortunate

³¹⁰ meeting

³¹¹ outcome

³¹² pieces of music

³¹³ seized sympathetically

³¹⁴ confess, acknowledge

³¹⁵ propensity

³¹⁶ foreshadows

³¹⁷ goals, purposes

³¹⁸ proper, fitting

³¹⁹ compliance

³²⁰ smoothen

³²¹ unusual, uncommon

613 *Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget,*
 614 *For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed*
 615 *Of goddesses, so blithe,³²² so smooth, so gay,*
 616 *Yet empty of all good wherein consists*
 617 *Woman's domestic honor and chief praise,*
 618 *Bred only and completed³²³ to the taste*
 619 *Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,*
 620 *To dress, and troll³²⁴ the tongue, and roll the eye.*
 621 *To these that sober race of men, whose lives*
 622 *Religious titled them the sons of God,*
 623 *Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame*
 624 *Ignobly, to the trains,³²⁵ and to the smiles*
 625 *Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy*
 626 *(Erelong to swim at large),³²⁶ and laugh, for*
 which
 627 *The world erelong a world of tears must weep."*
 628 *To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:³²⁷*
 629 *"O pity and shame, that they who to live well*
 630 *Entered³²⁸ so fair, should turn aside to tread*
 631 *Paths indirect,³²⁹ or in the mid way faint!³³⁰*
 632 *But still I see the tenor³³¹ of man's woe*
 633 *Holds on the same, from woman³³² to begin."*
 634 *"From man's effeminate slackness it begins,"*
 635 *Said th' Angel, "who should better hold his place*
 636 *By wisdom, and superior gifts received.*

³²² merry

³²³ perfected

³²⁴ wag

³²⁵ snares, tricks

³²⁶ at large = fully, when God sends down the Flood

³²⁷ robbed, deprived

³²⁸ began

³²⁹ crooked, devious

³³⁰ spiritless, oppressive

³³¹ course

³³² man's woe = wo-man

637 *But now prepare thee for another scene."*
 638 *He looked, and saw wide territory spread*
 639 *Before him, towns, and rural³³³ works between,*
 640 *Cities of men with lofty gates and tow'rs,*
 641 *Concourse³³⁴ in arms, fierce faces threat'ning war,*
 642 *Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.³³⁵*
 643 *Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,*
 644 *Single or in array of battle ranged*
 645 *Both horse and foot, nor idly must'ring³³⁶ stood.*
 646 *One way a band select³³⁷ from forage drives*
 647 *A herd of beeves,³³⁸ fair oxen and fair kine,³³⁹*
 648 *From a fat meadow ground, or fleecy flock,*
 649 *Ewes and their bleating lambs over the plain,*
 650 *Their booty. Scarce with life³⁴⁰ the shepherds fly,*
 651 *But call in aid, which makes a bloody fray;*
 652 *With cruel³⁴¹ tournament³⁴² the squadrons join.*
 653 *Where cattle pastured late,³⁴³ now scattered lies*
 654 *With carcasses and arms th'ensanguined³⁴⁴ field,*
 655 *Deserted. Others to a city strong*
 656 *Lay siege, encamped, by battery,³⁴⁵ scale,³⁴⁶ and*
 mine,³⁴⁷
 657 *Assaulting; others from the wall defend*

³³³ country, rustic

³³⁴ assembled

³³⁵ prowess, fame

³³⁶ assembling

³³⁷ choice [adjective]

³³⁸ oxen

³³⁹ cattle

³⁴⁰ with life = alive

³⁴¹ [bisyllabic]

³⁴² fighting

³⁴³ recently

³⁴⁴ bloody

³⁴⁵ battering rams

³⁴⁶ ladders

³⁴⁷ underground passages filled with gunpowder, which is then set off

658 *With dart³⁴⁸ and javelin,³⁴⁹ stones, and sulphurous
fire;*

659 *On each hand slaughter, and gigantic deeds.*
660 *In other part the sceptered heralds call*
661 *To council, in the city-gates. Anon³⁵⁰*
662 *Gray-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,*
663 *Assemble, and harangues³⁵¹ are heard, but soon*
664 *In factious³⁵² opposition, till at last*
665 *Of middle age one³⁵³ rising, eminent*
666 *In wise deport,³⁵⁴ spoke much of right and wrong,*
667 *Of justice, or religion, truth, and peace,*
668 *And judgment from above. Him old and young*
669 *Exploded,³⁵⁵ and had seized with violent hands,*
670 *Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence*
671 *Unseen amid the throng. So violence*
672 *Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,*
673 *Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.*
674 *Adam was all in tears, and to his guide*
675 *Lamenting turned full sad:*

“O what are these,

676 *Death’s ministers, not men, who thus deal death*
677 *Inhumanly to men, and multiply*
678 *Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew*
679 *His brother, for of whom such massacre*
680 *Make they, but of their brethren, men of men?*
681 *But who was that just man, whom had not*
Heav’n

³⁴⁸ spear

³⁴⁹ [bisyllabic]

³⁵⁰ at once

³⁵¹ speeches

³⁵² i.e., split into parties

³⁵³ Enoch: see Genesis 5:21–24

³⁵⁴ behavior, deportment

³⁵⁵ hooted at

703 *With foes, for daring single³⁶⁶ to be just*
 704 *And utter odious truth: that God would come*
 705 *To judge them with His Saints. Him the Most*
 High,
 706 *Rapt³⁶⁷ in a balmy³⁶⁸ cloud with wingèd steeds*
 707 *Did, as thou saw'st, receive³⁶⁹ to walk with God,*
 708 *High in salvation³⁷⁰ and the climes of bliss,*
 709 *Exempt from death. To show thee what reward*
 710 *Awaits the good, the rest what punishment,*
 711 *Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold.”*
 712 *He looked, and saw the face of things quite*
 changed.
 713 *The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar,*
 714 *All now was turned to jollity and game,*
 715 *To luxury and riot, feast and dance,*
 716 *Marrying or prostituting, as befel,³⁷¹*
 717 *Rape or adultery, where passing³⁷² fair*
 718 *Allured them, thence from cups to civil broils.³⁷³*
 719 *At length a reverend sire³⁷⁴ among them came,*
 720 *And of their doings great dislike declared,*
 721 *And testified against their ways. He oft*
 722 *Frequented their assemblies, whereso³⁷⁵ met,*
 723 *Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached*
 724 *Conversion and repentance, as to souls*
 725 *In prison, under judgments imminent.*
 726 *But all in vain. Which when he saw, he ceased*

³⁶⁶ alone

³⁶⁷ enveloped

³⁶⁸ fragrant

³⁶⁹ was given

³⁷⁰ eternal bliss

³⁷¹ it came about, happened, occurred

³⁷² surpassing

³⁷³ quarrels

³⁷⁴ Noah

³⁷⁵ wherever they

- 727 *Contending,*³⁷⁶ *and removed his tents far off.*
 728 *Then from the mountain hewing timber tall,*
 729 *Began to build a vessel of huge bulk,*
 730 *Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and*
 height,
 731 *Smear'd round with pitch, and in the side a door*
 732 *Contrived, and of provisions laid in large*³⁷⁷
 733 *For man and beast, when lo, a wonder strange!*
 734 *Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,*
 735 *Came sevens, and pairs, and entered in as*³⁷⁸
 taught
 736 *Their order. Last the sire and his three sons,*
 737 *With their four wives. And God made fast the*
 door.
 738 *Meanwhile the south-wind rose, and with black*
 wings
 739 *Wide-hovering all the clouds together drove*
 740 *From under Heav'n. The hills, to their*³⁷⁹ *supply,*
 741 *Vapor and exhalation, dusk and moist,*
 742 *Sent up amain,*³⁸⁰ *and now the thickened sky*
 743 *Like a dark ceiling stood, down rushed the rain*
 744 *Impetuous,*³⁸¹ *and continued till the earth*
 745 *No more was seen. The floating vessel swum*
 746 *Uplifted, and secure with beakèd prow*
 747 *Rode tilting o'er the waves. All dwellings else*
 748 *Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their*
 pomp
 749 *Deep under water rolled. Sea covered sea,*

³⁷⁶ struggling

³⁷⁷ in large = a great deal

³⁷⁸ as if

³⁷⁹ i.e., the clouds'

³⁸⁰ violently, with full force

³⁸¹ with great force [trisyllabic, second accented, "-uous" elided]

750 *Sea without shore, and in their palaces,*
 751 *Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters*
 *whelped*³⁸²
 752 *And stabled.*³⁸³ *Of mankind, so numerous late,*³⁸⁴
 753 *All left, in one small bottom*³⁸⁵ *swum embarked.*
 754 *How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold*
 755 *The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,*
 756 *Depopulation? Thee another flood,*
 757 *Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned,*
 758 *And sunk thee as thy sons, till gently reared*
 759 *By th' Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,*
 760 *Though comfortless, as when a father mourns*
 761 *His children, all in view destroyed at once,*
 762 *And scarce*³⁸⁶ *to th' Angel utter'dst thus thy*
 plaint:
 763 *“O visions ill foreseen! Better had I*
 764 *Lived ignorant of future, so had borne*
 765 *My part of evil only, each day's lot*
 766 *Enough to bear. Those now, that were*
 *dispensed*³⁸⁷
 767 *The burden of many ages, on me light*³⁸⁸
 768 *At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth*
 769 *Abortive, to torment me ere their being,*
 770 *With thought that they must be. Let no man seek*
 771 *Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall*
 772 *Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,*
 773 *Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,*
 774 *And he the future evil shall no less*

³⁸² brought forth young

³⁸³ dwelled

³⁸⁴ not long before

³⁸⁵ boat

³⁸⁶ barely, with difficulty

³⁸⁷ dealt out, given

³⁸⁸ descend, fall

775 *In apprehension than in substance feel,*
 776 *Grievous to bear. But that care now is past:*
 777 *Man is not whom to warn.³⁸⁹ Those few escaped*
 778 *Famine and anguish will at last consume,³⁹⁰*
 779 *Wand'ring that wat'ry desert. I had hope,*
 780 *When violence was ceased, and war on earth,*
 781 *All would have then gone well, peace would have*
 crowned
 782 *With length of happy days the race of man.*
 783 *But I was far deceived, for now I see*
 784 *Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.*
 785 *How comes it thus? Unfold, celestial guide,*
 786 *And whether here the race of man will end."*
 787 *To whom thus Michael:*
 "Those, whom last thou saw'st
 788 *In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they*
 789 *First seen in acts of prowess eminent*
 790 *And great exploits, but of true virtue void,*
 791 *Who having spilled much blood, and done much*
 waste,
 792 *Subduing nations, and achieved thereby*
 793 *Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,³⁹¹*
 794 *Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and*
 sloth,
 795 *Surfeit,³⁹² and lust, till wantonness³⁹³ and pride*
 796 *Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.*
 797 *The conquered also, and enslaved by war,*
 798 *Shall with their freedom lost all virtue lose*
 799 *And fear of God, from whom their piety feigned*

³⁸⁹ whom to warn = able to be warned

³⁹⁰ be destroyed

³⁹¹ booty, spoil, plunder

³⁹² gluttony

³⁹³ self-indulgence, capriciousness

800 *In sharp contest³⁹⁴ of battle found no aid*
 801 *Against invaders. Therefore cooled in zeal,*
 802 *Thenceforth shall practice how to live secure,³⁹⁵*
 803 *Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords*
 804 *Shall leave them to enjoy, for th' earth shall*
 bear
 805 *More than enough that temperance³⁹⁶ may be*
 tried.³⁹⁷
 806 *So all shall turn degenerate,³⁹⁸ all depraved,³⁹⁹*
 807 *Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot—*
 808 *One man⁴⁰⁰ except, the only son of light*
 809 *In a dark age, against example good,⁴⁰¹*
 810 *Against allurements,⁴⁰² custom,⁴⁰³ and a world*
 811 *Offended.⁴⁰⁴ Fearless of reproach and scorn,*
 812 *Or violence, he of their wicked ways*
 813 *Shall them admonish, and before them set*
 814 *The paths of righteousness, how much more safe*
 815 *And full of peace, denouncing⁴⁰⁵ wrath to come*
 816 *Of their impenitence,⁴⁰⁶ and shall return*
 817 *Of them derided, but of God observed*
 818 *The one just man alive. By His command*
 819 *Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld'st,*
 820 *To save himself, and household, from amidst*

³⁹⁴ [contest]

³⁹⁵ safely

³⁹⁶ moderation

³⁹⁷ tested

³⁹⁸ debased, degraded

³⁹⁹ corrupt

⁴⁰⁰ Noah

⁴⁰¹ “good against that which is being done”

⁴⁰² enticement

⁴⁰³ fashion

⁴⁰⁴ sinful

⁴⁰⁵ proclaiming

⁴⁰⁶ stubbornness

821 *A world devote to universal wrack.*⁴⁰⁷
 822 *No sooner he, with them of man and beast*
 823 *Select*⁴⁰⁸ *for life shall in the ark be lodged,*
 824 *And sheltered round, but all the cataracts*⁴⁰⁹
 825 *Of Heav'n set open on the earth shall pour*
 826 *Rain, day and night. All fountains of the deep,*
 827 *Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp*
 828 *Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise*
 829 *Above the highest hills. Then shall this mount*
 830 *Of Paradise by might of waves be moved*
 831 *Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd*⁴¹⁰ *flood,*
 832 *With all his verdure spoiled,*⁴¹¹ *and trees adrift,*
 833 *Down the great river*⁴¹² *to the op'ning gulf,*⁴¹³
 834 *And there take root an island salt and bare,*
 835 *The haunt of seals, and orcs,*⁴¹⁴ *and sea-mew's*⁴¹⁵
 *clang,*⁴¹⁶
 836 *To teach thee that God attributes*⁴¹⁷ *to place*
 837 *No sanctity, if none*⁴¹⁸ *be thither brought*
 838 *By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.*
 839 *And now, what further shall ensue, behold."*
 840 *He looked, and saw the ark hull*⁴¹⁹ *on the*
 flood,

⁴⁰⁷ wreck, ruin

⁴⁰⁸ chosen

⁴⁰⁹ waterfalls

⁴¹⁰ producing hornlike branches, as it divides and each branch flows on

⁴¹¹ destroyed

⁴¹² the Euphrates?

⁴¹³ (1) the Perisan Gulf, in particular, or (2) the deep, in general

⁴¹⁴ whales

⁴¹⁵ seagulls

⁴¹⁶ harsh screams [noun]

⁴¹⁷ [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁴¹⁸ no sanctity

⁴¹⁹ floating

841 *Which now abated, for the clouds were fled,*
 842 *Driven by a keen north-wind that, blowing dry,*
 843 *Wrinkled the face of deluge, as⁴²⁰ decayed,⁴²¹*
 844 *And the clear sun on his wide wat'ry glass*
 845 *Gazed hot, and of⁴²² the fresh wave largely⁴²³*
 drew,
 846 *As after thirst, which made their flowing shrink*
 847 *From standing lake to tripping⁴²⁴ ebb, that stole*
 848 *With soft foot towards the deep, who now had*
 stopped⁴²⁵
 849 *His sluices,⁴²⁶ as the Heav'n his windows shut.*
 850 *The ark no more now floats, but seems on*
 ground,
 851 *Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.*
 852 *And now the tops of hills as rocks appear.*
 853 *With clamor⁴²⁷ thence the rapid currents drive*
 854 *Towards the retreating sea their furious⁴²⁸ tide.⁴²⁹*
 855 *Forthwith⁴³⁰ from out the ark a raven flies,*
 856 *And after him the surer⁴³¹ messenger,*
 857 *A dove sent forth once and again⁴³² to spy*

⁴²⁰ as if

⁴²¹ declined, dwindled

⁴²² from

⁴²³ copiously

⁴²⁴ quick-moving

⁴²⁵ closed

⁴²⁶ channels

⁴²⁷ loud noise

⁴²⁸ aging

⁴²⁹ flowing water, here ebbing

⁴³⁰ at once

⁴³¹ more trustworthy/steadfast/reliable

⁴³² then again

- 858 *Green tree or ground, whereon his foot may
light.*⁴³³
- 859 *The second time returning, in his bill*
860 *An olive leaf he brings, pacific*⁴³⁴ *sign.*
- 861 *Anon*⁴³⁵ *dry ground appears, and from his ark*
862 *The ancient sire descends, with all his train,*
863 *Then with uplifted hands and eyes devout,*
864 *Grateful to Heav'n, over his head beholds*
865 *A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow*⁴³⁶
866 *Conspicuous*⁴³⁷ *with three lifted*⁴³⁸ *colors gay,*
867 *Betok'ning*⁴³⁹ *peace from God, and cov'nant
new.*
- 868 *Whereat the heart of Adam, erst*⁴⁴⁰ *so sad,*
869 *Greatly rejoiced, and thus his joy broke forth:*
870 *“O thou, who future things canst represent*
871 *As present, Heav'nly instructor, I revive*
872 *At this last sight, assured that man shall live,*
873 *With all the creatures and their seed preserve.*⁴⁴¹
874 *Far less I now lament for one whole world*
875 *Of wicked sons destroyed, than I rejoice*
876 *For one man found so perfect, and so just,*
877 *That God vouchsafes to raise another world*
878 *From him, and all His anger to forget.*
879 *But say, what mean those colored streaks in
Heav'n*

⁴³³ fall, descend

⁴³⁴ calm, tranquil

⁴³⁵ quickly

⁴³⁶ rainbow

⁴³⁷ visible

⁴³⁸ banded, striped

⁴³⁹ signaling

⁴⁴⁰ at first

⁴⁴¹ kept alive

899 *Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary⁴⁵³ frost,*
900 *Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things*
new,
901 *Both Heav'n and earth, wherein the just shall*
 dwell."

The End of the Eleventh Book

⁴⁵³ gray

BOOK XII

THE ARGUMENT

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

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

1 *As one who in his journey bates¹ at noon,*
 2 *Though bent² on speed, so here the Arch-Angel*
 paused
 3 *Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,*
 4 *If Adam aught perhaps might interpose.³*
 5 *Then with transition sweet,⁴ new speech*
 resumes:
 6 *“Thus thou hast seen one world begin, and*
 end,
 7 *And man, as from a second stock, proceed.*
 8 *Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceive*
 9 *Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine*
 10 *Must needs impair⁵ and weary human sense.*
 11 *Henceforth what is to come I will relate.*
 12 *Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.*
 13 *“This second source⁶ of men, while yet but*
 few,
 14 *And while the dread of judgment past remains*
 15 *Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,*
 16 *With some⁷ regard to what is just and right*
 17 *Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,⁸*
 18 *Laboring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,*
 19 *Corn, wine, and oil, and from the herd or flock*
 20 *Oft sacrificing bullock,⁹ lamb, or kid,*
 21 *With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred*
 feast,

¹ leaves off, breaks away

² determined, set

³ put forward

⁴ pleasing

⁵ weaken

⁶ origin, fountainhead

⁷ a certain (substantial)

⁸ swiftly

⁹ young bull, bull calf

22 *Shall spend their days in joy unblamed,¹⁰ and
 dwell*
 23 *Long time in peace, by families and tribes,*
 24 *Under paternal rule. Till one¹¹ shall rise*
 25 *Of proud ambitious heart, who not content*
 26 *With fair equality, fraternal state,*
 27 *Will arrogate dominion undeserved*
 28 *Over his brethren, and quite dispossess¹²*
 29 *Concord¹³ and law of nature from the earth,*
 30 *Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game)*
 31 *With war, and hostile snare, such as refuse*
 32 *Subjection to his empire tyrannous.*
 33 *A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled*
 34 *Before the Lord, as in despite¹⁴ of Heav'n,*
 35 *Or from Heav'n claiming second sov'reignty,*
 36 *And from rebellion shall derive his name,*
 37 *Though of rebellion others he accuse.*
 38 *“He with a crew, whom like ambition joins*
 39 *With him or under him to tyrannize,*
 40 *Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find*
 41 *The plain,¹⁵ wherein a black bituminous¹⁶ gurge¹⁷*
 42 *Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.*
 43 *Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast¹⁸ to build*
 44 *A city and tow'r,¹⁹ whose top may reach to
 Heav'n,*

¹⁰ unreprieved

¹¹ Nimrod (“hunter”): see Genesis 10:8–10

¹² cast out, get rid of

¹³ peace, harmony

¹⁴ contempt, scorn

¹⁵ Shinar

¹⁶ pitchy

¹⁷ whirlpool

¹⁸ determine, decide

¹⁹ the Tower of Babel: see Genesis 10:10 and 11:1–9

45 *And get themselves a name, lest far dispersed*
 46 *In foreign lands, their memory be lost,*
 47 *Regardless whether good or evil fame.*
 48 *But God, who oft descends to visit men*
 49 *Unseen, and through their habitations walks*
 50 *To mark their doings, them beholding soon,*
 51 *Comes down to see their city, ere the tower*
 52 *Obstruct Heav'n-tow'rs, and in derision sets*
 53 *Upon their tongues a various²⁰ spirit, to raze²¹*
 54 *Quite out their native language and, instead,*
 55 *To sow²² a jangling²³ noise of words unknown.*
 56 *Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud*
 57 *Among the builders; each to other calls*
 58 *Not understood; till hoarse, and all in rage,*
 59 *As mocked they storm.²⁴ Great laughter was in*
 Heav'n
 60 *And looking down, to see the hubbub strange*
 61 *And hear the din. Thus was the building²⁵ left*
 62 *Ridiculous, and the work Confusion²⁶ named."*
 63 *Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeas'd:*
 64 *"O execrable son! so to aspire*
 65 *Above his brethren, to himself assuming*
 66 *Authority usurped, from God not giv'n.*
 67 *He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,*
 68 *Dominion absolute; that right we hold*
 69 *By His donation.²⁷ But man over men*

²⁰ differing, unstable

²¹ erase, obliterate, sweep away, destroy

²² scatter

²³ discordant, babbling

²⁴ rage, complain

²⁵ i.e., the act of building, *not* the structure being built

²⁶ "babble" (Babel)

²⁷ gift

70 *He made not lord, such title to Himself*
 71 *Reserving, human left from human free.*
 72 *But this usurper his encroachment²⁸ proud*
 73 *Stays²⁹ not on man! To God his tower intends*
 74 *Siege³⁰ and defiance. Wretched man! What food*
 75 *Will he convey up thither, to sustain*
 76 *Himself and his rash army, where thin air*
 77 *Above the clouds will pine³¹ his entrails gross,*
 78 *And famish³² him of breath, if not of bread?"*
 79 *To whom thus Michael:*

"Justly thou abhorr'st

80 *That son, who on the quiet state of men*
 81 *Such trouble brought, affecting³³ to subdue*
 82 *Rational liberty. Yet know withal,³⁴*
 83 *Since thy original lapse true liberty*
 84 *Is lost, which always with right reason dwells*
 85 *Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.*
 86 *Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,*
 87 *Immediately inordinate desires,*
 88 *And upstart passions, catch³⁵ the government³⁶*
 89 *From reason, and to servitude reduce*
 90 *Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits*
 91 *Within himself unworthy powers to reign*
 92 *Over free reason, God, in judgment just,*
 93 *Subjects him from without to violent lords,*

²⁸ intrusion

²⁹ stops, remains

³⁰ assault

³¹ waste, pain

³² starve to death

³³ seeking

³⁴ notwithstanding

³⁵ capture, seize, snatch

³⁶ authority, direction

94 *Who oft as undeservedly enthrall*³⁷
 95 *His outward freedom. Tyranny must be—*
 96 *Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.*
 97 *Yet sometimes nations will decline so low*
 98 *From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,*
 99 *But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,*
 100 *Deprives them of their outward liberty,*
 101 *Their inward lost. Witness th' irreverent son*³⁸
 102 *Of him who built the ark, who for the shame*
 103 *Done to his father,³⁹ heard this heavy curse,*
 104 *'Servant of servants,' on his vicious⁴⁰ race.*
 105 *Thus will this latter, as the former world,*
 106 *Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,*
 107 *Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw*
 108 *His presence from among them, and avert*
 109 *His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth*
 110 *To leave them to their own polluted ways,*
 111 *And one peculiar⁴¹ nation⁴² to select*
 112 *From all the rest, of whom to be invoked,*
 113 *A nation from one faithful man⁴³ to spring,*
 114 *Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,*
 115 *Bred up in idol-worship. O that men*
 116 *(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,*
 117 *While yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the*
 Flood,
 118 *As to forsake the living God, and fall*
 119 *To worship their own work in wood and stone*

³⁷ enslave

³⁸ Ham, father of Canaan

³⁹ see Genesis 9:22–27

⁴⁰ depraved, corrupt, malignant

⁴¹ special, singular

⁴² the Jews

⁴³ Abraham

- 120 *For gods! Yet him God the Most High*
 vouchsafes⁴⁴
 121 *To call by vision from his father's house,*
 122 *His kindred and false gods, into a land*
 123 *Which He will show him, and from him will raise*
 124 *A mighty nation, and upon him show'r*
 125 *His benediction so that in his seed*
 126 *All nations shall be blest. He straight⁴⁵ obeys,*
 127 *Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.*
 128 *“I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith*
 129 *He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,*
 130 *Ur⁴⁶ of Chaldaea, passing now the ford*
 131 *To Haran,⁴⁷ after him a cumbrous train*
 132 *Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude,⁴⁸*
 133 *Not wand'ring poor, but trusting all his wealth*
 134 *With God, who called him, in a land unknown.*
 135 *Canaan he now attains; I see his tents*
 136 *Pitched about Sechem,⁴⁹ and the neighboring*
 plain
 137 *Of Moreh. There by promise he receives*
 138 *Gift to his progeny of all that land,*
 139 *From Hamath⁵⁰ northward to the desert south*
 140 *(Things by their names I call, though yet*
 unnamed),
 141 *From Hermon⁵¹ east to the great western sea.⁵²*

⁴⁴ deigns, condescends

⁴⁵ immediately

⁴⁶ west of the Euphrates and south of Babylon; the Chaldeans, a Semitic tribe, had migrated to southern Babylonia

⁴⁷ east of the Euphrates, in northwestern Mesopotamia

⁴⁸ those in servitude: servants

⁴⁹ Shechem, a city in central Palestine, north of Jerusalem

⁵⁰ in Syria, on the River Orontes

⁵¹ Mt. Hermon, to the north: the highest peak in Palestine

⁵² the Mediterranean

- 142 *Mount Hermon—yonder sea—each place*
behold
- 143 *In prospect, as I point them. On the shore,*
 144 *Mount Carmel.⁵³ Here, the double-founded⁵⁴*
stream,
- 145 *Jordan, true limit⁵⁵ eastward, but his⁵⁶ sons*
 146 *Shall dwell to Senir,⁵⁷ that long ridge of hills.*
- 147 *“This ponder, that all nations of the earth*
 148 *Shall in his seed be blessèd. By that seed*
 149 *Is meant thy great Deliverer,⁵⁸ who shall bruise⁵⁹*
 150 *The serpent’s head, whereof to thee anon⁶⁰*
 151 *Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blest,*
 152 *Whom ‘faithful Abraham’ due time⁶¹ shall call,*
 153 *A son⁶² and of his son a grand-child⁶³ leaves,*
 154 *Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown.*
 155 *The grandchild, with twelve sons increased,*
departs
- 156 *From Canaan to a land hereafter called*
 157 *Egypt, divided by the river Nile.*
- 158 *See where it flows, disgorging⁶⁴ at seven mouths*
 159 *Into the sea. To sojourn⁶⁵ in that land*
 160 *He comes, invited by a younger son⁶⁶*

⁵³ in Haifa, now in Israel

⁵⁴ double-sourced

⁵⁵ landmark, boundary, border

⁵⁶ Abraham’s

⁵⁷ see I Chronicles 5:23

⁵⁸ Christ

⁵⁹ crush, smash, break

⁶⁰ soon

⁶¹ due time = in the time that, properly, it should take

⁶² Isaac

⁶³ Jacob

⁶⁴ emptying

⁶⁵ to lodge, to dwell temporarily

⁶⁶ Joseph

- 161 *In time of dearth,⁶⁷ a son whose worthy deeds*
 162 *Raise him to be the second in that realm*
 163 *Of Pharaoh. There he dies, and leaves his race*
 164 *Growing into a nation, and now grown*
 165 *Suspected to a sequent⁶⁸ king, who seeks*
 166 *To stop their overgrowth, as inmate⁶⁹ guests*
 167 *Too numerous,⁷⁰ whence of⁷¹ guests he makes*
 them slaves,
 168 *Inhospitably, and kills their infant males.*
 169 *Till by two brethren (these two brethren call*
 170 *Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim*
 171 *His people from enthrallment,⁷² they return,*
 172 *With glory and spoil, back to their promised*
 land.
 173 *“But first, the lawless tyrant, who denies⁷³*
 174 *To know their God, or message to regard,*
 175 *Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire.*
 176 *To blood unshed⁷⁴ the rivers must be turned.*
 177 *Frogs, lice, and flies, must all his palace fill*
 178 *With loath’d intrusion,⁷⁵ and fill all the land.*
 179 *His cattle must of rot and murren⁷⁶ die,*
 180 *Botches⁷⁷ and blains⁷⁸ must all his flesh emboss,⁷⁹*

⁶⁷ scarcity, famine

⁶⁸ subsequent, following

⁶⁹ (1) occupant, (2) stranger, foreign

⁷⁰ [bisyllabic]

⁷¹ from

⁷² enslavement

⁷³ refuses

⁷⁴ not poured out from bodies

⁷⁵ thrusting/forcing in

⁷⁶ plague

⁷⁷ boils

⁷⁸ blisters

⁷⁹ cover, bulge with

181 *And all⁸⁰ his people. Thunder mixed with hail,*
 182 *Hail mixed with fire, must rend th' Egyptian sky,*
 183 *And wheel⁸¹ on th' earth, devouring where it rolls.*
 184 *What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,*
 185 *A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down*
 186 *Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green.*
 187 *Darkness must overshadow all his⁸² bounds,*
 188 *Palpable⁸³ darkness, and blot out three days.*
 189 *Last, with one midnight stroke all the first-born*
 190 *Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds*
 191 *The river-dragon⁸⁴ tamed at length submits*
 192 *To let his sojourners depart, and oft*
 193 *Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice*
 194 *More hardened after thaw, till in his rage*
 195 *Pursuing whom he late⁸⁵ dismissed,⁸⁶ the sea*
 196 *Swallows him with his host,⁸⁷ but them⁸⁸ lets pass*
 197 *As⁸⁹ on dry land, between two crystal walls,*
 198 *Awed⁹⁰ by the rod of Moses so to stand*
 199 *Divided, till his rescued gain their shore.*
 200 *“Such wondrous power God to His saint will*
 lend,
 201 *Though present in His Angel, who shall go*
 202 *Before them in a cloud and pillar⁹¹ of fire,*

⁸⁰ also all

⁸¹ turn, sweep

⁸² darkness

⁸³ potent, obvious

⁸⁴ Pharaoh

⁸⁵ not long before

⁸⁶ sent away

⁸⁷ army

⁸⁸ his former guests, the Jews

⁸⁹ as if

⁹⁰ controlled

⁹¹ column

203 *By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire,*
 204 *To guide them in their journey, and remove⁹²*
 205 *Behind them, while the obdurate⁹³ king pursues.*
 206 *All night he will pursue, but his approach*
 207 *Darkness defends⁹⁴ between⁹⁵ till morning watch.*
 208 *Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,*
 209 *God looking forth will trouble⁹⁶ all his⁹⁷ host,*
 210 *And craze⁹⁸ their chariot-wheels, when by*
 command
 211 *Moses once more his potent rod extends*
 212 *Over the sea. The sea his rod obeys;*
 213 *On their embattled⁹⁹ ranks the waves return,*
 214 *And overwhelm their war.¹⁰⁰ The race elect¹⁰¹*
 215 *Safe toward Canaan from the shore¹⁰² advance*
 216 *Through the wild desert, not the readiest¹⁰³ way,*
 217 *Lest ent'ring¹⁰⁴ on the Canaanite alarmed¹⁰⁵*
 218 *War terrify them¹⁰⁶ inexpert,¹⁰⁷ and fear*
 219 *Return them¹⁰⁸ back to Egypt, choosing rather*
 220 *Inglorious life with servitude, for life*

⁹² take away, clear off, disappear (make disappear)

⁹³ unyielding, hardened in evil, insensible to moral influence

⁹⁴ prevents, wards off, prohibits

⁹⁵ in the space between the two groups, Egyptians and Jews

⁹⁶ derange

⁹⁷ Pharaoh's

⁹⁸ shatter, smash, break

⁹⁹ in battle formation

¹⁰⁰ troops, soldiers

¹⁰¹ [adjective]

¹⁰² of the Red Sea

¹⁰³ quickest, shortest, most direct

¹⁰⁴ penetrating

¹⁰⁵ thus called to arms

¹⁰⁶ the Jews

¹⁰⁷ not experienced (as the Canaanites definitely were) in war

¹⁰⁸ lead/send them

221 *To noble (and ignoble) is more sweet*
 222 *Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.*¹⁰⁹
 223 *“This also shall they gain by their delay*
 224 *In the wide wilderness. There they shall found*¹¹⁰
 225 *Their government, and their great senate*¹¹¹
choose
 226 *Through the twelve tribes,*¹¹² *to rule by laws*
ordained.
 227 *God from the mount of Sinai, whose gray top*
 228 *Shall tremble, He descending, will Himself*
 229 *In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpets’ sound*
 230 *Ordain them laws, part such as appertain*¹¹³
 231 *To civil justice, part religious rites*
 232 *Of sacrifice, informing them, by types*¹¹⁴
 233 *And shadows,*¹¹⁵ *of that destined seed*¹¹⁶ *to*
*bruise*¹¹⁷
 234 *The serpent, by what means he shall achieve*
 235 *Mankind’s deliverance. But the voice of God*
 236 *To mortal ear is dreadful. They beseech*
 237 *That Moses might report*¹¹⁸ *to them His will,*
 238 *And terror cease. He grants what they besought,*
 239 *Instructed that to God is no access*
 240 *Without mediator; whose high office now*
 241 *Moses in figure*¹¹⁹ *bears, to introduce*

¹⁰⁹ “not trained (or, by implication, not having anything to do with) weapons and armor (warfare), unless people are drawn on (led on) by reckless impetuosity”

¹¹⁰ create, initiate, begin building

¹¹¹ council of seventy elders, chosen by Moses: see Exodus 24:1–9

¹¹² derived from the twelve sons of Jacob

¹¹³ belong

¹¹⁴ symbols

¹¹⁵ images

¹¹⁶ Christ

¹¹⁷ smash, crush

¹¹⁸ narrate, tell, speak

¹¹⁹ image, emblem

242 *One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,*
 243 *And all the prophets in their age the times*
 244 *Of great Messiah shall sing.*

“Thus, laws and rites

245 *Established, such delight hath God in men*
 246 *Obedient to His will, that he vouchsafes*
 247 *Among them to set up His tabernacle,*
 248 *The Holy One with mortal men to dwell.*
 249 *By His prescript¹²⁰ a sanctuary is framed*
 250 *Of cedar, overlaid with gold, therein*
 251 *An ark,¹²¹ and in the ark His testimony,¹²²*
 252 *The records of His cov’nant. Over these*
 253 *A mercy-seat of gold,¹²³ between the wings*
 254 *Of two bright Cherubim. Before him¹²⁴ burn*
 255 *Seven lamps as in a zodiac¹²⁵ representing*
 256 *The Heav’nly fires. Over the tent a cloud*
 257 *Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,*
 258 *Save when they journey. And at length they*
 come,
 259 *Conducted by His Angel, to the land*
 260 *Promised to Abraham and his seed.*

“The rest

261 *Were long to tell, how many battles fought,*
 262 *How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won,*
 263 *Or how the sun shall in mid Heav’n stand still*
 264 *A day entire, and night’s due course adjourn,*
 265 *Man’s voice commanding, ‘Sun, in Gibeon stand,*
 266 *And thou moon in the vale of Aialon,*

¹²⁰ command

¹²¹ coffer, chest

¹²² divine law

¹²³ mercy-seat of gold = golden covering

¹²⁴ the ark? God Himself?

¹²⁵ i.e., one lamp for each of the seven known planets

267 *Till Israel overcome!*¹²⁶ *So call*¹²⁷ *the third*
 268 *From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him*
 269 *His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.”*
 270 *Here Adam interposed:*

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

“Doubt not but that sin
 286 *Will reign among them, as of thee begot,*
 287 *And therefore was law giv’n them, to evince*¹²⁸
 288 *Their natural pravity,¹²⁹ by stirring up*
 289 *Sin against law to fight, that when they see*
 290 *Law can discover¹³⁰ sin, but not remove*
 291 *(Save by those shadowy¹³¹ expiations¹³² weak,*

¹²⁶ see Joshua 10:12

¹²⁷ Israel

¹²⁸ subdue, overcome

¹²⁹ depravity

¹³⁰ expose, reveal, show

¹³¹ (1) insubstantial, (2) foreshadowing (Christ)

¹³² atonements

292 *The blood of bulls and goats), they may conclude*
 293 *Some blood more precious must be paid for man,*
 294 *Just for unjust, that¹³³ in such righteousness*
 295 *To them by faith imputed they may find*
 296 *Justification¹³⁴ towards God, and peace*
 297 *Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies¹³⁵*
 298 *Cannot appease, nor man the moral part*
 299 *Perform¹³⁶ and, not performing, cannot live.*
 300 *So law appears¹³⁷ imperfect, and but¹³⁸ giv'n*
 301 *With purpose to resign¹³⁹ them, in full time,*
 302 *Up to a better cov'nant, disciplined¹⁴⁰*
 303 *From shadowy types¹⁴¹ to truth, from flesh to*
 spirit,
 304 *From imposition of strict laws to free*
 305 *Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear*
 306 *To filial, works of law to works of faith.*
 307 *And therefore shall not Moses, though of God*
 308 *Highly belov'd, being but the minister*
 309 *Of law, his people into Canaan lead,*
 310 *But Joshua, whom the gentiles Jesus call,*
 311 *His name and office bearing, who¹⁴² shall quell*
 312 *The adversary-serpent, and bring back*
 313 *Through the world's wilderness long-wand' red*
 man
 314 *Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.*

¹³³ so that

¹³⁴ verification, i.e., freeing (justifying) man from the penalty of (original) sin, man being thus made righteous

¹³⁵ outward rites

¹³⁶ carry out, execute, accomplish

¹³⁷ (1) can be plainly seen, shown, (2) is declared

¹³⁸ only

¹³⁹ confidently yield themselves up to

¹⁴⁰ trained, educated

¹⁴¹ images

¹⁴² Christ

315 *Meanwhile, they in their earthly Canaan placed,*
 316 *Long time shall dwell and prosper, but¹⁴³ when*
 sins
 317 *National interrupt their public peace,*
 318 *Provoking God to raise them enemies,*
 319 *From whom as oft He saves them penitent*
 320 *By Judges first, then under Kings. Of whom*
 321 *The second,¹⁴⁴ both for piety renowned*
 322 *And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive*
 323 *Irrevocable, that his regal throne*
 324 *Forever shall endure. The like¹⁴⁵ shall sing¹⁴⁶*
 325 *All prophecy, that of the royal stock*
 326 *Of David (so I name this king) shall rise*
 327 *A son, the woman's seed to thee foretold,*
 328 *Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust*
 329 *All nations, and to kings foretold, of kings*
 330 *The last, for of his reign shall be no end.*
 331 *But first a long succession must ensue,*
 332 *And his¹⁴⁷ next son,¹⁴⁸ for wealth and wisdom*
 famed,
 333 *The clouded ark of God, till then in tents*
 334 *Wand'ring, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.*
 335 *Such follow him as shall be registered¹⁴⁹*
 336 *Part good, part bad—of bad the longer scroll,*
 337 *Whose foul idolatries and other faults*
 338 *Heaped to the popular sum,¹⁵⁰ will so incense*
 339 *God, as to¹⁵¹ leave them, and expose their land,*

¹⁴³ except

¹⁴⁴ David

¹⁴⁵ same

¹⁴⁶ tell, declare, relate

¹⁴⁷ David's

¹⁴⁸ Solomon

¹⁴⁹ recorded

¹⁵⁰ "added (heaped) to the sum (total: large) of the people's (the popular) faults"

¹⁵¹ as to = so as to make Him

340 *Their city, His temple, and His holy ark,*
 341 *With all His sacred things, a¹⁵² scorn and prey.*
 342 *To that proud city, whose high walls thou saw'st*
 343 *Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.*
 344 *There in captivity He lets them dwell*
 345 *The space of seventy years,¹⁵³ then brings them*
 back,
 346 *Rememb'ring¹⁵⁴ mercy and His cov'nant sworn*
 347 *To David, stablished¹⁵⁵ as the days of Heav'n.*
 348 *Returned from Babylon by leave of kings¹⁵⁶*
 349 *Their lords, whom God disposed,¹⁵⁷ the house of*
 God
 350 *They first re-edify,¹⁵⁸ and for a while*
 351 *In mean¹⁵⁹ estate¹⁶⁰ live moderate. Till grown*
 352 *In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.*
 353 *But first among the priests dissention springs,*
 354 *Men who attend¹⁶¹ the altar, and should most*
 355 *Endeavor¹⁶² peace. Their strife pollution brings*
 356 *Upon the temple itself. At last they¹⁶³ seize*
 357 *The scepter, and regard not David's sons,*
 358 *Then lose it to a stranger,¹⁶⁴ that the true*
 359 *Anointed King Messiah might be born*

¹⁵² to be a

¹⁵³ the Babylonian Captivity, 606–536 B.C.

¹⁵⁴ bearing in mind

¹⁵⁵ established: as fixed as

¹⁵⁶ Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes

¹⁵⁷ made ready, so inclined

¹⁵⁸ rebuild

¹⁵⁹ poor/low

¹⁶⁰ condition, degree of prosperity

¹⁶¹ watch over, look after

¹⁶² strive for

¹⁶³ priests

¹⁶⁴ Antipater (a Roman appointee), father of Herod

360 *Barred*¹⁶⁵ of his right. Yet at his birth a star,
 361 *Unseen before in Heav'n, proclaims him come,*
 362 *And guides the eastern sages, who inquire*
 363 *His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold.*
 364 *His place of birth a solemn*¹⁶⁶ *Angel tells*
 365 *To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night.*
 366 *They gladly thither*¹⁶⁷ *haste, and by a choir*
 367 *Of squadroned*¹⁶⁸ *Angels hear his carol sung.*
 368 *A virgin is his mother, but his sire*
 369 *The power of the Most High. He shall ascend*
 370 *The throne hereditary, and bound his reign*
 371 *With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the*
 Heav'ns."
 372 *He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy*
 373 *Surcharged*¹⁶⁹ *as had, like grief, been dewed in*
 tears,
 374 *Without the vent*¹⁷⁰ *of words, which these he*
 breathed:
 375 *"O prophet of glad tidings, finisher*¹⁷¹
 376 *Of utmost hope! Now clear I understand*
 377 *What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in*
 vain,
 378 *Why our great expectation should be called*
 379 *The seed of woman. Virgin Mother, hail,*
 380 *High in the love of Heav'n! Yet from my loins*
 381 *Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the son*
 382 *Of God Most High: so God with man unites!*

¹⁶⁵ obstructed, hindered, excluded

¹⁶⁶ majestic

¹⁶⁷ Bethlehem

¹⁶⁸ in military formation

¹⁶⁹ overburdened

¹⁷⁰ outlet

¹⁷¹ perfecter

403 *Both by obedience and by love, though love*
 404 *Alone fulfill the law. Thy punishment*
 405 *He shall endure, by coming in the flesh*
 406 *To a reproachful¹⁸³ life and cursèd death,*
 407 *Proclaiming life to all who shall believe*
 408 *In his redemption, and that his obedience,*
 409 *Imputed,¹⁸⁴ becomes theirs by faith, his merits*
 410 *To save them, not their own, though¹⁸⁵ legal¹⁸⁶*
 works.¹⁸⁷
 411 *For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,¹⁸⁸*
 412 *Seized on by force, judged and to death*
 condemned,
 413 *A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross*
 414 *By his own nation, slain for bringing life.*
 415 *But to the cross he nails thy enemies,*
 416 *The law that is against thee, and the sins*
 417 *Of all mankind, with him there crucified,*
 418 *Never to hurt them more who rightly trust*
 419 *In this his satisfaction.¹⁸⁹ So he dies,*
 420 *But soon revives: Death over him no power*
 421 *Shall long usurp.¹⁹⁰ Ere the third dawning light*
 422 *Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise*
 423 *Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,*
 424 *Thy ransom paid, which man from death*
 redeems,
 425 *His death for man, as many as offered¹⁹¹ life*

¹⁸³ shameful

¹⁸⁴ credited (to them)

¹⁸⁵ though their merits are based on

¹⁸⁶ lawful

¹⁸⁷ actions, deeds

¹⁸⁸ reviled

¹⁸⁹ full payment of a debt

¹⁹⁰ seize wrongfully

¹⁹¹ [adjective]

- 426 *Neglect not, and the benefit¹⁹² embrace¹⁹³*
 427 *By faith not void of works. This God-like act*
 428 *Annuls thy doom, the death thou should'st have*
 died,
 429 *In sin forever lost from life. This act*
 430 *Shall bruise¹⁹⁴ the head of Satan, crush his*
 strength,
 431 *Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,*
 432 *And fix far deeper in his head their stings*
 433 *Than temporal¹⁹⁵ death shall bruise the victor's*
 heel,
 434 *Or theirs¹⁹⁶ whom he redeems—a death like*
 sleep,
 435 *A gentle wafting¹⁹⁷ to immortal life.*
 436 *Nor after resurrection shall he stay*
 437 *Longer on earth than certain¹⁹⁸ times to appear*
 438 *To his disciples, men who in his life*
 439 *Still¹⁹⁹ followed him. To them shall leave in*
 charge
 440 *To teach all nations what of him they learned*
 441 *And his salvation,²⁰⁰ them who shall believe*
 442 *Baptizing in the profluent²⁰¹ stream, the sign*
 443 *Of washing them from guilt of sin to life*
 444 *Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,*
 445 *For death, like that which the Redeemer died.*

¹⁹² profit, good thing, favor, kind deed

¹⁹³ (1) accept, (2) submit to

¹⁹⁴ crush, smash, break, destroy

¹⁹⁵ temporary, in merely human time

¹⁹⁶ their death

¹⁹⁷ lifting/floating/carrying through the air

¹⁹⁸ definite, fixed

¹⁹⁹ always

²⁰⁰ his salvation = the saving of the soul which Christ brings to men

²⁰¹ fully flowing

446 *All nations they shall teach. For from that day,*
 447 *Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins*
 448 *Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons*
 449 *Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world.*
 450 *So in his seed all nations shall be blest.*
 451 *Then to the Heav'n of Heav'ns he²⁰² shall*
 ascend
 452 *With victory, triumphing²⁰³ through the air*
 453 *Over his foes and thine. There shall surprise*
 454 *The serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains*
 455 *Through all his²⁰⁴ realm, and there²⁰⁵ confounded²⁰⁶*
 leave,
 456 *Then enter into glory, and resume*
 457 *His seat at God's right hand, exalted high*
 458 *Above all names²⁰⁷ in Heav'n, and thence shall*
 come,
 459 *When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,*
 460 *With glory and power to judge both quick²⁰⁸ and*
 dead—
 461 *To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward*
 462 *His faithful, and receive them into bliss,*
 463 *Whether in Heav'n or earth, for then the earth*
 464 *Shall all be Paradise, far happier place*
 465 *Than this of Eden, and far happier days."*
 466 *So spoke the Arch-Angel Michael, then*
 paused,
 467 *As at the world's great period;²⁰⁹ and our sire,*

²⁰² Christ

²⁰³ (1) celebrating, (2) being victorious

²⁰⁴ Satan's

²⁰⁵ in Hell

²⁰⁶ defeated, overthrown, brought to nought

²⁰⁷ those with distinguished reputations

²⁰⁸ the living

²⁰⁹ finish, final stage

468 *Replete*²¹⁰ with joy and wonder, thus replied:
 469 *“O goodness infinite, goodness immense!*
 470 *That all this good of*²¹¹ *evil shall produce,*²¹²
 471 *And evil turn to good, more wonderful*
 472 *Than that which by creation first brought forth*
 473 *Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,*
 474 *Whether I should repent me now of sin*
 475 *By me done and occasioned,*²¹³ *or rejoice*
 476 *Much more, that much more good thereof shall*
 spring,
 477 *To God more glory, more good-will to men*
 478 *From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.*²¹⁴
 479 *But say, if our Deliverer up to Heav’n*
 480 *Must re-ascend, what will betide*²¹⁵ *the few*
 481 *His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,*
 482 *The enemies of truth? Who then shall guide*
 483 *His people, who defend? Will they not deal*
 484 *Worse with his followers than with him they*
 dealt?”
 485 *“Be sure they will,” said the Angel, “but from*
 Heav’n
 486 *He to his own a comforter*²¹⁶ *will send,*
 487 *The promise of the Father, who shall dwell*
 488 *His Spirit within them, and the law of faith,*
 489 *Working through love, upon their hearts shall*
 write,
 490 *To guide them in all truth, and also arm*
 491 *With spiritual armor, able to resist*

²¹⁰ filled with, full of

²¹¹ from

²¹² be brought forth/produced

²¹³ induced (in others)

²¹⁴ be plentiful, overflow

²¹⁵ become of, happen to

²¹⁶ the Holy Spirit

516 *Places, and titles, and with these to join*
 517 *Secular power, though feigning still to act*
 518 *By spiritual, to themselves appropriating*
 519 *The Spirit of God, promised alike and giv'n*
 520 *To all believers; and from that pretence,*
 521 *Spiritual laws by carnal²²⁵ power shall force*
 522 *On every conscience, laws which none shall*
 find
 523 *Left them enrolled²²⁶ or what the Spirit within*
 524 *Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then*
 525 *But force the spirit of grace itself, and bind*
 526 *His consort liberty? What but unbuild*
 527 *His living temples, built by faith to stand,*
 528 *Their own faith, not another's—for on earth*
 529 *Who against faith and conscience can be heard*
 530 *Infallible?*

“Yet many will presume.”²²⁷

531 *Whence heavy persecution shall arise*
 532 *On all who in the worship persevere*
 533 *Of spirit and truth. The rest, far greater part,*
 534 *Will deem²²⁸ in outward rites and specious²²⁹*
 forms²³⁰
 535 *Religion satisfied.²³¹ Truth shall retire,²³²*
 536 *Bestuck with sland'rous darts, and works of*
 faith
 537 *Rarely be found.*

“So shall the world go on,

²²⁵ bodily, fleshly, corporeal

²²⁶ left them enrolled = were (had been) left them in written form (recorded)

²²⁷ venture, dare

²²⁸ consider, judge

²²⁹ fallacious, outwardly respectable

²³⁰ formalities, ceremonies

²³¹ fulfilled

²³² withdraw

538 *To good malignant, to bad men benign,*
 539 *Under her own weight groaning, till the day*
 540 *Appear of respiration²³³ to the just*
 541 *And vengeance to the wicked, at return*
 542 *Of him so lately promised to thy aid,*
 543 *The woman's seed, obscurely then foretold,*
 544 *Now ampler known thy Savior and thy Lord,*
 545 *Last²³⁴ in the clouds from Heav'n to be revealed*
 546 *In glory of the Father, to dissolve*
 547 *Satan with his perverted world, then raise*
 548 *From the conflagrant²³⁵ mass, purged and*
 refined,
 549 *New Heav'ns, new earth, ages of endless date,²³⁶*
 550 *Founded in righteousness, and peace, and*
 love—
 551 *To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.”*
 552 *He ended, and thus Adam last²³⁷ replied:*
 553 *“How soon hath thy prediction, seer²³⁸ blest,*
 554 *Measured²³⁹ this transient world, the race²⁴⁰ of*
 time,
 555 *Till time stand fixed! Beyond is all abyss,*
 556 *Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.*
 557 *Greatly-instructed I shall hence depart,*
 558 *Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill*
 559 *Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain,*
 560 *Beyond which was my folly to aspire.*
 561 *Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,*

²³³ respite

²³⁴ at last, finally

²³⁵ flaming, burning

²³⁶ duration

²³⁷ in conclusion

²³⁸ [bisyllabic? (the etymology being “see” + “er,” and Michael being, by God’s specific direction, here a seer into the future)]

²³⁹ traversed

²⁴⁰ course, movement

562 *And love with fear the only God; to walk*
 563 *As in His presence, ever to observe*
 564 *His providence, and on Him sole depend,*
 565 *Merciful over²⁴¹ all His works, with good*
 566 *Still²⁴² overcoming evil, and by small*
 567 *Accomplishing great things, by things deemed*
 weak
 568 *Subverting²⁴³ worldly strong, and worldly wise*
 569 *By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake*
 570 *Is fortitude to highest victory*
 571 *And, to the faithful, death the gate of life,*
 572 *Taught this by his example, whom I now*
 573 *Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."*
 574 *To whom thus also th' Angel last²⁴⁴ replied:*
 575 *"This having learned, thou hast attained the*
 sum
 576 *Of wisdom. Hope no higher, though all the*
 stars
 577 *Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal*
 powers,
 578 *All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,*
 579 *Or works of God in Heav'n, air, earth, or sea,*
 580 *And all the riches of this world enjoyd'st,*
 581 *And all the rule, one empire. Only add*
 582 *Deeds to thy knowledge answerable,²⁴⁵ add*
 faith,
 583 *Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,*
 584 *By name to come called charity, the soul*
 585 *Of all the rest. Then wilt thou not be loath*

²⁴¹ (1) through all, (2) even more than

²⁴² always

²⁴³ overthrowing

²⁴⁴ in conclusion

²⁴⁵ suitable, corresponding [adjective]

586 *To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess*
 587 *A Paradise within thee, happier far.*
 588 *“Let us descend now therefore from this*
 *top*²⁴⁶
 589 *Of speculation,*²⁴⁷ *for the hour precise*²⁴⁸
 590 *Exacts*²⁴⁹ *our parting hence. And see the*
 guards,
 591 *By me encamped on yonder hill! Expect*²⁵⁰
 592 *Their motion, at whose front*²⁵¹ *a flaming*
 sword,
 593 *In signal of remove,*²⁵² *waves fiercely*²⁵³ *round.*
 594 *We may no longer stay. Go, waken Eve.*
 595 *Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,*
 596 *Portending*²⁵⁴ *good, and all her spirits*
 *composed*²⁵⁵
 597 *To meek*²⁵⁶ *submission. Thou, at season fit,*²⁵⁷
 598 *Let her with thee partake*²⁵⁸ *what thou hast*
 heard,
 599 *Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,*
 600 *The great deliverance by her seed to come*
 601 *(For by the woman’s seed) on all mankind,*
 602 *That ye may live, which will be many days,*

²⁴⁶ highest place, peak

²⁴⁷ vision

²⁴⁸ strictly defined/expressed

²⁴⁹ demands, requires, insists on

²⁵⁰ look at

²⁵¹ at whose front = in front of whom

²⁵² the act of departure

²⁵³ actively

²⁵⁴ foretelling

²⁵⁵ arranged, adjusted, ordered

²⁵⁶ humble, submissive

²⁵⁷ season fit = appropriate time

²⁵⁸ share

603 *Both in one faith unanimous,²⁵⁹ though sad,*
 604 *With cause, for evils past, yet much more*
 cheered
 605 *With meditation²⁶⁰ on the happy end.”*
 606 *He ended, and they both descend the hill.*
 607 *Descended Adam to the bow’r where Eve*
 608 *Lay sleeping, ran before, but found her waked,*
 609 *And thus with words not sad she him received:*
 610 *“Whence thou return’st, and whither went’st, I*
 know,
 611 *For God is also in sleep, and dreams advise,²⁶¹*
 612 *Which He hath sent propitious,²⁶² some great*
 good
 613 *Presaging, since with sorrow and heart’s*
 distress
 614 *Wearied I fell asleep. But now lead on:*
 615 *In me is no delay. With thee to go*
 616 *Is to stay here. Without thee here to stay*
 617 *Is to go hence unwilling. Thou to me*
 618 *Art all things under Heav’n, all places thou,*
 619 *Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.*
 620 *This further consolation yet secure*
 621 *I carry hence, though all by me is lost,*
 622 *Such favor I unworthy am vouchsafed,²⁶³*
 623 *By me the promised seed shall all restore.”*
 624 *So spoke our mother Eve, and Adam heard*
 625 *Well pleased, but answered not. For now, too*
 nigh
 626 *The Arch-Angel stood and, from the other hill*
 627 *To their fixed station, all in bright array*

²⁵⁹ agreed, of one mind

²⁶⁰ serious and sustained reflection

²⁶¹ inform, give counsel

²⁶² favorable, gracious

²⁶³ granted

628 *The Cherubim descended, on the ground*
 629 *Gliding meteorous,²⁶⁴ as ev'ning-mist*
 630 *Ris'n from a river o'er the marish²⁶⁵ glides,*
 631 *And gathers ground fast at the laborer's heel*
 632 *Homeward returning. High in front advanced,²⁶⁶*
 633 *The brandished sword of God before them*
 blazed,
 634 *Fierce²⁶⁷ as a comet, which with torrid heat,*
 635 *And vapor²⁶⁸ as²⁶⁹ the Libyan air adust,²⁷⁰*
 636 *Began to parch²⁷¹ that²⁷² temperate²⁷³ clime.*
 Whereat
 637 *In either hand the hast'ning Angel caught*
 638 *Our ling'ring²⁷⁴ parents, and to the eastern gate*
 639 *Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast*
 640 *To the subjected²⁷⁵ plain, then disappeared.²⁷⁶*
 641 *They looking back, all th' eastern side beheld*
 642 *Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,*
 643 *Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate*
 644 *With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.*
 645 *Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them*
 soon.

²⁶⁴ brilliant, flashing, swift [four syllables, first and third accented]

²⁶⁵ marsh

²⁶⁶ raised [adjective]

²⁶⁷ vehement, intense, merciless

²⁶⁸ waves (of heat)

²⁶⁹ like

²⁷⁰ scorched

²⁷¹ scorch

²⁷² (of Eden)

²⁷³ moderate

²⁷⁴ reluctant, tardy, dawdling

²⁷⁵ lying below

²⁷⁶ i.e., then the angel (and his troop) disappeared

- 646 *The world was all before them, where to
choose*
- 647 *Their place of rest, and Providence their
guide.*
- 648 *They hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and
slow,*
- 649 *Through Eden took their solitary way.*

The End

PARADISE REGAINED

1671

BOOK I

*I, who erewhile¹ the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried²
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.*

*Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite³
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence 10
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont,⁴ my prompted⁵ song, else mute,
And bear through height or depth of Nature's bounds,
With prosperous⁶ wing full summed,⁷ to tell of deeds
Above⁸ heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age—
Worthy t' have not remained so long unsung.
Now had the great Proclaimer,⁹ with a voice*

¹ some time ago

² tested

³ hermit

⁴ accustomed to, in the habit of

⁵ ready

⁶ favored, fortunate

⁷ full summed = feathers fully formed/grown, i.e., poetic capacity fully matured

⁸ beyond

⁹ John the Baptist

*More awful¹⁰ than the sound of trumpet, cried
 "Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand 20
 To all baptized!" To his great baptism flocked
 With awe¹¹ the regions round, and with them came
 From Nazareth, the son of Joseph deemed,¹²
 To the flood Jordan—came as then obscure,
 Unmarked,¹³ unknown. But him the Baptist soon
 Descried,¹⁴ divinely warned, and witness bore
 As to his worthier,¹⁵ and would have resigned
 To him his Heav'nly office. Nor was long
 His witness unconfirmed: on him¹⁶ baptized
 Heav'n opened, and in likeness of a dove 30
 The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
 From Heav'n pronounced him His belovèd Son.
 That heard the Adversary,¹⁷ who roving still
 About the world, at that assembly famed¹⁸
 Would not be last, and with the voice divine
 Nigh thunder-struck,¹⁹ th' exalted man to whom
 Such high attest was giv'n a while surveyed²⁰
 With wonder. Then with envy fraught,²¹ and rage,
 Flies to his place,²² nor rests, but in mid air*

¹⁰ sublimely majestic, commanding reverence

¹¹ reverent wonder

¹² considered

¹³ unnoticed

¹⁴ discovered

¹⁵ his worthier = (1) Christ being worthier than John, or (2) one who is his (John's) worthier; the meaning is unchanged either way

¹⁶ Christ

¹⁷ Satan

¹⁸ celebrated [adjective]—but does it mean that the assembly is "famed" or that Satan did not want to be ("would not be") less famed?

¹⁹ Satan is "nigh thunder-struck" by God's voice

²⁰ Satan "surveys" (looks carefully at, examines) Christ, who is "the exalted man"

²¹ filled

²² residence, dwelling, citadel

*To council summons all his mighty Peers,*²³ 40
*Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,*²⁴
A gloomy consistory,²⁵ and them amidst,
With looks aghast²⁶ and sad,²⁷ he thus bespoke:
“O ancient Powers of air and this wide world
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation), well ye know
How many ages, as²⁸ the years of men,
This universe²⁹ we have possessed, and ruled
In manner at our will th’ affairs of earth, 50
Since Adam and his facile³⁰ consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived by me, though since
With dread attending³¹ when that fatal wound
Shall³² be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heav’n
Delay, for longest time to Him is short.
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed,³³ wherein we
Must bide³⁴ the stroke of that long-threat’ned wound
(At least, if so we can, and by the head 60
Broken³⁵ be not intended all our power
To be infringed,³⁶ our freedom and our being

²³ of the highest rank (*not* “equals”)

²⁴ wreathed

²⁵ council

²⁶ frightened

²⁷ serious, morose

²⁸ as are counted

²⁹ world, earth

³⁰ easily led

³¹ awaiting

³² in Milton’s time, “shall” still carried the sense of “will have to, must”

³³ attained, accomplished

³⁴ endure, undergo

³⁵ “bruised”

³⁶ shattered, broken

*In this fair empire won of earth and air),
 For this ill news I bring: the woman's seed,
 Destined to this, is late of woman born.
 His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
 But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
 All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
 Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
 Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
 His coming, is sent harbinger,³⁷ who all
 Invites, and in the consecrated stream
 Pretends³⁸ to wash off sin, and fit them so
 Purified to receive him pure, or rather
 To do him honor as their King. All come,
 And he³⁹ himself among them was baptized—
 Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
 The testimony of Heav'n, that who he is
 Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw
 The prophet do him reverence. On him, rising
 Out of the water, Heav'n above the clouds
 Unfold her crystal doors, thence on his head
 A perfect dove descend (whate'er it meant),
 And out of Heav'n the sov'reign voice I heard,
 'This is my Son beloved—in him am pleased.'
 His mother, then, is mortal, but his sire
 He⁴⁰ who obtains⁴¹ the monarchy of Heav'n,
 And what will He not do t' advance His Son?
 His first-begot we know,⁴² and sore have felt,
 When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep.
 Who this is we must learn, for man he seems*

70

80

90

³⁷ as a forerunner

³⁸ claims, aspires

³⁹ Christ

⁴⁰ is He

⁴¹ holds

⁴² Satan does not yet identify *this* Son of God with Christ

*In all his lineaments,⁴³ though in his face
 The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
 Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
 Of hazard,⁴⁴ which admits⁴⁵ no long debate,
 But must with something sudden be opposed
 (Not force, but well-couched⁴⁶ fraud, well-woven snares),
 Ere in the head⁴⁷ of nations he appear,
 Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
 I, when no other durst, sole undertook* 100
*The dismal⁴⁸ expedition⁴⁹ to find out
 And ruin Adam, and the exploit performed
 Successfully. A calmer voyage now
 Will waft⁵⁰ me, and the way found prosperous once
 Induces best to hope of like success."*

*He ended, and his words impression left
 Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,
 Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
 At these sad tidings. But no time was then⁵¹
 For long indulgence to their fears or grief:* 110
*Unanimous they all commit the care
 And management of this main enterprise
 To him, their great dictator,⁵² whose attempt
 At first against mankind so well had thrived⁵³
 In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
 From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,*

⁴³ features, characteristics

⁴⁴ peril

⁴⁵ allows, permits

⁴⁶ well put together/hidden

⁴⁷ position of leadership/chief importance

⁴⁸ somber, malign

⁴⁹ warlike enterprise

⁵⁰ convey, carry

⁵¹ no time was then = at that moment there was no time

⁵² absolute ruler

⁵³ prospered, been successful

*Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.*

*So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy⁵⁴ steps, girded⁵⁵ with snaky wiles, 120
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try—
So to subvert⁵⁶ whom⁵⁷ he suspected raised
To end his⁵⁸ reign on earth so long enjoyed.
But contrary unweeting,⁵⁹ he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,
Of the Most High, who in full frequency⁶⁰ bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spoke:*

*“Gabriel, this day, by proof, thou shalt behold, 130
Thou and all Angels conversant⁶¹ on earth
With man or men’s affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and called the Son of God.
Then told’st her (doubting⁶² how these things could be
To her a virgin) that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O’ershadow⁶³ her. This man, born and now upgrown, 140
To show him worthy of his birth divine*

⁵⁴ smooth

⁵⁵ equipped

⁵⁶ corrupt, undermine

⁵⁷ he whom

⁵⁸ Satan’s

⁵⁹ contrary unweeting = not knowing to the contrary

⁶⁰ assembly

⁶¹ occupied, familiar with [trisyllabic, first and third accented]

⁶² she doubting

⁶³ cover

*And high prediction, henceforth I expose⁶⁴
 To Satan. Let him tempt, and now assay⁶⁵
 His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
 And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
 Of his apostasy. He might have learned
 Less overweening,⁶⁶ since he failed in Job,
 Whose constant perseverance overcame
 Whate'er his⁶⁷ cruel malice could invent.
 He now shall know I can produce a man
 Of female seed, far abler⁶⁸ to resist
 All his solicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
 Winning by conquest what the first man lost
 By fallacy⁶⁹ surprised.*

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*“But first I mean
 To exercise⁷⁰ him⁷¹ in the wilderness.
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments⁷²
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes.
 By humiliation⁷³ and strong sufferance⁷⁴
 His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
 And all the world, and mass⁷⁵ of sinful flesh,
 That⁷⁶ all the Angels and aethereal Powers—*

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⁶⁴ exhibit, set forth

⁶⁵ try, attempt

⁶⁶ to be less arrogant/prideful

⁶⁷ Satan's

⁶⁸ than Job

⁶⁹ trickery, deceit

⁷⁰ employ

⁷¹ Christ

⁷² beginnings

⁷³ [four syllables, first and third accented, third elided]

⁷⁴ patient/long-suffering endurance

⁷⁵ body, bulk

⁷⁶ so that

*They now, and men hereafter—may discern
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.”*

*So spoke th’ Eternal Father, and all Heav’n
Admiring⁷⁷ stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures⁷⁸ moved,
Circling the throne and singing while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:⁷⁹*

170

*“Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now ent’ring his great duel,⁸⁰ not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!
The Father knows the Son, therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate’er may tempt, whate’er seduce,⁸¹
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.*

*Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought!”
So they in Heav’n their odes⁸² and vigils⁸³ tuned.⁸⁴*

180

*Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara,⁸⁵ where John baptized,
Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Savior to mankind, and which way first
Publish⁸⁶ his godlike office now mature,⁸⁷*

⁷⁷ marveling

⁷⁸ rhythms

⁷⁹ theme, subject

⁸⁰ combat

⁸¹ lead astray

⁸² hymns

⁸³ prayers

⁸⁴ sang

⁸⁵ Bet ha-Arabah, biblical site near the north shore of the Dead Sea [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁸⁶ proclaim, make public

⁸⁷ ripe, full-grown

*One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse 190
With⁸⁸ solitude, till far from track⁸⁹ of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bord'ring desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environed round
His holy meditations thus pursued:*

*“O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting⁹⁰ with my present state compared! 200
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing. All my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good. Myself I thought⁹¹
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at our⁹² great feast 210
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own,
And was admired⁹³ by all.*

*“Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds*

⁸⁸ keep company/live with

⁸⁹ the paths

⁹⁰ consorting, fitting, harmonizing

⁹¹ Christ too seems unsure of his prior existence

⁹² the Jews'

⁹³ wondered at

*Flamed in my heart, heroic acts—one while⁹⁴
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
 Then to subdue and quell,⁹⁵ o'er all the earth,
 Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
 Till truth were freed, and equity⁹⁶ restored— 220
 Yet held it more humane, more Heav'nly,⁹⁷ first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear,
 At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
 Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
 Mised. The stubborn only to subdue.*

*“These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
 By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
 And said to me apart,⁹⁸ ‘High are thy thoughts,
 O Son! But nourish them, and let them soar 230
 To what height sacred virtue and true worth
 Can raise them, though above example⁹⁹ high.
 By matchless deeds express thy matchless sire.
 For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
 Though men esteem thee low of parentage.
 Thy Father is th' Eternal King who rules
 All Heav'n and earth, Angels and sons of men.
 A messenger from God foretold thy birth
 Conceived in me a virgin. He foretold
 Thou should'st be great, and sit on David's throne, 240
 And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
 At thy nativity a glorious choir
 Of Angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
 To shepherds, watching at their folds¹⁰⁰ by night,*

⁹⁴ time, period

⁹⁵ extinguish, destroy

⁹⁶ justice

⁹⁷ divine, celestial

⁹⁸ privately

⁹⁹ above example = unprecedented

¹⁰⁰ sheep pens

*And told them the Messiah now was born,
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
 Directed to the manger¹⁰¹ where thou lay'st,
 For in the inn was left no better room.¹⁰²
 A star, not seen before, in Heav'n appearing,
 Guided the Wise Men thither from the East, 250
 To honor thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
 By whose¹⁰³ bright course led on they found the place,
 Affirming it thy star, new-graven¹⁰⁴ in Heav'n,
 By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
 Just Simeon¹⁰⁵ and prophetic Anna,¹⁰⁶ warned
 By vision, found thee in the Temple, and spoke
 Before the altar and the vested priest
 Like¹⁰⁷ things of thee to all that present stood.'*

*“This having heard, straight I again revolved¹⁰⁸
 The Law and prophets, searching what was writ 260
 Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
 Known partly, and soon found of whom they spoke
 I am—this chiefly, that my way must lie
 Through many a hard assay,¹⁰⁹ ev'n to the death,
 Ere I the promised kingdom can attain
 Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
 Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
 Yet neither thus disheart'ned or dismayed,
 The time prefixed¹¹⁰ I waited, when behold
 The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard, 270*

¹⁰¹ feeding trough in a stable

¹⁰² place

¹⁰³ the star's

¹⁰⁴ formed, carved, set

¹⁰⁵ see Luke 2:25–35

¹⁰⁶ see Luke 2:36–38

¹⁰⁷ similar

¹⁰⁸ considered, studied, meditated upon

¹⁰⁹ learning experience, endeavor, affliction, temptation

¹¹⁰ established previously

*Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
 Before Messiah, and his way prepare.
 I, as all others, to his baptism came,
 Which I believed was from above, but he
 Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
 Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heav'n)—
 Me him whose harbinger¹¹¹ he was, and first
 Refused on me his baptism to confer,
 As much his greater, and was hardly¹¹² won.¹¹³
 But as I rose out of the laving¹¹⁴ stream 280
 Heav'n op'ned her eternal doors, from whence
 The Spirit descended on me like a dove,
 And last—the sum¹¹⁵ of all—my Father's voice,
 Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounced me His,
 Me His belovèd Son, in whom alone
 He was well pleased. By which I knew the time
 Now full,¹¹⁶ that I no more should live obscure,¹¹⁷
 But openly begin, as best becomes
 Th' authority which I derived from Heav'n.
 “And now by some strong motion I am led 290
 Into this wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet. Perhaps I need not know,
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.”
 So spoke our morning star, then in his rise,
 And looking round on every side beheld
 A pathless desert, dusk¹¹⁸ with horrid shades.¹¹⁹
 The way he came, not having marked return,*

¹¹¹ forerunner

¹¹² not easily, with difficulty, barely

¹¹³ prevailed upon

¹¹⁴ pouring, washing

¹¹⁵ highest point

¹¹⁶ complete

¹¹⁷ hidden, retired, unknown

¹¹⁸ dark, gloomy

¹¹⁹ (1) shadows, (2) dark figures, ghosts, specters

*Was difficult, by human steps untrod,
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 Accompanied of things past and to come* 300
*Lodged in his breast as well might recommend¹²⁰
 Such solitude before choicest¹²¹ society.
 Full forty days he passed—whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon¹²² in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert¹²³ of some ancient oak
 Or cedar to defend¹²⁴ him from the dew,
 Or harbored¹²⁵ in one cave, is not revealed.
 Nor¹²⁶ tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
 Till those days ended. Hungered then at last
 Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild,¹²⁷ 310
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed. His walk
 The fiery serpent fled and noxious¹²⁸ worm,
 The lion and fierce tiger glared¹²⁹ aloof.¹³⁰*

*But now an agèd man in rural weeds,
 Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
 Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
 Against a winter's day when winds blow keen
 To warm him, wet returned from field at eve,
 He¹³¹ saw approach, who first with curious eye
 Perused him, then with words thus uttered spoke: 320
 "Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,*

¹²⁰ commend, advise

¹²¹ the best

¹²² soon, in a little while

¹²³ covering, shelter

¹²⁴ keep, protect

¹²⁵ lodged, sheltered

¹²⁶ he neither

¹²⁷ tame, gentle

¹²⁸ hurtful, harmful

¹²⁹ looked fixedly/fiercely

¹³⁰ at a distance

¹³¹ Christ

*So far from path or road of men, who pass
 In troop or caravan? For single¹³² none
 Durst ever, who returned, and dropped not here
 His carcass, pined¹³³ with hunger and with drought?
 I ask the rather, and the more admire,
 For that¹³⁴ to me thou seem'st the man whom late
 Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
 Of Jordan honored so, and called thee Son
 Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes
 Who dwell this wild,¹³⁵ constrained¹³⁶ by want, come
 forth*

330

*To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
 Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
 What happens new. Fame¹³⁷ also finds us out."
 To whom the Son of God:*

*“Who brought me hither
 Will bring me hence. No other guide I seek.”*

“By miracle he may,” replied the swain.¹³⁸

*“What other way I see not, for we here
 Live on tough roots and stubs,¹³⁹ to thirst inured
 More than the camel, and to drink go far—
 Men to much misery and hardship born.*

340

*But if thou be the Son of God, command
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread,
 So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
 With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.”
 He ended, and the Son of God replied:*

“Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written

¹³² alone

¹³³ consumed, exhausted

¹³⁴ for that = because

¹³⁵ desert, wilderness

¹³⁶ forced, compelled

¹³⁷ public report, rumor

¹³⁸ rustic

¹³⁹ stubble, stumps

*(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
 Man lives not by bread only, but each word
 Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed* 350
*Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
 Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank,
 And forty days Elijah without food
 Wandered this barren waste. The same I now.
 Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,¹⁴⁰
 Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"*
*Whom thus answered th' arch-fiend, now
 undisguised:*

*"'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
 Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
 Kept not my happy station, but was driv'n* 360
*With them from bliss to the bottomless deep.
 Yet to that hideous place not so confined
 By rigor¹⁴¹ unconniving¹⁴² but that oft,
 Leaving my dolorous¹⁴³ prison, I enjoy
 Large liberty to round¹⁴⁴ this globe of earth,
 Or range¹⁴⁵ in the air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
 Hath He excluded my resort¹⁴⁶ sometimes.
 I came among the Sons of God when He
 Gave up into my hands Uzzean¹⁴⁷ Job,
 To prove¹⁴⁸ him, and illustrate¹⁴⁹ his high worth.* 370
And when to all His Angels He proposed

¹⁴⁰ doubt

¹⁴¹ strict discipline, harshness

¹⁴² not permissive

¹⁴³ dismal

¹⁴⁴ travel around

¹⁴⁵ roam

¹⁴⁶ recourse

¹⁴⁷ of Uz, in eastern Palestine

¹⁴⁸ test

¹⁴⁹ make clear [trissyllabic, second accented]

*To draw the proud King Ahab¹⁵⁰ into fraud,
 That he might fall in Ramoth,¹⁵¹ they demurring,¹⁵²
 I undertook that office, and the tongues
 Of all his¹⁵³ flattering prophets glibbed¹⁵⁴ with lies
 To his destruction, as I had in charge.¹⁵⁵
 For what He bids I do. Though I have lost
 Much luster of my native brightness, lost
 To be beloved of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contemplate¹⁵⁶ and admire, 380
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,
 Or virtuous.¹⁵⁷ I should so have lost all sense.*

*“What can be then less in me than desire¹⁵⁸
 To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
 Declared the Son of God, to hear attent¹⁵⁹
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind. Why should I? They to me
 Never did wrong or violence. By them
 I lost not what I lost. Rather by them 390
 I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
 Copartner in these regions of the world,*

¹⁵⁰ king of Israel, who meets his death after a weltering confusion of prophecies: see I Kings 22

¹⁵¹ Ramoth-Gilead, fortified position east of Jordan

¹⁵² hesitating, balking

¹⁵³ Ahab's

¹⁵⁴ caused to chatter

¹⁵⁵ had in charge = was supposed to do

¹⁵⁶ [trissyllabic, accent on second]

¹⁵⁷ [bisyllabic, second elided]

¹⁵⁸ “What can I feel less than desire . . . ?” (reading “less” as an adverb) or “How could anything make me do less than desire . . . ?” (reading “less” not as an adverb but as a verb, said by the O.E.D. to have become obsolete when Milton was twenty-five years old)

¹⁵⁹ attentively

*If not disposer¹⁶⁰—lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages¹⁶¹ and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.*

*“Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe!*

At first it may be but, long since with woe

Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof

That fellowship in pain divides¹⁶² not smart,¹⁶³

Nor lightens aught each man’s peculiar¹⁶⁴ load.

Small consolation, then, were man adjoined.¹⁶⁵

*This wounds me most (what can it less?) that man,
Man fall’n, shall be restored, I never more.”*

To whom our Savior sternly thus replied:

“Deservedly thou griev’st, composed¹⁶⁶ of lies

From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,

Who boast’st release from Hell, and leave to come

Into the Heav’n of Heav’ns! Thou com’st indeed,

As a poor miserable¹⁶⁷ captive thrall¹⁶⁸

Comes to the place where he before had sat

Among the prime in splendor, now deposed,

Ejected, emptied, gazed,¹⁶⁹ unpitied, shunned,

A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,

To all the host of Heav’n. The happy place

Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,

Rather inflames thy torment, representing

400

410

¹⁶⁰ i.e., copartner if not “disposer” (one who controls)

¹⁶¹ predictions, omens

¹⁶² shares

¹⁶³ grief

¹⁶⁴ private, individual

¹⁶⁵ united with me

¹⁶⁶ constituted

¹⁶⁷ [four syllables, first and third accented?]

¹⁶⁸ slave

¹⁶⁹ stared at

*Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable—
So never more in Hell than when in Heav'n.* 420

“But thou art serviceable to Heav'n's King!

*Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem¹⁷⁰
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? But his patience won.*

*The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths,
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth! All oracles* 430

*By thee are giv'n, and what confessed more true
Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.*

*But what have been thy answers? What but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who asked have seldom understood,
And not well understood, as good not known?¹⁷¹*

*Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly¹⁷² or follow what concerned him most,* 440

*And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
To thy delusions—justly, since they fell
Idolatrous.*

*“But when His purpose is
Among them to declare His providence,
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from Him, or his Angels president¹⁷³
In every province, who themselves disdain
T' approach thy temples, give thee in command*

¹⁷⁰ think evil of

¹⁷¹ as good = they might/just as well not have known at all

¹⁷² flee

¹⁷³ superintending

*What, to the smallest tittle,¹⁷⁴ thou shalt say
 To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,
 Or like a fawning¹⁷⁵ parasite, obey'st,
 Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched.¹⁷⁶
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse¹⁷⁷
 The gentiles:¹⁷⁸ henceforth oracles are ceased,
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be inquired at Delphos or elsewhere—
 At least¹⁷⁹ in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent His living oracle
 Into the world to teach His final will,
 And sends His Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
 In pious hearts, an inward oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.”*
460

*So spoke our Savior. But the subtle fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,¹⁸⁰
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:*

*“Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urged me hard with doings which not will¹⁸¹
 But misery hath wrested¹⁸² from me. Where
 Easily canst thou find one¹⁸³ miserable,
 And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
 If it may stand him more in stead¹⁸⁴ to lie,*
470

¹⁷⁴ tiny point

¹⁷⁵ whining

¹⁷⁶ cut short

¹⁷⁷ [verb]

¹⁷⁸ heathen

¹⁷⁹ “at least, if you are inquired for, it shall be”

¹⁸⁰ indignation

¹⁸¹ volition [noun]

¹⁸² wrung, extorted

¹⁸³ someone who is

¹⁸⁴ profit, advantage

*Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?*¹⁸⁵
But thou art placed above me, thou art Lord.
From thee I can, and must, submit, endure
*Check*¹⁸⁶ *or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.*¹⁸⁷
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
*Smooth on the tongue discoursed,*¹⁸⁸ *pleasing to th' ear,*
*And tunable*¹⁸⁹ *as sylvan*¹⁹⁰ *pipe*¹⁹¹ *or song.* 480
What wonder, then, if I delight to hear
*Her dictates*¹⁹² *from thy mouth? Most men admire*¹⁹³
Virtue who follow not her lore. Permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair t' attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
*To tread His sacred courts,*¹⁹⁴ *and minister*¹⁹⁵
About His altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsafed His voice 490
*To Balaam,*¹⁹⁶ *reprobate,*¹⁹⁷ *a prophet yet*¹⁹⁸
*Inspired. Disdain*¹⁹⁹ *not such access to me."*
To whom our Savior, with unaltered brow:
*"Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,"*²⁰⁰

¹⁸⁵ renounce, recant, disclaim

¹⁸⁶ (1) restraint, (2) rebuff

¹⁸⁷ free

¹⁸⁸ spoken, uttered

¹⁸⁹ sweet-sounding

¹⁹⁰ characteristic of/belonging to forests or woods

¹⁹¹ flute

¹⁹² authoritative direction/admonition

¹⁹³ marvel at

¹⁹⁴ courtyards, grounds

¹⁹⁵ help, serve

¹⁹⁶ see Numbers 22:5 through 24:25

¹⁹⁷ corrupt

¹⁹⁸ still

¹⁹⁹ scorn

²⁰⁰ purpose

*I bid not, or forbid. Do as thou find'st
Permission from above. Thou canst not more."*

*He added not, and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation,²⁰¹ disappeared,
Into thin air diffused. For now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade 500
The desert. Fowls in their clay²⁰² nests were couched,²⁰³
And now wild beasts came forth, the woods to roam.*

²⁰¹ feigned semblance

²⁰² earthy

²⁰³ lying down, resting

BOOK II

*Meanwhile the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late¹ expressly² called
Jesus Messiah, Son of God declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged³—I mean
Andrew⁴ and Simon,⁵ famous after⁶ known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named—
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown⁷
And for a time caught up⁸ to God, as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long,
And the great Thisbite,⁹ who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heav'n, yet once again to come.*

10

Therefore, as those young prophets then with care

¹ recently

² clearly, distinctly

³ lived in lodgings

⁴ see John 1:40

⁵ see John 1:41

⁶ afterward

⁷ displayed, exhibited

⁸ caught up = taken

⁹ Elijah: see 2 Kings 2:1–12

Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara¹⁰—in Jericho¹¹ 20
The city of palms, Aenon,¹² and Salem¹³ old,
Machaerus,¹⁴ and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,¹⁵
Or in Peraea¹⁶—but returned in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers¹⁷ whispering play,
Plain fishermen (no greater, men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints¹⁸ outbreathed:
 “Alas, from what high hope to what relapse 30
Unlooked for are we fall’n! Our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers. We have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
‘Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand!
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored!’
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze.
For whither is he gone? What accident
Hath rapt¹⁹ him from us? Will he now retire²⁰ 40
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send Thy Messiah forth. The time is come.

¹⁰ Bet ha-Arabah, north of the Dead Sea: see John 1:28

¹¹ north of the Dead Sea: see Deuteronomy 34:3

¹² in Samaria: see John 3:23

¹³ Salim, in Samaria: see John 3:23

¹⁴ stronghold east of the Dead Sea, earlier destroyed but rebuilt by Herod

¹⁵ the Sea of Galilee

¹⁶ region east of the Jordan River, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea

¹⁷ willows

¹⁸ laments, complaints

¹⁹ carried/swept away

²⁰ withdraw, disappear

*Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their pow'r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of Thee. Arise, and vindicate²¹
Thy glory, free Thy people from their yoke!*

*“But let us wait. Thus far He hath performed,²²
Sent His anointed,²³ and to us revealed him 50
By His great prophet pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have conversed.
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on His providence.²⁴ He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him²⁵ now, nor will recall—
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence.
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return.”*

*Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought.
But to his mother Mary, when she saw 60
Others returned from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head,²⁶ and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:*

*“Oh what avails me now, that honor high,
To have conceived of God, or that salute,²⁷
'Hail, highly favored, among women blest'?
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,²⁸
And fears as eminent²⁹ above the lot 70*

²¹ uphold, maintain, justify

²² completed, brought about, done

²³ consecrated

²⁴ (1) foreknowledge, beneficent care, (2) divine intervention

²⁵ Christ

²⁶ strength

²⁷ greeting

²⁸ raised

²⁹ remarkable

*Of other women, by the birth I bore—
 In such a season born, when scarce a shed
 Could be obtained to shelter him or me
 From the bleak³⁰ air. A stable was our warmth,
 A manger his, yet soon enforced to fly
 Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king³¹
 Were dead, who sought his life and, missing,³² filled
 With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.
 From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
 Hath been our dwelling many years, his life 80
 Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any king. But now,
 Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
 By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
 Son owned³³ from Heav'n by his Father's voice,
 I looked for some great change. To honor? No,
 But trouble, as old Simeon³⁴ plain foretold,
 That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign
 Spoken against—that through my very soul 90
 A sword shall pierce, this my favored lot,
 My exaltation to afflictions high!
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest!
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.³⁵*

*“But where delays he now? Some great intent
 Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had seen,
 I lost him, but so found as well I saw
 He could not lose himself, but went about
 His Father's business. What he meant I mused,³⁶*

³⁰ cold

³¹ Herod

³² not found

³³ acknowledged

³⁴ see Luke 2:34

³⁵ murmur, complain

³⁶ pondered

*Since understand: much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.³⁷
But I to wait with patience am inured,
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.”*

*Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably³⁸ had passed
Since first her salutation³⁹ heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling,⁴⁰
The while her son, tracing⁴¹ the desert wild,
Sole,⁴² but with holiest meditations fed, 110
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set—
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end⁴³ of being on earth, and mission high.
For Satan, with sly preface⁴⁴ to return,
Had left him vacant,⁴⁵ and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his Potentates in council sat.
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank,⁴⁶ he thus began: 120*

*“Princes, Heav’n’s ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones—
Daemonian Spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called,
Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats*

³⁷ hides, keeps dark

³⁸ extraordinarily

³⁹ heavenly greeting

⁴⁰ completion

⁴¹ traversing, traveling, treading

⁴² alone

⁴³ purpose, aim

⁴⁴ statement made in a preliminary way, hint

⁴⁵ undisturbed

⁴⁶ resourceless

Without new trouble!)—such an enemy
Is ris'n to invade us, who no less
Threat'ns than our expulsion down to Hell.
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence⁴⁷ was empowered, 130
Have found him, viewed him, tasted⁴⁸ him, but find
Far other labor to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurements⁴⁹ fell,
However to this man inferior far—
If he be man by mother's side, at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorned,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence 140
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like⁵⁰ succeeding here. I summon all
Rather to be in readiness with hand
Or counsel to assist, lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be overmatched."

So spoke the old serpent, doubting, and from all
With clamor was assured their utmost aid
At his command, when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutes Spirit that fell, 150
The sensualest, and after Asmodai⁵¹
The fleshiest incubus,⁵² and thus advised:
"Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found.

⁴⁷ assembly

⁴⁸ examined, tested

⁴⁹ enticement

⁵⁰ similar

⁵¹ a "womanizing" demon: Asmodeus in *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, line 146, and Asmodai, in *Paradise Lost*, Book 6, line 365

⁵² demonic womanizer/seducer, who usually descended upon sleeping women

*Many are in each region passing⁵³ fair
 As the noon sky, more like to goddesses
 Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,⁵⁴
 Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
 Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
 And sweet allayed,⁵⁵ yet terrible⁵⁶ to approach, 160
 Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw
 Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
 Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame
 Severest temper,⁵⁷ smooth the rugged'st brow,
 Enerve⁵⁸ and with voluptuous hope dissolve,⁵⁹
 Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
 At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
 As the magnetic⁶⁰ hardest iron draws.
 Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
 Of wisest Solomon, and made him build 170
 And made him bow to the gods of his wives."*

*To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:
 "Belial, in much uneven⁶¹ scale thou weigh'st
 All others by thyself. Because of old
 Thou thyself doat'st on⁶² womankind, admiring
 Their shape, their color,⁶³ and attractive grace,
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.⁶⁴
 Before the Flood, thou with thy lusty crew,*

⁵³ surpassing

⁵⁴ well-spoken

⁵⁵ mixed

⁵⁶ dreadful, frightful

⁵⁷ temperament

⁵⁸ enervate, weaken

⁵⁹ bring to nought, destroy

⁶⁰ magnet

⁶¹ irregular

⁶² dote on = be infatuated with

⁶³ complexion

⁶⁴ dalliance

False titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men, 180
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation⁶⁵ heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain-side,
In valley or green meadow, to waylay
Some beauty rare? Callisto,⁶⁶ Clymene,⁶⁷
Daphne,⁶⁸ or Semele,⁶⁹ Antiopa,⁷⁰
Or Amymone,⁷¹ Syrinx⁷²—many more
Too long. Then lay'st thy scapes⁷³ on names adored,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan, 190
Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan!⁷⁴ But these haunts⁷⁵
Delight not all. Among the sons of men
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
“Remember that Pellean⁷⁶ conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slightly⁷⁷ viewed, and slightly overpassed.

⁶⁵ narration

⁶⁶ nymph, attendant on Artemis, twin sister of Apollo [trissyllabic, second accented]

⁶⁷ daughter of Oceanus, mother of Atlas [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁶⁸ nymph-huntress who fled from all would-be lovers [bisyllabic, first accented]

⁶⁹ mother of Dionysus, by Zeus [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

⁷⁰ Antiopé, seduced and impregnated by Zeus [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

⁷¹ rescued from a satyr by Poseidon, who then seduced her [four syllables, first and third accented]

⁷² nymph pursued by Pan and transformed into a reed to escape him [bisyllabic, first accented]

⁷³ transgressions, escapades

⁷⁴ god of the wild woods

⁷⁵ habits, practices

⁷⁶ Alexander the Great [trissyllabic, second accented]

⁷⁷ carelessly

*“How he surnamed of Africa⁷⁸ dismissed,⁷⁹
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.⁸⁰* 200

*“For Solomon he lived at ease, and full
Of honor, wealth, high fare,⁸¹ aimed not beyond
Higher design⁸² than to enjoy his state,⁸³
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.*

*“But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure⁸⁴ will vouchsafe an eye 210
Of fond⁸⁵ desire? Or should she, confident
As sitting queen adored on beauty’s throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt⁸⁶
To enamor, as the zone⁸⁷ of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),⁸⁸
How would one look from his majestic brow⁸⁹
(Seated as on the top of virtue’s hill)
Discount’nance⁹⁰ her despised, and put to rout*

⁷⁸ Scipio Africanus, 236–183 B.C., who triumphed in Spain and in the Second Punic War

⁷⁹ sent away

⁸⁰ a young Spanish captive to whom, it was said, he had been attracted; she loved someone else

⁸¹ food

⁸² intention, plan

⁸³ (1) condition, (2) greatness, power

⁸⁴ deliberation

⁸⁵ foolish, insipid

⁸⁶ encompassed

⁸⁷ girdle/belt

⁸⁸ see Homer’s *Iliad*, 14:214–18

⁸⁹ i.e., “how one look from his majestic brow (seated as on the top of virtue’s hill) would . . .”

⁹⁰ shame, disapprove

*All her array, her female pride deject,⁹¹
 Or turn to reverent awe? For beauty stands 220
 In th' admiration only of weak minds
 Led captive. Cease to admire, and all her plumes⁹²
 Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,⁹³
 At every sudden slighting⁹⁴ quite abashed.⁹⁵*

*"Therefore with manlier objects we must try
 His constancy—with such as have more show
 Of worth, of honor, glory, and popular praise
 (Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked),
 Or that which only seems to satisfy
 Lawful desires of nature, not beyond. 230
 And now I know he hungers,⁹⁶ where no food
 Is to be found, in the wide wilderness.
 The rest commit to me. I shall let pass
 No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."*

*He ceased, and heard their grant⁹⁷ in loud acclaim,
 Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
 Of Spirits likest to himself in guile,
 To be at hand and at his beck⁹⁸ appear
 If cause were⁹⁹ to unfold some active¹⁰⁰ scene
 Of various persons, each to know his part, 240
 Then to the desert takes with these his flight,
 Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,
 After forty days' fasting, had remained,*

⁹¹ dejected

⁹² ostentatious ornament not necessarily composed of, but resembling, feathers

⁹³ whim, caprice

⁹⁴ display of disregard

⁹⁵ confused, destroyed

⁹⁶ is starving

⁹⁷ consent

⁹⁸ signal

⁹⁹ "if there were reason (cause)"

¹⁰⁰ energetic

Now hung'ring first,¹⁰¹ and to himself thus said:

*“Where will this end? Four times ten days I have
passed,*

Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food

Nor tasted, nor had appetite. That fast

To virtue I impute¹⁰² not, or count part

Of what I suffer here. If Nature need not,

Or God support Nature without repast,

250

Though needing, what praise is it to endure?

But now I feel I hunger, which declares

Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God

Can satisfy that need some other way,

Though hunger still remain. So¹⁰³ it remain

Without this body's wasting, I content me,

And from the sting of famine¹⁰⁴ fear no harm,

Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed

Me hung'ring more to do my Father's will.”

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son

260

Communed¹⁰⁵ in silent walk, then laid him down

Under the hospitable covert nigh

Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,

And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,

Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreshment sweet.

Him thought he by the brook of Cherith¹⁰⁶ stood,

And saw the ravens with their horny beaks

Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn,

*Though ravenous, taught t' abstain from what they
brought.*

He saw the prophet also, how he fled

270

¹⁰¹ for the first time

¹⁰² ascribe/attribute to

¹⁰³ as long as

¹⁰⁴ extreme hunger, starvation

¹⁰⁵ held intimate mental intercourse

¹⁰⁶ where God directed Elijah to hide from King Ahab: see 1 Kings 17:2–3

*Into the desert, and how there he slept
 Under a juniper, then how, awaked,
 He found his supper on the coals prepared,
 And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
 And ate the second time after repose,
 The strength whereof sufficed him forty days.
 Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,¹⁰⁷
 Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.¹⁰⁸*

*Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
 Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry 280
 The morn's approach, and greet her with his song.
 As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
 Our Savior, and found all was but a dream:
 Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
 Up to a hill anon¹⁰⁹ his steps he reared,¹¹⁰
 From whose high top to ken¹¹¹ the prospect¹¹² round,
 If cottage were in view, sheep-cote,¹¹³ or herd.
 But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
 Only in a bottom¹¹⁴ saw a pleasant grove,
 With chant¹¹⁵ of tuneful birds resounding loud. 290
 Thither he bent his way, determined there
 To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
 High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys¹¹⁶ brown,
 That opened¹¹⁷ in the midst a¹¹⁸ woody scene.*

¹⁰⁷ i.e., in his dream

¹⁰⁸ lentils, peas, beans ("plain/simple food")

¹⁰⁹ at once

¹¹⁰ lifted (went up)

¹¹¹ have knowledge of

¹¹² view, landscape

¹¹³ shed, stall

¹¹⁴ hollow, valley

¹¹⁵ singing

¹¹⁶ walks, passageways

¹¹⁷ spread out

¹¹⁸ of a

*Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught¹¹⁹ art),
 And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
 Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it round—
 When suddenly a man before him stood,
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier¹²⁰ clad,
 As one in city or court or palace bred,* 300
And with fair speech these words to him addressed:

*“With granted leave officious¹²¹ I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide,¹²²
 Of all things destitute and, well I know,
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,
 As story tells, have trod this wilderness:
 The fugitive bond-woman,¹²³ with her son,
 Outcast Nebaioth,¹²⁴ yet found here relief
 By a providing Angel. All the race* 310
*Of Israel here had¹²⁵ famished, had not God
 Rained from Heav'n manna. And that prophet bold,
 Native of Thebez,¹²⁶ wand'ring here, was fed
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
 Of thee those forty days none hath regard,
 Forty and more deserted here indeed.”*

To whom thus Jesus:

*“What conclud'st thou hence?
 They all had need. I, as thou see'st, have none.”*

*“How hast thou hunger then?” Satan replied.
 “Tell me, if food were now before thee set,* 320

¹¹⁹ having been taught

¹²⁰ more decorously

¹²¹ dutifully

¹²² remain, wait, continue

¹²³ Hagar: see Genesis 21:14–19

¹²⁴ her son was Ishmael, whose son was Nebaioth: see Genesis 25:12–13

¹²⁵ would have

¹²⁶ Elijah

Would'st thou not eat?"

"Thereafter as¹²⁷ I like¹²⁸

The giver," answered Jesus.

"Why should that

Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle fiend.

"Hast thou not right to all created things?

Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee

Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,

But tender¹²⁹ all their power?¹³⁰ Nor mention I

Meats by the law unclean, or offered first

To idols—those young Daniel¹³¹ could refuse.

Nor proffered by an enemy—though who

330

Would scruple¹³² that, with want¹³³ oppressed? Behold!

Nature ashamed (or, better to express,

Troubled) that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed¹³⁴

From all the elements her choicest store,

To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord

With honor. Only deign to sit and eat."

He spoke no dream, for as his words had end

Our Savior, lifting up his eyes, beheld

In ample space under the broadest shade

A table richly spread in regal mode,

340

With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort

And savor,¹³⁵ beasts of chase, or fowl of game,

In pastry built,¹³⁶ or from the spit, or boiled,

¹²⁷ thereafter as = according to how

¹²⁸ approve of

¹²⁹ offer, present

¹³⁰ vigor, energy, capacity

¹³¹ see Daniel 1:8–16

¹³² hesitate, be reluctant

¹³³ need

¹³⁴ supplied, furnished

¹³⁵ taste, quality

¹³⁶ framed (contained)

*Grisamber*¹³⁷ steamed—all fish, from sea or shore,
*Freshet*¹³⁸ or purling¹³⁹ brook, of shell or fin,
 And exquisitest name,¹⁴⁰ for which was drained
Pontus,¹⁴¹ and *Lucrine Bay*,¹⁴² and *Afric coast*.
 Alas! how simple,¹⁴³ to these cates¹⁴⁴ compared,
 Was that crude apple that diverted¹⁴⁵ Eve!
 And at a stately¹⁴⁶ sideboard,¹⁴⁷ by the wine
 That fragrant smell diffused,¹⁴⁸ in order stood
 Tall stripling¹⁴⁹ youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
 Than *Ganymede*¹⁵⁰ or *Hylas*.¹⁵¹ Distant more,
 Under the trees now¹⁵² tripped,¹⁵³ now solemn stood¹⁵⁴
Nymphs of Diana's train, and *Naiades*
 With fruits and flowers from *Amalthea's horn*,¹⁵⁵
 And ladies of the *Hesperides*,¹⁵⁶ that seemed

350

¹³⁷ ambergris, at one time used in cooking

¹³⁸ small freshwater stream

¹³⁹ flowing

¹⁴⁰ reputation

¹⁴¹ the Black Sea

¹⁴² near Naples

¹⁴³ plain, low

¹⁴⁴ dainties

¹⁴⁵ deflected, turned aside

¹⁴⁶ splendid, magnificent

¹⁴⁷ tablelike board

¹⁴⁸ spread abroad, poured out

¹⁴⁹ slender

¹⁵⁰ Trojan youth taken by Zeus as his cupbearer

¹⁵¹ handsome prince carried off by Hercules

¹⁵² now . . . now = first this, then that

¹⁵³ danced

¹⁵⁴ stood as if they were

¹⁵⁵ horn of plenty (*corum copiae*): Amalthea was the all-bountiful goat that suckled infant Zeus

¹⁵⁶ daughters of Night and guardians of the tree that bore golden apples

*Fairer than feigned¹⁵⁷ of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres,¹⁵⁸ or of Lyonesse,¹⁵⁹ 360
Lancelot, or Pelléas, or Pellenore.¹⁶⁰*

*And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming¹⁶¹ strings or charming pipes, and winds
Of gentlest gale¹⁶² Arabian odors fanned
From their soft wings, and Flora's¹⁶³ earliest smells.
Such was the splendor. And the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renewed:*

*“What doubts¹⁶⁴ the Son of God to sit and eat?
These are not fruits forbidd'n. No interdict¹⁶⁵
Defends¹⁶⁶ the touching of these viands¹⁶⁷ pure. 370
Their taste no knowledge works (at least of evil)
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle¹⁶⁸ ministers,¹⁶⁹ who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat.”*

*To whom thus Jesus temperately¹⁷⁰ replied:
“Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?*

¹⁵⁷ told, related

¹⁵⁸ middle region of Britain: see Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot*

¹⁵⁹ mythical region west of Cornwall, in Britain

¹⁶⁰ knights of King Arthur's court

¹⁶¹ concordant, harmonizing

¹⁶² a gentle wind, but not so soft as a breeze

¹⁶³ goddess of flowers

¹⁶⁴ hesitates, fears [verb]

¹⁶⁵ act of prohibition

¹⁶⁶ prohibits (under Jewish law)

¹⁶⁷ food, sustenance, victuals

¹⁶⁸ courteous, excellent, noble

¹⁶⁹ attendants, servants

¹⁷⁰ moderately, restrainedly

And who withholds my pow'r that right to use? 380
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
Arrayed in glory, on my cup t' attend.
Why should'st thou, then, obtrude¹⁷¹ this diligence¹⁷²
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous¹⁷³ delicacies¹⁷⁴ I contemn,¹⁷⁵ 390
And count thy specious¹⁷⁶ gifts no gifts, but guiles."
To whom thus answered Satan, malcontent.¹⁷⁷
"That I have also power to give thou see'st.
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
And, rather,¹⁷⁸ opportunely¹⁷⁹ in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent¹⁸⁰ need,
Why should'st thou not accept it? But I see
What I can do or offer is suspect.
Of these things others quickly will dispose, 400
Whose pains have earned the far-fet¹⁸¹ spoil."

With that

Both table and provision vanished quite,¹⁸²
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard.

¹⁷¹ push forward

¹⁷² careful attention

¹⁷³ splendid, pretentious

¹⁷⁴ [four syllables, first and third accented]

¹⁷⁵ scorn, disdain

¹⁷⁶ showy

¹⁷⁷ dissatisfied

¹⁷⁸ instead

¹⁷⁹ appropriately

¹⁸⁰ obvious

¹⁸¹ fetched-from-afar

¹⁸² completely, entirely

*Only the importune¹⁸³ Tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued:*

*“By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved.*

*Thy temperance,¹⁸⁴ invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,*

And all thy heart is set on high designs,

High actions. But wherewith to be achieved?

Great acts require great means of enterprise.¹⁸⁵

Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,

A carpenter thy father known, thyself

Bred up in poverty and straits¹⁸⁶ at home,

Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit.

Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire

To greatness? Whence authority deriv'st?¹⁸⁷

What followers, what retinue¹⁸⁸ canst thou gain,

Or¹⁸⁹ at thy heels the dizzy¹⁹⁰ multitude,

Longer than thou canst feed them on¹⁹¹ thy cost?

Money brings honor, friends, conquest, and realms.

What raised Antipater¹⁹² the Edomite,¹⁹³

And his son Herod, placed on Judah's throne

(Thy throne), but gold, that got him puissant friends?

Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,

410

420

¹⁸³ troublesome, persistent

¹⁸⁴ (1) temperament, (2) moderation

¹⁸⁵ management

¹⁸⁶ poor circumstances

¹⁸⁷ draw, obtain

¹⁸⁸ suite, train, company of servants

¹⁸⁹ or keep

¹⁹⁰ foolish, stupid, giddy

¹⁹¹ at

¹⁹² ruler of Judea, 63–43 B.C., and Herod's father [four syllables, second and fourth accented?]

¹⁹³ Semitic tribe located south of the Dead Sea; traditionally, descendants of Esau, son of Isaac and elder twin of Jacob

*Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap*¹⁹⁴—
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me.

Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand.

*They whom I favor thrive in wealth amain,*¹⁹⁵ 430
While virtue, valor, wisdom, sit in want.”

To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:

*“Yet wealth without these three*¹⁹⁶ *is impotent*
*To gain dominion, or to keep it, gained.*¹⁹⁷

Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
In height of all their flowing wealth dissolved,
*But men endued with these*¹⁹⁸ *have oft attained,*
In lowest poverty, to highest deeds:

*Gideon,*¹⁹⁹ *and Jephtha,*²⁰⁰ *and the shepherd lad*²⁰¹
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat 440

So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.

Among the heathen (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done,
Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
*Quintius,*²⁰² *Fabricius,*²⁰³ *Curius,*²⁰⁴ *Regulus?*²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁴ heap up [verb]

¹⁹⁵ exceedingly

¹⁹⁶ virtue, valor, wisdom

¹⁹⁷ once gained

¹⁹⁸ virtue, valor, wisdom

¹⁹⁹ see Judges 6–8

²⁰⁰ see Judges 11–12

²⁰¹ David

²⁰² Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, legendary hero, called from farming in 458 B.C. and, for urgent military reasons, made dictator; sixteen days later, having won the war, he resigned as dictator and went back to his farm

²⁰³ Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, consul in the early third century B.C., who refused all bribes, gifts, and favors; after his death, since he left nothing for his daughter's dowry, it was provided by the Senate

²⁰⁴ Manius Curius Dentatus, also early third century B.C., was a successful general who gave all booty to the Roman republic and then, like Cincinnatus, retired to his farm

²⁰⁵ Marcus Atilius Regulus, captured in the First Punic War (with Carthage) was

*For I esteem those names of men so poor
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches, though offered from the hand of kings.
 And what in me seems wanting²⁰⁶ but that I* 450
*May also, in this poverty, as soon
 Accomplish what they did, perhaps, and more?
 Extol not riches, then, the toil²⁰⁷ of fools,
 The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt
 To slacken virtue and abate²⁰⁸ her edge²⁰⁹
 Than prompt her to do aught²¹⁰ may merit praise.
 What if with like²¹¹ aversion I reject
 Riches and realms! Yet not for that²¹² a crown,
 Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns—
 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights* 460
*To him who wears the regal diadem,²¹³
 When on his shoulders each²¹⁴ man's burden lies.
 For therein stands²¹⁵ the office of a king,
 His honor, virtue, merit, and chief praise
 That for the public all this weight he bears.
 "Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules²¹⁶
 Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—
 Which every wise and virtuous man attains.
 And who attains not, ill aspires to rule*

paroled on condition he present Carthage's demands to Rome and then return; he advised rejection of Carthage's terms, then returned as he had agreed, and was tortured to death: see Horace, *Odes* 3:5

²⁰⁶ lacking, missing

²⁰⁷ snare, trap

²⁰⁸ diminish

²⁰⁹ sharpness

²¹⁰ anything that

²¹¹ similar

²¹² "yet not for that reason is"

²¹³ crown

²¹⁴ every

²¹⁵ shows, remains

²¹⁶ governs, controls

Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
Subject²¹⁷ himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving²¹⁸ doctrine, and from error lead
To know and, knowing, worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly. This attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous²¹⁹ mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.

480

“Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down²²⁰
Far more magnanimous,²²¹ than to assume.²²²
Riches are needless, then, both for themselves
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a scepter, ofttest better missed.”²²³

²¹⁷ [adjective, accent on first syllable]

²¹⁸ protecting, guarding

²¹⁹ noble

²²⁰ i.e., to give up a kingdom

²²¹ high-souled, nobly valiant

²²² receive, lay claim to: i.e., nobler to give or refuse than to take a kingdom

²²³ to be without, omitted

BOOK III

*So spoke the Son of God, and Satan stood
A while as mute, confounded¹ what to say,
What to reply, confuted² and convinced³
Of his weak arguing and fallacious⁴ drift.⁵
At length, collecting⁶ all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renewed, him⁷ thus accosts:*

*“I see thou know’st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do.
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due: thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape. IO
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult⁸
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim,⁹ those oraculous gems
On Aaron’s breast, or tongue of seers¹⁰ old*

¹ confused, perplexed

² (1) proven wrong, (2) futile

³ (1) convicted, (2) vanquished, overcome

⁴ flawed, unsound

⁵ direction

⁶ summoning up, regaining control of

⁷ Christ

⁸ ask advice/counsel of

⁹ see Leviticus 8:8: sacred means of divination attached to (not necessarily set into) the high priest’s breastplate, though exactly what the Urim and Thummim were (both words = grammatically plural) is not known

¹⁰ [bisyllabic]

*Infallible. Or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array¹¹ of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist¹²
In battle, though against thy few in arms.^{12A}* 20

*“These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting¹³ private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory—glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected¹⁴ spirits, most tempered¹⁵ pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers, all but the highest? 30
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son
Of Macedonian Philip¹⁶ had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus¹⁷ held
At his dispose. Young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride;¹⁸ young Pompey quelled
The Pontic king,¹⁹ and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius,²⁰ whom now all the world admires,*

¹¹ special preparation/readiness

¹² stand firm, hold out

^{12A} i.e., though there are many fighting “against thy few in arms”

¹³ professing

¹⁴ upright, uplifted, exalted

¹⁵ having been brought to the temperament/state of mind

¹⁶ Alexander the Great

¹⁷ kingdom of Persia, founded by Cyrus and overthrown by Alexander at Arbela in 331 B.C.

¹⁸ in Spain, when Scipio was probably less than thirty years old

¹⁹ Mithradates—though by then (66 B.C.) Pompey had reached the age of forty

²⁰ Julius Caesar

*The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious. But thou yet art not too late.”* 40

*To whom our Savior calmly thus replied:
“Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire’s sake, nor empire to affect²¹
For glory’s sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze²² of fame,
The people’s praise—if always praise unmixed?
And what²³ the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble,²⁴ who extol 50
Things vulgar and, well weighed,²⁵ scarce worth the
praise?*

*They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other.
And what delight to be by such extolled,
To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise—
His lot who dares be singularly²⁶ good.
Th’ intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.²⁷
This is true glory and renown—when God, 60
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges²⁸ him through Heav’n
To all His Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises. Thus He did to Job,*

²¹ seek

²² splendid display

²³ what are

²⁴ swarm

²⁵ valued

²⁶ separately, individually

²⁷ produced

²⁸ declares

*When to extend his fame through Heav'n and earth
 (As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember)
 He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'
 Famous he was in Heav'n; on earth less known,
 Where glory is false glory, attributed
 To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.* 70

*"They err who count it glorious to subdue
 By conquest far and wide, to overrun
 Large countries, and in field great battles win,
 Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
 But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
 Peaceable nations, neighboring or remote?
 Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
 Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
 Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
 And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,* 80
*Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
 Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
 Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice!
 One is the son of Jove,²⁹ of Mars³⁰ the other,
 Till conqueror Death discover³¹ them scarce men,
 Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,³²
 Violent or shameful Death their due reward.*

*"But if there be in glory aught of good,
 It may by means far different be attained,
 Without ambition, war, or violence—* 90
*By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
 By patience, temperance. I mention still
 Him whom thy wrongs with saintly patience borne,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure:*

²⁹ Alexander the Great was so identified

³⁰ Romulus was so identified

³¹ reveal, show

³² morally ugly/perverted

*Who names not now with honor patient Job?
 Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)
 By what he taught and suffered for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.*

Yet if for fame and glory aught be done, 100
*Aught suffered—if young African³³ for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic³⁴ rage—
 The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,
 Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but His
 Who sent me, and thereby witness³⁵ whence I am.”³⁶*

To whom the Tempter, murmuring, thus replied:
*“Think not so slight of glory, therein least
 Resembling thy great Father. He seeks glory,* 110
*And for His glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs, nor content in Heav'n,
 By all His Angels glorified, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.
 Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,
 Glory He requires, and glory He receives,
 Promiscuous³⁷ from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
 Or barbarous, nor exception hath declared.
 From us, His foes pronounced, glory He exacts.”* 120

*To whom our Savior fervently replied:
 “And reason,³⁸ since His Word all things produced,*

³³ Scipio Africanus

³⁴ Carthaginian

³⁵ prove

³⁶ am from, came

³⁷ en masse, without distinction

³⁸ i.e., and with reason

*Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth His goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely. Of whom what could He less expect
Than glory and benediction³⁹—that is, thanks—
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return Him nothing else?
And not returning that, would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonor, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence!*

130

*“But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
Who for so many benefits received
Turned recreant⁴⁰ to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoiled,⁴¹
Yet sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs?
Yet so much bounty⁴² is in God, such grace,
That who advances His glory, not their own,
Them He Himself to glory will advance.”*

140

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

*“Of glory, as thou wilt,” said he, “so deem,
Worth or not worth the seeking. Let it pass.
But to a kingdom thou art born—ordained*

150

³⁹ thankful blessing

⁴⁰ false

⁴¹ stripped

⁴² goodness, kindness

*To sit upon thy father David's throne,
 By mother's side thy father, though thy right
 Be now in powerful hands that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms.
 Judaea now, and all the promised land
 Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius,⁴³ nor is always ruled
 With temperate sway. Oft have they violated 160
 The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
 Antiochus.⁴⁴ And think'st thou to regain
 Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?
 So did not Machabeus.⁴⁵ He indeed
 Retired unto the desert, but with arms,
 And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed
 That by strong hand his family obtained,
 Though priests, the crown, and David's throne
 usurped,
 With Modin and her suburbs once content. 170
 "If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
 And duty. Zeal and duty are not slow,
 But on occasion's⁴⁶ forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves, rather, are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
 Thy country from her heathen servitude.
 So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify,
 The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign—
 The happier reign the sooner it begins.*

⁴³ Roman emperor, A.D. 14–37

⁴⁴ He caused the Hasmonean uprising by plundering Temple treasures, desecrating the altar, and more

⁴⁵ Judah Maccabeus, who led the Hasmonean uprising; he was born in Modin

⁴⁶ opportunity's

Reign then. What canst thou better do the while?" 180

To whom our Savior answer thus returned:

*"All things are best fulfilled in their due time,
And time there is for all things, truth hath said.*

If of my reign prophetic writ hath told

That it shall never end, so when begin

The Father in His purpose hath decreed,

He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.

What if He hath decreed that I shall first

Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,

By tribulations, injuries, insults, 190

Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,

Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting

Without distrust or doubt, that He may know

What I can suffer, how obey? Who best

Can suffer, best can do, best reign who first

Well hath obeyed—just trial ere I merit

My exaltation without change or end.

"But what concerns it thee when I begin

My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou

Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition? 200

Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,

And my promotion will be thy destruction?"

To whom the Tempter, inly racked,⁴⁷ replied:

"Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost

Of my reception into grace. What worse?

For where no hope is left, is left no fear.

If there be worse, the expectation more

Of worse torments me than the feeling can.

I would be at the worst. Worst is my port,

My harbor, and my ultimate repose, 210

⁴⁷ tortured

*The end I would attain, my final good.
 My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime, whatever for itself condemned,
 And will alike be punished whether thou
 Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow
 Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
 From that placid⁴⁸ aspect and meek regard,
 Rather than aggravate my evil state
 Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
 (Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell),* 220
*A shelter and a kind of shading cool
 Interposition,⁴⁹ as a summer's cloud.*

*“If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,
 Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?
 Happiest, both to thyself and all the world
 That thou, who worthiest art, should'st be their king!
 Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detained
 Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
 No wonder, for though in thee be united
 What of perfection can in man be found,* 230
*Or human nature can receive, consider
 Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
 At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
 And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
 Short sojourn—and what thence could'st thou observe?
 The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
 Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
 Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
 In all things that to greatest actions lead.
 The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever* 240
*Timorous, and loath, with novice modesty
 (As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom),⁵⁰*

⁴⁸ peaceful

⁴⁹ intervention, mediation

⁵⁰ Saul: see I Samuel 9ff.

*Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous.
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit⁵¹
 Those rudiments,⁵² and see before thine eyes
 The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and state,
 Sufficient introduction to inform
 Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts
 And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
 How best their opposition to withstand."* 250

*With that (such power was giv'n him then), he took
 The Son of God up to a mountain high.
 It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
 A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
 Lay pleasant. From his⁵³ side two rivers⁵⁴ flowed,
 The one winding, th' other straight, and left between
 Fair champaign,⁵⁵ with less⁵⁶ rivers interveined,
 Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.
 Fertile of corn⁵⁷ the glebe,⁵⁸ of oil, and wine;
 With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills; 260
 Huge cities and high-tower'd, that well might seem
 The seats of mightiest monarchs; and so large
 The prospect⁵⁹ was that here and there was room
 For barren desert, fountainless⁶⁰ and dry.
 To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought
 Our Savior, and new train of words began:*

⁵¹ leave, give up

⁵² beginnings

⁵³ i.e., the mountain's

⁵⁴ the Tigris and the Euphrates

⁵⁵ open, level country

⁵⁶ lesser, smaller

⁵⁷ grain

⁵⁸ soil

⁵⁹ view

⁶⁰ without springs or headsprings (sources of rivers)

*“Well have we speeded,⁶¹ and o’er hill and dale,
 Forest, and field and flood, temples and towers,
 Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold’st
 Assyria, and her empire’s ancient bounds, 270
 Araxes⁶² and the Caspian lake. Thence on
 As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
 And oft beyond. To south the Persian Bay,
 And, inaccessible,⁶³ th’ Arabian drought.⁶⁴
 Here Nineveh,⁶⁵ of length within her walls
 Several days’ journey, built by Ninus⁶⁶ old,
 Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
 And seat of Salmanassar;⁶⁷ whose success⁶⁸
 Israel in long captivity still mourns.
 There Babylon,⁶⁹ the wonder of all tongues, 280
 As⁷⁰ ancient, but rebuilt by him⁷¹ who twice
 Judah and all thy father David’s house
 Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
 Till Cyrus⁷² set them free. Persepolis,⁷³
 His city, there thou see’st, and Bactra⁷⁴ there.*

⁶¹ (1) hastened, (2) gotten where we wanted to go

⁶² Armenian river, flowing into the Caspian Sea

⁶³ unapproachable

⁶⁴ desert

⁶⁵ capital city of Assyrian empire after about 1100 B.C.

⁶⁶ king of Assyria, husband of Semiramis

⁶⁷ king of Assyria, d. 722 B.C.

⁶⁸ in 726 B.C.

⁶⁹ immense city on the Euphrates

⁷⁰ just as

⁷¹ Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, 605–562 B.C.

⁷² king of Persia: Cyrus captured Babylon in 538 B.C. and released the captive Jews

⁷³ in southern Persia: residence and burial place of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, etc.

⁷⁴ northeast of Persepolis, ancient capital of Bactria, now in Afghanistan

*Ecbatana*⁷⁵ her structure vast there shows,
*And Hecatompylos*⁷⁶ her hundred gates.
*There Susa*⁷⁷ by Choaspes,⁷⁸ amber stream,
The drink of none but kings. Of later fame,
*Built by Emathian*⁷⁹ or by Parthian⁸⁰ hands, 290
*The great Seleucia,*⁸¹ *Nisibis,*⁸² *and there*
*Artaxata,*⁸³ *Teredon,*⁸⁴ *Ctesiphon,*⁸⁵
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold.
“All these the Parthian (now some ages past
*By great Arsaces*⁸⁶ *led, who founded first*
That empire) under his dominion holds,
*From the luxurious*⁸⁷ *kings of Antioch*⁸⁸ *won.*
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power, for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host 300
*Against the Scythian,*⁸⁹ *whose incursions wild*

⁷⁵ summer residence of Darius

⁷⁶ Parthian capital, southeast of the Caspian Sea [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

⁷⁷ Shushan, city at northwestern tip of Persian Gulf, capital of Susiana/Elam and later of Persia

⁷⁸ river east of Tigris, flowing through Susa/Shushan

⁷⁹ Macedonian

⁸⁰ seminomadic culture in western Asia, famous for bow-wielding cavalry

⁸¹ capital of Selucid empire, founded by Seleucus I Nicator; located on the Tigris

⁸² city in northwestern Mesopotamia, south of the Tigris

⁸³ city in Armenia, southeast of the Black Sea; located on the Araxes River

⁸⁴ town at northeastern end of Persian Gulf, near the juncture of the Tigris and the Euphrates

⁸⁵ city on the Tigris, near Seleucia [trisyllabic, first and third accented; first letter silent]

⁸⁶ founder of Parthian empire, ca. 248 B.C.

⁸⁷ (1) extravagant, (2) unchaste, lewd

⁸⁸ city on the Orontes River, capital of Syria

⁸⁹ fierce “barbarian” people living north and east of the Black and Caspian Seas

*Have wasted Sogdiana.⁹⁰ To her aid
 He marches now in haste. See, though from far,
 His thousands, in what martial equipage
 They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
 Of equal dread⁹¹ in flight or in pursuit—
 All horsemen, in which fight they most excel.
 See how in warlike muster they appear,
 In rhombs,⁹² and wedges,⁹³ and half-moons⁹⁴ and wings.”*

310

*He⁹⁵ looked, and saw what numbers numberless
 The city gates outpoured, light-armed troops
 In coats of mail and military pride.⁹⁶
 In mail their horses clad, yet fleet⁹⁷ and strong,
 Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
 Of many provinces from bound⁹⁸ to bound,
 From Arachosia,⁹⁹ from Candaor¹⁰⁰ east,
 And Margiana,¹⁰¹ to the Hyrcanian¹⁰² cliffs
 Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian¹⁰³ dales—
 From Atropatia,¹⁰⁴ and the neighboring plains*

⁹⁰ region northeast of Parthia

⁹¹ fearsomeness

⁹² lozenge/diamond-shaped military formation

⁹³ half-rhomb military formation

⁹⁴ i.e., with most of the army concentrated in the center

⁹⁵ Christ

⁹⁶ splendor, pomp, display

⁹⁷ swift

⁹⁸ border

⁹⁹ eastern Parthia, a region west of the Indus River

¹⁰⁰ Kandahar, in modern Afghanistan

¹⁰¹ northern Parthia, between Bactria and Parthia

¹⁰² Hyrcania: province of ancient Persian empire, southeast of the Caspian Sea

¹⁰³ region in the Caucasus, *not* Spain

¹⁰⁴ Media-Atropatena, west of Parthia, between the Caspian Sea and Armenia

Of Adiabean,¹⁰⁵ Media,¹⁰⁶ and the south 320
Of Susiana¹⁰⁷ to Balsara's¹⁰⁸ hav'n.¹⁰⁹
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight.
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,
Nor wanted¹¹⁰ clouds of foot,¹¹¹ nor on each horn¹¹²
Cuirassiers¹¹³ all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants endorsed¹¹⁴ with towers
Of archers, nor of laboring pioneers¹¹⁵ 330
A multitude, with spades and axes armed,
To lay hills plain,¹¹⁶ fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was, raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke.
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,¹¹⁷
And wagons fraught¹¹⁸ with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican¹¹⁹ with all his northern powers

¹⁰⁵ near Nineveh, south of Armenia, on the Tigris: part of Assyria

¹⁰⁶ see footnote 104, above

¹⁰⁷ southeastern Persia: Susa was its capital

¹⁰⁸ Basra, north of Persian Gulf, south of Susa

¹⁰⁹ port, harbor

¹¹⁰ lacked

¹¹¹ foot soldiers

¹¹² an army had two horns/wings

¹¹³ soldiers in armor

¹¹⁴ loaded

¹¹⁵ soldier-diggers

¹¹⁶ flat, level, smooth, even

¹¹⁷ one-humped swift camels

¹¹⁸ filled

¹¹⁹ Tatar king in Boiardo's romance *Orlando Innamorato* ("Roland in Love")

*Besieged Albracca,¹²⁰ as romances tell,
 The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win* 340
*The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
 His daughter, sought by many prowest¹²¹ knights,
 Both paynim¹²² and the peers¹²³ of Charlemagne.
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry,
 At sight whereof the fiend yet more presumed,¹²⁴
 And to our Savior thus his words renewed:*
*“That thou may’st know I seek not to engage¹²⁵
 Thy virtue, and not every way secure¹²⁶
 On no slight¹²⁷ grounds thy safety, hear and mark¹²⁸
 To what end I have brought thee hither; and show* 350
*All this fair sight. Thy kingdom, though foretold
 By prophet or by Angel, unless thou
 Endeavor, as thy father¹²⁹ David did,
 Thou never shalt obtain. Prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means;
 Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possessed of David’s throne
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
 Samaritan¹³⁰ or Jew, how could’st thou hope
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure* 360
Between two such enclosing enemies,

¹²⁰ fortress of King Gallophrone, Angelica’s father

¹²¹ bravest, most chivalric

¹²² pagan

¹²³ high nobles

¹²⁴ pressed forward

¹²⁵ win over

¹²⁶ make secure/safe [verb]

¹²⁷ contemptible, small

¹²⁸ note

¹²⁹ progenitor, ancestor

¹³⁰ descendants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, religiously and politically at odds with the Jews

*Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
 Thou must make sure thy own. The Parthian first,
 By my advice, as nearer, and of late
 Found able by invasion to annoy¹³¹
 Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
 Antigonus,¹³² and old Hyracanus—bound,
 Maugre¹³³ the Roman. It shall be my task
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose,
 Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.¹³⁴ 370
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee
 In David's royal seat, his true successor—
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
 Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
 In Habor,¹³⁵ and among the Medes¹³⁶ dispersed:
 Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph,¹³⁷ lost
 Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
 Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver. 380
 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,
 Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear.”*

*To whom our Savior answered thus, unmoved:
 “Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war,*

¹³¹ molest, injure

¹³² Hyrcanus II, made king of Judah by Rome; he was attacked by Antigonus; both were abducted by Parthians

¹³³ in spite of

¹³⁴ alliance, treaty

¹³⁵ modern Khabar, near the Euphrates: see 2 Kings 17:6, 18:11

¹³⁶ inhabitants of Media, in Parthia

¹³⁷ i.e., those of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh: see note 130, above

*Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
 Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear* 390
*Vented much policy,¹³⁸ and projects deep
 Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
 Plausible¹³⁹ to the world, to me worth naught.
 Means I must use, thou say'st. Prediction else
 Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne!
 My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
 Were better farthest off), is not yet come.
 When that comes, think not thou to find me slack¹⁴⁰
 On my part aught endeavoring, or to need
 Thy politic¹⁴¹ maxims, or that cumbersome* 400
*Luggage of war there shown me, argument¹⁴²
 Of human weakness rather than of strength.
 My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes,
 I must deliver, if I mean to reign
 David's true heir, and his full scepter sway¹⁴³
 To just extent over all Israel's sons!
 But whence to thee this zeal? Where was it then
 For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
 When thou stood'st up¹⁴⁴ his tempter¹⁴⁵ to the pride
 Of numbering¹⁴⁶ Israel, which cost the lives* 410
*Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
 By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal*

¹³⁸ political cunning

¹³⁹ praiseworthy, fair-seeming

¹⁴⁰ remiss, neglectful

¹⁴¹ scheming, crafty

¹⁴² evidence

¹⁴³ wield

¹⁴⁴ confronted (him) as

¹⁴⁵ see 1 Chronicles 21:1ff.

¹⁴⁶ counting, making a census of

To Israel then, the same that now to me.

*“As for those captive tribes, themselves were
they*

*Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all th’ idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes.*

Nor in the land of their captivity 420

*Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers, but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From gentiles but¹⁴⁷ by circumcision vain,¹⁴⁸
And God with idols in their worship joined.*

*Should I of these the liberty regard¹⁴⁹
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
Headlong¹⁵⁰ would follow,¹⁵¹ and to their gods
perhaps* 430

*Of Bethel and of Dan? No, let them serve
Their enemies who serve idols with God.
Yet He at length, time to Himself best known,
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave th’ Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once He cleft*

¹⁴⁷ except

¹⁴⁸ idle, useless, of no significance/value

¹⁴⁹ look to, have a care for

¹⁵⁰ with blind speed

¹⁵¹ go after, pursue

*When to the promised land their fathers passed.
To His due time and providence I leave them.”*

440

*So spoke Israel's true king, and to the fiend
Made answer meet,¹⁵² that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.*

¹⁵² fit, suitable

BOOK IV

*Perplexed and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked¹ his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little² here—nay lost! But Eve was Eve.
This far his over-match, who self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own.
But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,
To salve³ his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils⁴ him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more—
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
About the wine-press where sweet must⁵ is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound—
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers⁶ dashed, th' assault renew
(Vain battery!⁷) and in froth or bubbles end—*

10

20

¹ polished

² little won

³ heal, make good

⁴ defeats, frustrates

⁵ new wine in process

⁶ splinters, chips

⁷ battering

*So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate⁸ of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.*

*He brought our Savior to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain,⁹ long, but in breadth not wide,
Washed by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
That screened the fruits of th' earth and seats of men 30
From cold Septentrion¹⁰ blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, off whose banks
On each side an imperial city¹¹ stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches¹² and theaters,¹³ baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies,¹⁴ and triumphal arcs,¹⁵
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes
Above the height of mountains interposed
(By what strange parallax, or optic skill 40
Of vision, multiplied through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious¹⁶ to enquire).
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:*

*“The city which thou see'st no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth*

⁸ despairing

⁹ central Italy: Tyrrhenian Sea to the south, Apennine Range to the northwest, the plain split by the River Tiber

¹⁰ northern

¹¹ Rome

¹² galleries, colonnades

¹³ [trissyllabic, first and third accented]

¹⁴ memorial structures, commemorating military success

¹⁵ arches

¹⁶ noteworthy (interesting)

*So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
 Of nations. There the capitol¹⁷ thou see'st,
 Above the rest lifting his stately¹⁸ head
 On the Tarpeian rock,¹⁹ her citadel
 Impregnable, and there Mount Palatine, 50
 Th' imperial palace, compass²⁰ huge, and high
 The structure, skill of noblest architects,
 With gilded battlements, conspicuous²¹ far,
 Turrets and terraces, and glittering spires.
 Many a fair edifice besides, more like
 Houses of gods (so well I have disposed²²
 My airy microscope²³) thou may'st behold,
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carved work, the hand of famed artificers²⁴
 In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold. 60*

*“Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux²⁵ issuing forth, or entering in:
 Praetors,²⁶ proconsuls²⁷ to their provinces
 Hasting, or on return, in robes of state,
 Lictors²⁸ and rods, the ensigns²⁹ of their power;*

¹⁷ citadel (fortress) built on top of a hill

¹⁸ majestic, dignified

¹⁹ part of the Capitoline Hill

²⁰ of limits/bounds

²¹ visible

²² adjusted, placed

²³ optical instrument

²⁴ craftsmen [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

²⁵ stream, flowing

²⁶ magistrates

²⁷ governors of provinces

²⁸ attendants carrying bundles of rods with an ax wrapped inside, the blade projecting

²⁹ symbols

*Legions and cohorts,³⁰ turms³¹ of horse and wings,
 Or embassies from regions far remote,
 In various habits,³² on the Appian road,³³
 Or on the Emilian,³⁴ some from farthest south,
 Syene,³⁵ and where the shadow both way falls, 70
 Meroë,³⁶ Nilotic isle, and more to west
 The realm of Bocchus³⁷ to the Blackmoor sea.³⁸
 From th' Asian kings (and Parthian among these),
 From India and the golden Chersoness,³⁹
 And utmost Indian isle, Taprobane,⁴⁰
 Dusk faces with white silken turbants⁴¹ wreathed.
 From Gallia,⁴² Gades,⁴³ and the British west,
 Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians⁴⁴ north
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.⁴⁵
 All nations now to Rome obedience pay, 80
 To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain,
 In ample territory, wealth and power,
 Civility⁴⁶ of manners, arts and arms,*

³⁰ one-tenth of a legion

³¹ cavalry: one-tenth of a wing (flank)

³² garments, dress, clothing

³³ from Rome to Brindisi, seaport in southern Italy

³⁴ from Rome north to the Adriatic Sea

³⁵ Aswan, in southern Egypt on the Upper Nile

³⁶ region in the Upper Nile, considered (but in fact not) an island

³⁷ North African king, ca. 105 B.C.

³⁸ i.e., the Mediterranean Sea off the northwest African coast

³⁹ Chersonese: the Malay Peninsula

⁴⁰ Ceylon or Sumatra

⁴¹ turbans

⁴² Gaul (now France)

⁴³ Cadiz

⁴⁴ people east of Germany, between the Vistula and the Volga

⁴⁵ the Sea of Azov, northeast of and connected to the Black Sea

⁴⁶ politeness

*And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed.⁴⁷*

*These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.*

*"This Emperor⁴⁸ hath no son, and now is old, 90
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Capri,⁴⁹ an island small but strong
On the Campanian⁵⁰ shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favorite⁵¹*

*All public cares, and yet of him suspicious—
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,*

*Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne, 100
Now made a sty, and in his place ascending,
A victor-people free⁵² from servile yoke!*

*"And with my help thou may'st. To me the power
Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.*

*Aim, therefore, at no less than all the world.
Aim at the highest: without the highest attained
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."*

*To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied: 110
"Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though called magnificence,*

⁴⁷ distant, remote, secluded

⁴⁸ Tiberius

⁴⁹ island south of Naples

⁵⁰ Roman province (Naples, Pompeii, etc.)

⁵¹ Sejanus, finally executed in A.D. 29

⁵² [verb]

*More than of arms, before, allure mine eye,
 Much less my mind, though thou should'st add to tell
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous⁵³ feasts
 On citron⁵⁴ tables or Atlantic stone⁵⁵
 (For I have also heard, perhaps have read),
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,⁵⁶
 Chios and Crete,⁵⁷ and how they quaff in gold,
 Crystal, and myrrhine cups embossed with gems
 And studs⁵⁸ of pearl—to me should'st tell, who thirst 120
 And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
 From nations far and nigh! What honor that?
 But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
 So many hollow compliments and lies,
 Outlandish⁵⁹ flatteries. Then proceed'st to talk
 Of the Emperor, how easily subdued,
 How gloriously. I shall, thou say'st, expel
 A brutish monster. What if I withal
 Expel a Devil who first made him such?
 Let his tormentor, conscience, find him out. 130
 For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
 That people, victor once, now vile and base,
 Deservedly made vassal—who, once just,
 Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
 But govern ill the nations under yoke,
 Peeling⁶⁰ their provinces, exhausted all
 By lust and rapine—first ambitious grown*

⁵³ showy

⁵⁴ of citrus wood

⁵⁵ marble from the Atlas mountains in North Africa

⁵⁶ three then-famous Italian wines, from Sezza, near Rome, and Cales and Falernia, near Mt. Vesuvius

⁵⁷ two then-famous Greek wines: see Horace, *Odes* 3:19

⁵⁸ ornaments

⁵⁹ foreign, bizarre, uncouth

⁶⁰ pillaging

*Of triumph, that insulting⁶¹ vanity,
 Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed, 140
 Luxurious⁶² by⁶³ their wealth, and greedier still,
 And from⁶⁴ the daily scene⁶⁵ effeminate.⁶⁶
 What wise and valiant man would seek to free
 These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free?*

*“Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
 On David’s throne, it shall be like a tree
 Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
 Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
 All monarchies besides⁶⁷ throughout the world, 150
 And of my kingdom there shall be no end.
 Means there shall be to this, but what the means
 Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.”*

*To whom the Tempter, impudent,⁶⁸ replied:
 “I see all offers made by me how slight
 Thou valu’st, because offered and reject’st.
 Nothing will please the difficult and nice,⁶⁹
 Or nothing more than still⁷⁰ to contradict.
 On th’ other side, know also thou that I
 On what I offer set as high esteem, 160
 Nor what I part with mean to give for naught.
 All these, which in a moment thou behold’st,
 The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give*

⁶¹ (1) arrogant, (2) outrageous

⁶² unchaste

⁶³ because of

⁶⁴ because of

⁶⁵ (1) theatrical performances, (2) their daily existence

⁶⁶ overly refined, soft

⁶⁷ “besides my own”

⁶⁸ shameless

⁶⁹ fussy, fastidious

⁷⁰ always

*(For, giv'n to me, I give to whom I please),
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else—
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down
And worship me as thy superior Lord
(Easily done), and hold them all of me.
For what can less so great a gift deserve?"*

*Whom thus our Savior answered with disdain: 170
"I never liked thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
Th' abominable terms, impious condition.
But I endure⁷¹ the time, till which expired
Thou hast permission⁷² on me. It is written,
The first of all commandments, 'Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve.'⁷³
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound⁷⁴
To worship thee, accursed? Now more accursed
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve, 180
And more blasphemous, which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n!
Permitted, rather; and by thee usurped.
Other donation⁷⁵ none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme? If giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
As offer them to me, the Son of God— 190
To me my own, on such abhorrèd pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?"*

⁷¹ submit to

⁷² liberty, licence

⁷³ see Exodus 20:2–3, Deuteronomy 6:12–15, and Matthew 4:8–10

⁷⁴ propose

⁷⁵ grant, gift

*Get thee behind me! Plain thou now appear'st
That Evil One, Satan, forever damned."*

To whom the fiend, with fear abashed, replied:

"Be not so sore offended, Son of God—

Though Sons of God both Angels are and men—

If I, to try⁷⁶ whether in higher sort⁷⁷

Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed

What both from men and Angels I receive,

200

Tetrachs⁷⁸ of fire, air, flood, and on the earth

Nations besides, from all the quartered winds—⁷⁹

God of this world invoked,⁸⁰ and world beneath.

Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold

To me so fatal, me it most concerns.

The trial⁸¹ hath endamaged thee no way—

Rather more honor left, and more esteem—

Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.

Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,

The kingdoms of this world. I shall no more

210

Advise thee. Gain them as thou canst, or not.

"And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined

Than to a worldly crown, addicted⁸² more

To contemplation and profound dispute,

As by that early action may be judged,

When slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st

Alone into the Temple. There wast found

⁷⁶ test

⁷⁷ state

⁷⁸ the lesser rulers

⁷⁹ i.e., blowing from the four quarters of the earth

⁸⁰ called: that is, Satan is currently called god both of earth and of Hell

⁸¹ test

⁸² devoted

*Among the gravest⁸³ rabbis disputant
 On points and questions fitting Moses' chair;⁸⁴
 Teaching, not taught.⁸⁵ The childhood shows the man, 220
 As morning shows the day. Be famous, then,
 By wisdom. As thy empire must extend,
 So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
 In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
 All knowledge is not couched⁸⁶ in Moses' law,
 The Pentateuch,⁸⁷ or what the prophets wrote.
 The gentiles⁸⁸ also know, and write, and teach
 To admiration,⁸⁹ led by Nature's light,
 And with the gentiles much thou must converse,
 Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st. 230
 Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
 Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?⁹⁰
 How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
 Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
 Error by his own arms⁹¹ is best evinced.⁹²
 "Look once more, ere we leave this specular⁹³ mount,
 Westward, much nearer by south-west. Behold
 Where on th' Aegean shore a city stands,
 Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—
 Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts 240*

⁸³ most authoritative

⁸⁴ "Then spake Jesus . . . , saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat . . ." Matthew 23:1-2

⁸⁵ see Luke 2:42-49

⁸⁶ contained

⁸⁷ the first five books of the Old Testament

⁸⁸ heathen, pagans

⁸⁹ to admiration: wonderfully

⁹⁰ appropriate [adjective]

⁹¹ weapons

⁹² convinced

⁹³ affording a wide view

*And eloquence, native to famous wits
 Or hospitable,⁹⁴ in her sweet recess,⁹⁵
 City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
 See there the olive-grove of Academe,⁹⁶
 Plato's retirement,⁹⁷ where the Attic bird⁹⁸
 Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.
 There flow'ry hill, Hymettus,⁹⁹ with the sound
 Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
 To studious musing; there Ilissus¹⁰⁰ rolls
 His whispering stream. Within the walls then view 250
 The schools of ancient sages—his¹⁰¹ who bred¹⁰²
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,
 Lyceum¹⁰³ there, and painted Stoa¹⁰⁴ next.
 There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
 Of harmony, in tones and numbers¹⁰⁵ hit¹⁰⁶
 By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
 Aeolian¹⁰⁷ charms¹⁰⁸ and Dorian¹⁰⁹ lyric odes,
 And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,*

⁹⁴ i.e., either “native” or “hospitable” to those not native

⁹⁵ (1) niche, coastal indentation, (2) privacy

⁹⁶ public park northwest of Athens

⁹⁷ secluded place

⁹⁸ nightingale

⁹⁹ mountain near Athens

¹⁰⁰ river running from Mt. Hymettus south into the sea

¹⁰¹ Aristotle

¹⁰² developed, produced (as Alexander's tutor)

¹⁰³ park east of Athens

¹⁰⁴ Athenian colonnade, with painted frescoes, where Zeno the Stoic taught

¹⁰⁵ measures, rhythms: the term was used both in music and in poetry

¹⁰⁶ attained

¹⁰⁷ Aeolic: Greek dialect used by Sappho, Alcaeus, and others

¹⁰⁸ songs

¹⁰⁹ (1) the Doric dialect of Greek, (2) the choral lyric poetry written in that dialect (as, e.g., by Pindar, who was himself a speaker of the Boeotian dialect)

*Blind Melesigenes,¹¹⁰ thence Homer called,
 Whose poem Phoebus¹¹¹ challenged¹¹² for his own. 260
 Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
 In chorus or iambic,¹¹³ teachers best
 Of moral prudence,¹¹⁴ with delight received
 In brief sententious¹¹⁵ precepts, while they treat
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
 High actions and high passions best describing.
 Thence to the famous orators repair,¹¹⁶
 Those ancient whose resistless eloquence
 Wielded¹¹⁷ at will that fierce democracy,
 Shook the Arsenal,¹¹⁸ and fulminated¹¹⁹ over Greece 270
 To Macedon¹²⁰ and Artaxerxes¹²¹ throne.
 To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
 From Heav'n descended to the low-roofed house
 Of Socrates—see there his tenement,¹²²
 Whom well inspired the oracle pronounced
 Wisest of men, from whose mouth issued forth
 Mellifluous¹²³ streams, that watered all the schools
 Of Academics old and new, with those*

¹¹⁰ “born in/of Meles”: the River Meles, in Asia Minor, was one of Homer’s supposed birthplaces [five syllables, first, third, and fifth accented]

¹¹¹ Apollo

¹¹² claimed

¹¹³ iambic trimeter, used in dramatic scenes

¹¹⁴ wisdom

¹¹⁵ full of wisdom

¹¹⁶ make one’s way, go, resort

¹¹⁷ ruled, commanded, controlled, directed

¹¹⁸ Athenian harbor building, construction of which was suspended in 339 B.C. because of Demosthenes, 384–322, famous Athenian orator

¹¹⁹ thundered

¹²⁰ region between Balkans and Greece: famous for Philip II and his son, Alexander the Great

¹²¹ Persian king; on Sparta’s side in the war against Athens

¹²² dwelling

¹²³ sweetly flowing

*Surnamed¹²⁴ Peripatetics,¹²⁵ and the sect
Epicurean,¹²⁶ and the Stoic severe.* 280

*“These here revolve¹²⁷ or, as thou lik’st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom’s weight.
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined.”*

*To whom our Savior sagely thus replied:
“Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not. Not therefore am I short¹²⁸
Of knowing what I ought. He who receives
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
No other doctrine needs, though¹²⁹ granted¹³⁰ true.* 290
*But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest¹³¹ of them all professed
To know this only, that he nothing knew.
The next¹³² to fabling fell and smooth conceits.
A third sort¹³³ doubted all things, though plain sense.
Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life.
In corporal pleasure he,¹³⁴ and careless ease.
The Stoic last, in philosophic pride* 300
(By him called virtue) and his virtuous man,

¹²⁴ given an additional name, title, or epithetic description

¹²⁵ Aristotle and his pupils were peripatetic (“walking about”)

¹²⁶ Epicurus and his followers

¹²⁷ consider, meditate upon

¹²⁸ inadequate

¹²⁹ even if

¹³⁰ acknowledged, admitted

¹³¹ Socrates

¹³² Plato

¹³³ Pyrrho, Sceptic founder

¹³⁴ Epicurus

*Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
 Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
 As fearing God nor man, contemning¹³⁵ all
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life—
 Which, when he lists,¹³⁶ he leaves, or boasts he can,
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
 Or subtle shifts,¹³⁷ conviction to evade.*

*“Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead,
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, 310
 And how the world began, and how man fell,
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
 Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
 And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
 All glory arrogate,¹³⁸ to God give none,
 Rather accuse Him under usual names,
 Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
 Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these
 True wisdom finds her not, or by delusion
 Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, 320
 An empty cloud. However many books,
 Wise men have said, are wearisome. Who¹³⁹ reads
 Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
 A spirit and judgment equal or superior
 (And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?),
 Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
 Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
 And trifles for¹⁴⁰ choice¹⁴¹ matters, worth a sponge,¹⁴²*

¹³⁵ disdain

¹³⁶ wishes, desires

¹³⁷ stratagems, contrivances

¹³⁸ claim, assume

¹³⁹ whoever

¹⁴⁰ as if they were

¹⁴¹ select, of special excellence

¹⁴² eraser

As¹⁴³ children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language¹⁴⁴ can I find
That solace? All our Law and story strewn¹⁴⁵
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts derived—
Ill imitated while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own, 340
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating¹⁴⁶
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick-laid
As varnish¹⁴⁷ on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is praised aright and godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies and His Saints.
Such are from God inspired, not such from thee,¹⁴⁸ 350
Unless where¹⁴⁹ moral virtue is expressed
By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st as those
The top of eloquence—statists¹⁵⁰ indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem.
But herein to our prophets far beneath,

¹⁴³ like

¹⁴⁴ Hebrew

¹⁴⁵ sprinkled, spread

¹⁴⁶ impersonating, playing the part of

¹⁴⁷ means of adornment/embellishment, veneer, paint

¹⁴⁸ Satan

¹⁴⁹ in those cases where

¹⁵⁰ politicians

*As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of civil government,
 In their majestic, unaffected style,
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. 360
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat.
 These only, with our Law, best form a king.”*

*So spoke the Son of God. But Satan, now
 Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),¹⁵¹
 Thus to our Savior, with stern brow, replied:*

*“Since neither wealth nor honor, arms nor arts,
 Kingdom nor empire, pleases thee, nor aught
 By me proposed in life contemplative 370
 Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
 What dost thou in this world? The wilderness
 For thee is fittest place! I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee. Yet remember
 What I foretell thee. Soon thou shalt have cause
 To wish thou never had'st rejected, thus
 Nicely¹⁵² or cautiously, my offered aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, 380
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
 Now, contrary, if I read aught in Heav'n,
 Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the stars
 Voluminous,¹⁵³ or single characters
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell,¹⁵⁴*

¹⁵¹ used up, exhausted

¹⁵² fussily

¹⁵³ massive, copious

¹⁵⁴ utter, discourse

*Sorrows and labors, opposition, hate,
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes¹⁵⁵ and, lastly, cruel death.
A kingdom they portend¹⁵⁶ thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern¹⁵⁷ not, 390
Nor when. Eternal sure—as without end,
Without beginning, for no date prefixed
Directs¹⁵⁸ me in the starry rubric¹⁵⁹ set.”*

*So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring¹⁶⁰ night,
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere¹⁶¹ of light and absent day. 400
Our Savior, meek,¹⁶² and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt,¹⁶³ though hurried sore,¹⁶⁴
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse¹⁶⁵ of shades
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head,
But sheltered, slept in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams*

¹⁵⁵ whip lashes

¹⁵⁶ foretell

¹⁵⁷ perceive distinctly

¹⁵⁸ guides, gives directions

¹⁵⁹ instructive red-lettered text printed in prayer book margins

¹⁶⁰ sullen, dark

¹⁶¹ absolute, entire

¹⁶² calm, patient

¹⁶³ excursion, journey

¹⁶⁴ severely, very much

¹⁶⁵ flowing together, meeting

*Disturbed his sleep. And either Tropic¹⁶⁶ now
 'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n. The clouds* 410
*From many a horrid rift abortive¹⁶⁷ poured
 Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire,
 In ruin¹⁶⁸ reconciled,¹⁶⁹ nor slept the winds
 Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
 From the four hinges of the world and fell
 On the vexed¹⁷⁰ wilderness, whose tallest pines,
 Though rooted deep as high,¹⁷¹ and sturdiest oaks,
 Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
 Or torn up sheer.¹⁷² Ill wast thou shrouded¹⁷³ then,
 O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st* 420
*Unshaken! Nor yet stayed¹⁷⁴ the terror there.
 Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
 Environed thee: some howled, some yelled, some
 shrieked,
 Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
 Sat'st unappalled¹⁷⁵ in calm and sinless peace.
 Thus passed the night so foul, till morning fair
 Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice¹⁷⁶ gray,
 Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
 Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid¹⁷⁷ the winds*

¹⁶⁶ either Tropic: both circles of the celestial sphere

¹⁶⁷ premature

¹⁶⁸ falling

¹⁶⁹ equivalent

¹⁷⁰ agitated

¹⁷¹ roots extending as far into the earth as the tree extends into the air

¹⁷² completely

¹⁷³ covered

¹⁷⁴ stopped

¹⁷⁵ undismayed

¹⁷⁶ hood with gray fur, worn by clerics

¹⁷⁷ caused to subside

And grisly¹⁷⁸ specters, which the fiend had raised 430
To tempt¹⁷⁹ the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual¹⁸⁰ beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree. The birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up¹⁸¹ their choicest notes in bush and spray,¹⁸²
To gratulate¹⁸³ the sweet return of morn.

Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done, 440
The Prince of darkness—glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Savior came,
Yet with no new device¹⁸⁴ (they all were spent),
Rather by this his last affront¹⁸⁵ resolved,¹⁸⁶
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
And mad despite¹⁸⁷ to be so oft repelled.

Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood.
Out of the wood he starts in wonted¹⁸⁸ shape,
And in a careless¹⁸⁹ mood thus to him said: 450
“Fair morning yet betides¹⁹⁰ thee, Son of God,

¹⁷⁸ horrible, ugly

¹⁷⁹ make trial of

¹⁸⁰ effective

¹⁸¹ i.e., clearly sounded/uttered/brought forth

¹⁸² twig, shoot, slender branches

¹⁸³ welcome, greet, give thanks for

¹⁸⁴ plan, trick, stratagem

¹⁸⁵ encounter, meeting

¹⁸⁶ (1) relaxed, calmed, (2) determined

¹⁸⁷ outrage [noun]

¹⁸⁸ his usual

¹⁸⁹ unconcerned, artless

¹⁹⁰ befalls

*After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,¹⁹¹
 As earth and sky would mingle, but myself
 Was distant, and these flaws,¹⁹² though mortals fear them
 As dangerous to the pillared frame of Heav'n,
 Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
 Are to the main¹⁹³ as inconsiderable
 And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
 To man's lesser universe,¹⁹⁴ and soon are gone.
 Yet, as being oft-times noxious¹⁹⁵ where they light 460
 On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
 Like turbulencies in the affairs of men
 (Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point),¹⁹⁶
 They oft fore-signify and threaten ill.*

*"This tempest at this desert most was bent,¹⁹⁷
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
 The perfect season¹⁹⁸ offered with my aid
 To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong
 All to the push¹⁹⁹ of Fate, pursue thy way 470
 Of gaining David's throne no man knows when
 (For both the when and how is nowhere told):
 Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt,
 For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
 The time and means. Each act is rightliest done
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find*

¹⁹¹ storming

¹⁹² gusts, blasts

¹⁹³ the larger universe

¹⁹⁴ i.e., the human body

¹⁹⁵ harmful, injurious

¹⁹⁶ point to, mark

¹⁹⁷ directed

¹⁹⁸ time, period, occasion

¹⁹⁹ exerted influence

*What I foretold thee, many a hard assay²⁰⁰
 Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold, 480
 Whereof this ominous²⁰¹ night that closed thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies,²⁰²
 May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."*

*So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
 And stayed not, but in brief him answered thus:*

*"Me worse than wet thou find'st not. Other harm
 Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none.
 I never feared they could, though noising loud
 And threat'ning nigh. What they can do as signs
 Betokening or ill-boding I contemn 490
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee,
 Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
 Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
 At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
 Ambitious Spirit, and would'st be thought my God,
 And storm 'st,²⁰³ refused, thinking to terrify
 Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,
 And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."*

*To whom the fiend, now swoll'n with rage, replied:
 "Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born! 500
 For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
 Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
 By all the prophets; of thy birth, at length
 Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
 And of th' Angelic song in Bethlehem field
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Savior born.*

"From that time seldom have I ceased to eye

²⁰⁰ assault

²⁰¹ ill-omened

²⁰² portents, omens

²⁰³ rage

*Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred,
 Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all* 510
*Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest
 (Though not to be baptized), by voice from Heav'n
 Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
 And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
 In what degree²⁰⁴ or meaning thou art called
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
 The Son of God I also am, or was,
 And if I was, I am. Relation stands:
 All men are Sons of God. Yet thee I thought* 520
In some respect far higher so declared.

*“Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that
 hour,*

*And followed thee still on to this waste wild,
 Where by all best conjectures I collect
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
 Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
 To understand my adversary, who
 And what he is, his wisdom, power, intent,
 By parle²⁰⁵ or composition,²⁰⁶ truce or league,
 To win him, or win from him what I can.* 530

*“And opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift²⁰⁷ thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation, as a rock
 Of adamant and as a center, firm
 To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good,
 Not more, for honors, riches, kingdoms, glory,*

²⁰⁴ in what degree = at what level/rank

²⁰⁵ parley

²⁰⁶ agreement, treaty

²⁰⁷ examine

*Have been before contemned,²⁰⁸ and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming the Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
Another method I must now begin.”* 540

*So saying, he caught him up and, without wing
Of hippogrif,²⁰⁹ bore through the air sublime,²¹⁰
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple reared
Her pile,²¹¹ far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topped with golden spires.
There on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:* 550

*“There stand, if thou wilt stand. To stand
upright
Will ask²¹² thee skill. I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is
best.*

*Now show thy progeny!²¹³ If not to stand,
Cast thyself down—safely, if Son of God,
For it is written, ‘He will give command
Concerning thee to His Angels; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash²¹⁴ thy foot against a stone.’ ”²¹⁵
To whom thus Jesus: “Also it is written,* 560

²⁰⁸ disdained

²⁰⁹ winged beast, half horse, half griffin (head and wings of an eagle)

²¹⁰ lofty

²¹¹ a large building

²¹² need, demand, call upon

²¹³ lineage

²¹⁴ knock, strike

²¹⁵ see Psalms 91:11–12 and Matthew 4:5–7

'Tempt not the Lord thy God.' " He said, and stood,
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell.

*As when Earth's son, Antaeus²¹⁶ (to compare
 Small things with greatest), in Irassa²¹⁷ strove
 With Jove's Alcides²¹⁸ and, oft foiled,²¹⁹ still rose,
 Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
 Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
 Throttled at length in th' air, expired and fell,
 So after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
 Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride* 570
Fell whence he stood to see²²⁰ his victor fall.

*And as that Theban monster²²¹ that proposed
 Her riddle and, him who solved it not, devoured,
 That²²² once found out and solved, for grief and spite
 Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian²²³ steep,
 So strook²²⁴ with dread and anguish fell the fiend,
 And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
 Joyless triumphals²²⁵ of his hoped success,
 Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
 Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.* 580

*So Satan fell, and straight a fiery globe²²⁶
 Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,*

²¹⁶ son of Poseidon and Gaia (earth)

²¹⁷ in North Africa

²¹⁸ Hercules

²¹⁹ defeated

²²⁰ stood to see = stood intending/hoping to see

²²¹ sphinx

²²² i.e., the riddle

²²³ a river

²²⁴ struck

²²⁵ celebrations

²²⁶ a compact body of persons

*Who on their plume-y vans²²⁷ received him²²⁸ soft
 From his uneasy²²⁹ station,²³⁰ and upbore,
 As on a floating couch, through the blithe²³¹ air,
 Then, in a flow'ry valley, set him down
 On a green bank, and set before him spread
 A table of celestial food, divine
 Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
 And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
 That soon refreshed him, wearied, and repaired²³² 590
 What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,²³³
 Or thirst. And, as he fed, Angelic choirs
 Sung Heavenly anthems²³⁴ of his victory
 Over temptation and the Tempter proud:*

*“True Image of the Father, whether throned
 In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
 Conceiving, or remote from Heav'n, enshrined
 In fleshly tabernacle²³⁵ and human form,
 Wand'ring the wilderness—whatever place, 600
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with Godlike force endued²³⁶
 Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne
 And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
 Thou didst debel,²³⁷ and down from Heav'n cast
 With all his army. Now thou hast avenged*

²²⁷ wings

²²⁸ Jesus

²²⁹ difficult, uncomfortable

²³⁰ standing place, position

²³¹ joyous, well-pleased

²³² restored, renewed, mended

²³³ weakened, injured

²³⁴ hymns

²³⁵ temporary dwelling

²³⁶ endowed, supplied

²³⁷ expel, vanquish

*Supplanted*²³⁸ *Adam and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.*
He never more henceforth will dare set foot 610
In Paradise to tempt. His snares are broke.
*For though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
A fairer Paradise is founded now*
*For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Savior, art come down to reinstall,*
*Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.*

*“But thou, Infernal Serpent! shalt not long
Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heav’n, trod down* 620
*Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel’st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
By this repulse received, and hold’st in Hell
No triumph. In all her gates*²³⁹ *Abaddon*²⁴⁰ *rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,
Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul—
Thee and thy legions. Yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,* 630
*Lest he command them down into the deep,
Bound, and to torment*²⁴¹ *sent before their time.*

*“Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller*²⁴² *of Satan! On thy glorious work*

²³⁸ dispossessed

²³⁹ streets, roads

²⁴⁰ hell

²⁴¹ [noun]

²⁴² destroyer, slayer, conqueror

Now enter, and begin to save mankind.”

*Thus they the Son of God, our Savior meek,
Sung victor and, from Heav'nly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private²⁴³ returned.*

²⁴³ alone, unseen

SAMSON AGONISTES¹

date uncertain: everything from 1646 to 1670 has been proposed

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY

Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest,² moralest, and most profitable of all other poems—therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions. That is, to temper³ and reduce⁴ them to just,⁵ with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated.

Nor is Nature wanting⁶ in her own effects⁷ to make good his assertion, for so, in physic,⁸ things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humors.⁹ Hence philosophers and other

¹ contestant, actor, champion (of God)

² authoritative, important

³ modify, moderate [verb]

⁴ bring to, change, restore

⁵ right, proper, correct

⁶ lacking

⁷ operative influences, accomplishments

⁸ medical science/art/practice

⁹ physical/mental states

gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch and others, frequently cite out of¹⁰ tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides¹¹ into the text of Holy Scripture (I Cor. 15:33), and Paraeus,¹² commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of Heavenly harpings and song between.¹³

Heretofore men in highest dignity have labored not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, then¹⁴ before of his attaining to the Tyranny.¹⁵ Augustus Caesar also had begun his Ajax, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen,¹⁶ a Father of the Church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled, *Christ Suffering*.

This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes¹⁷—happening through the poets' error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness¹⁸ and gravity, or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious¹⁹ hath been

¹⁰ from

¹¹ now considered to be by Menander rather than Euripides

¹² David Pareus, 1548–1622, German Protestant theologian

¹³ i.e., (1) act, (2) chorus, (3) act, (4) chorus, etc.

¹⁴ in the time

¹⁵ a state governed by an absolute ruler/dictator

¹⁶ d. ca. A.D. 389; he probably was not the author of *Christ Suffering*

¹⁷ stage plays, usually comic

¹⁸ seriousness

¹⁹ [noun]

counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue (yet using sometimes, in case of self defense or explanation, that which Martial calls an "epistle"), in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be "epistled."

The chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure²⁰ of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apolelymenon,²¹ without regard had to strophe, antistrophe or epode (which were a kind of stanza framed only for the music, then²² used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material)²³ or being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be call'd allaeostropha.²⁴ Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found²⁵ not produced²⁶ beyond the fifth act, of the style and uniformity, and that²⁷ commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such economy²⁸ or

²⁰ meter

²¹ having no stanzaic patterning

²² at that time

²³ important

²⁴ having stanzas (strophes) of varying form

²⁵ created?

²⁶ extended

²⁷ i.e., that which is

²⁸ organization, management

disposition²⁹ of the fable³⁰ as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum. They only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Aeschulus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavor to write tragedy. The circumscription³¹ of time wherein the whole drama begins and ends is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

THE ARGUMENT

Samson (made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labor as in a common work-house), on a festival day, in the general cessation from labor, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh,³² somewhat retired,³³ there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make³⁴ the chorus, who seek to comfort him what³⁵ they can, then³⁶ by his old father, Manoa, who endeavors the like, and withal³⁷ tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom, [and] lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him.

Manoa then departs to prosecute³⁸ his endeavor³⁹ with

²⁹ arrangement, ordering

³⁰ narrative, story

³¹ boundary, limit

³² nearby

³³ withdrawn

³⁴ form, compose

³⁵ as much as

³⁶ i.e., then visited

³⁷ in addition

³⁸ follow up on, pursue

³⁹ attempt

the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption, who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons, and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast, before⁴⁰ the lords and people, to play⁴¹ or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come. At length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now, the second time, with great threatenings, to fetch him.

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

THE PERSONS

Samson.

Harapha of Gath.

Manoa, the father of Samson.

Public officer.

Messenger.

Dalila, his wife.

Chorus of Danites.⁴²

The scene: before the prison in Gaza.

SAM. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on,

⁴⁰ in front of

⁴¹ exercise

⁴² tribe of Dan (Manoa and Samson's tribe), northwest of Judah

For yonder bank⁴³ hath choice of sun or shade.
 There I am wont⁴⁴ to sit, when any chance
 Relieves me from my task of servile⁴⁵ toil,
 Daily in the common prison else enjoined⁴⁶ me,
 Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw⁴⁷
 The air—imprisoned also, close and damp,
 Unwholesome⁴⁸ draught.⁴⁹ But here I feel amends,⁵⁰
 The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet, 10
 With day-spring born. Here leave me to respire.⁵¹
 This day a solemn feast the people hold
 To Dagon⁵² their sea-Idol, and forbid
 Laborious⁵³ works. Unwillingly this rest
 Their superstition⁵⁴ yields me. Hence with leave⁵⁵
 Retiring from the popular⁵⁶ noise, I seek
 This unfrequented⁵⁷ place to find some ease,
 Ease to the body some, none to the mind
 From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
 Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone 20
 But rush upon me thronging,⁵⁸ and present⁵⁹
 Times past, what once I was, and what am now.

⁴³ ridge, elevation

⁴⁴ accustomed, in the habit of

⁴⁵ enslaved

⁴⁶ imposed on

⁴⁷ breathe

⁴⁸ unhealthy

⁴⁹ flow, current of air

⁵⁰ improvement

⁵¹ (1) draw breath, (2) recover

⁵² Philistine national god

⁵³ hard-work-requiring

⁵⁴ ignorant/irrational/false belief

⁵⁵ permission

⁵⁶ plebeian, common, general

⁵⁷ unvisited, uncrowded

⁵⁸ crowding, pressing

⁵⁹ [verb]

O wherefore was my birth from Heav'n foretold
 Twice, by an Angel, who at last in sight
 Of both my parents all in flames ascended
 From off the altar, where an off'ring burned,
 As in a fiery column charioting
 His godlike presence, and from some great act
 Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
 Why was my breeding⁶⁰ ordered and prescribed 30
 As of a person separate⁶¹ to God,
 Designed for great exploits, if I must die
 Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
 Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze?
 To grind⁶² in brazen⁶³ fetters⁶⁴ under task⁶⁵
 With this Heav'n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
 Put to the labor of a beast, debased
 Lower than bonds slave! Promise was that I
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver.
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40
 Eyeless in Gaza at the mill⁶⁶ with slaves,
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.

Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
 Divine prediction. What if all foretold
 Had been fulfilled but⁶⁷ through mine own default,⁶⁸
 Whom have I to complain of but myself?
 Who this high gift of strength, committed to me,
 In what part lodged, how easily bereft⁶⁹ me,

⁶⁰ development, training, education

⁶¹ special

⁶² work laboriously

⁶³ brass, brasslike, as strong as brass

⁶⁴ chains, shackles

⁶⁵ assigned compulsion

⁶⁶ building containing machinery (here water-driven) for processing, manufacturing, etc.

⁶⁷ except

⁶⁸ defect, failure, guilt

⁶⁹ robbed, stripped

Under the seal of silence could not keep
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50
 O'ercome with importunity and tears.
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!
 But what is strength without a double share
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy,⁷⁰ burdensome,
 Proudly secure,⁷¹ yet liable to fall
 By weakest subtleties, not made to rule
 But to subserve⁷² where wisdom bears⁷³ command.
 God, when He gave me strength, to show withal
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.

But peace! I must not quarrel with the will 60
 Of highest dispensation,⁷⁴ which herein
 Happ'ly⁷⁵ had ends⁷⁶ above my reach to know.
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,⁷⁷
 And proves the source of all my miseries,
 So many, and so huge, that each apart
 Would ask⁷⁸ a life to wail—but of all,
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
 Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
 Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
 Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct, 70
 And all her various objects of delight
 Annulled,⁷⁹ which might in part my grief have eased,
 Inferior to the vilest now become
 Of man or worm. The vilest here excel me,

⁷⁰ clumsy, awkward

⁷¹ confident

⁷² be subordinated

⁷³ wields

⁷⁴ ordering, management

⁷⁵ (1) probably, (2) appropriately

⁷⁶ goals, purposes

⁷⁷ curse, poison, slayer, ruin

⁷⁸ demand, call for

⁷⁹ ended, destroyed

They creep, yet see, I dark in light exposed
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
 Within doors, or without, still⁸⁰ as a fool,
 In power of others, never in my own.
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
 O dark, dark, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of
 noon,

80

Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
 Without all⁸¹ hope of day!

O first created beam, and thou great Word,
 "Let there be light, and light was over all,"⁸²
 Why am I thus bereaved thy prime⁸³ decree?
 The sun to me is dark
 And silent as the moon
 When she deserts the night,
 Hid in her vacant⁸⁴ interlunar cave.⁸⁵
 Since light so necessary is to life,
 And almost life itself, if it be true
 That light is in the soul,
 She all in every part, why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confined?⁸⁶
 So obvious⁸⁷ and so easy to be quenched,⁸⁸
 And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused
 That she might look at will⁸⁹ through every pore?
 Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
 As in the land of darkness, yet in light,

90

⁸⁰ (1) silent, (2) always

⁸¹ every, any, all

⁸² see Genesis 1:3

⁸³ (1) first, beginning, (2) primary

⁸⁴ empty, destitute of life/activity

⁸⁵ in which the moon was thought to hide between its old and new phases

⁸⁶ relegated, fastened

⁸⁷ visible

⁸⁸ extinguished, destroyed

⁸⁹ at will = at pleasure/choice

To live a life half dead, a living death, 100
 And buried, but O yet more miserable!
 Myself my sepulcher,⁹⁰ a moving grave,
 Buried, yet not exempt
 By privilege of death and burial
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
 But made hereby obnoxious⁹¹ more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 Among inhuman foes.

But who are these? For with joint⁹² pace⁹³ I hear 110
 The tread of many feet steering this way—
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.

CHOR. This, this is he. Softly a while,
 Let us not break in upon him.
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,⁹⁴
 With languished⁹⁵ head unpropped,
 As one past hope, abandoned 120
 And by himself given over,
 In slavish habit,⁹⁶ ill-fitted weeds⁹⁷
 O'er worn and soiled.

Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
 That heroic, that renowned,
 Irresistible Samson? Whom unarmed

⁹⁰ tomb, burial place

⁹¹ susceptible, amenable, exposed

⁹² two or more

⁹³ steps

⁹⁴ sprawled, spread out

⁹⁵ slack, feeble

⁹⁶ clothes

⁹⁷ garments

No strength of man or fiercest wild beast could
withstand?

Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid?

Ran on embattled⁹⁸ armies clad in iron,

And weaponless himself

I30

Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery⁹⁹

Of brazen¹⁰⁰ shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,¹⁰¹

Chalybean¹⁰² tempered steel, and frock¹⁰³ of mail

Adamantean proof?

But safest he who stood aloof,

When insupportably¹⁰⁴ his foot advanced

In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,

Spurned¹⁰⁵ them to death—by troops! The bold

Ascalonite¹⁰⁶

Fled from his lion ramp,¹⁰⁷ old warriors turned¹⁰⁸

Their plated¹⁰⁹ backs under his heel

I40

Or, grov'ling, soiled¹¹⁰ their crested helmets in the dust.

Then with what¹¹¹ trivial¹¹² weapon came to hand—

The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone—

⁹⁸ in battle formation

⁹⁹ (1) forging, (2) invention

¹⁰⁰ brass

¹⁰¹ upper-body armor

¹⁰² from the Black Sea region, famous for their metalworking [four syllables, second and fourth accented]

¹⁰³ tunic, upper garment

¹⁰⁴ too strongly to be resisted/endured (“supported”)

¹⁰⁵ thrust, struck, trampled

¹⁰⁶ Ascalon: ancient Philistine port city

¹⁰⁷ rearing and raging

¹⁰⁸ twisted, writhed, bent, reversed

¹⁰⁹ covered with layer(s) of metal

¹¹⁰ dirtied, fouled, polluted

¹¹¹ whatever

¹¹² common

A thousand fore-skins¹¹³ fell, the flower of Palestine,
 In Ramath-lechi,¹¹⁴ famous to this day.
 Then by main¹¹⁵ force pulled up, and on his shoulders
 bore

The Gates of Azza¹¹⁶—post¹¹⁷ and massy bar—¹¹⁸
 Up to the hill by Hebron,¹¹⁹ seat of giants old,¹²⁰
 No journey of a sabbath day,¹²¹ and¹²² loaded so:
 Like¹²³ whom¹²⁴ the gentiles feign¹²⁵ to bear up
 Heav'n.¹²⁶

150

Which shall I first bewail,
 Thy bondage or lost sight,
 Prison within prison
 Inseparably dark?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
 The dungeon of thyself! Thy soul
 (Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
 Imprisoned now indeed,
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light
 T' incorporate¹²⁷ with gloomy night,
 For inward light alas

160

¹¹³ unlike the Jews, the Philistines were not circumcised

¹¹⁴ the suffix "lechi" = lifting up/casting away of the jawbone: see Judges 15:14–17

¹¹⁵ mighty

¹¹⁶ Gaza

¹¹⁷ gatepost/stake

¹¹⁸ used to lock the gates

¹¹⁹ south of Jerusalem, more than thirty miles from Gaza

¹²⁰ see Numbers 13:22 ("anak" = "giant," in Hebrew)

¹²¹ on which day only very short journeys were permitted

¹²² and in addition

¹²³ i.e., loaded like

¹²⁴ he whom

¹²⁵ tell in myths/fables

¹²⁶ the giant Atlas

¹²⁷ unite, combine

Puts forth no visual beam.

O mirror of our fickle¹²⁸ state,
 Since man¹²⁹ on earth unparalleled!
 The rarer¹³⁰ thy example stands
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
 For him I reckon not in high estate
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the sphere of fortune raises,
 But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdued the earth,
 Universally crowned with highest praises.

170

SAM. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed¹³¹ ere it reach my ear.

CHOR. He speaks: let us draw nigh.

Matchless in might,
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief!
 We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale¹³²
 To visit or bewail thee or, if better,
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,
 Salve to thy sores. Apt words have power to suage
 The tumors¹³³ of a troubled mind,
 And are as balm to festered wounds.

180

SAM. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,

¹²⁸ uncertain, changeable

¹²⁹ man has been

¹³⁰ more unusual

¹³¹ incoherent

¹³² Eshtaol and Zora: west of Jerusalem, in the valley of Sorec (Sorek) (see line 229, below)

¹³³ swellings

How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
 Bear in their superscription¹³⁴ (of the most,¹³⁵ 190
 I would be understood): in prosperous days
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
 How many evils have enclosed me round.
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
 Blindness, for had I sight, confused with shame,
 How could I once look up, or heave¹³⁶ the head,
 Who like a foolish pilot have shipwrecked
 My vessel, trusted to me from above,
 Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear 200
 —Fool!—have divulged the secret gift of God
 To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,
 Am I not sung and proverbied for a fool
 In every street? Do they not say how well
 Are come upon him his deserts? Yet why?
 Immeasurable strength they might behold
 In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean.¹³⁷
 This with the other should, at least, have paired;¹³⁸
 These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.¹³⁹
 CHOR. Tax¹⁴⁰ not divine disposal.¹⁴¹ Wisest men 210
 Have erred, and by bad women been deceived,
 And shall again, pretend they ne're so wise.
 Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder

¹³⁴ name, inscription on coins

¹³⁵ i.e., most of them

¹³⁶ raise, uplift

¹³⁷ poor, inferior

¹³⁸ have paired = been equal

¹³⁹ crosswise, sideways

¹⁴⁰ blame, accuse, challenge

¹⁴¹ ordering, arranging

Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather
 Than of thine own tribe—fairer, or as fair,
 At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

SAM. The first I saw at Timna,¹⁴² and she pleased
 Me (not my parents), that¹⁴³ I sought to wed, 220
 The daughter of an infidel. They¹⁴⁴ knew not
 That what I motioned¹⁴⁵ was of God; I knew
 From intimate¹⁴⁶ impulse,¹⁴⁷ and therefore urged¹⁴⁸
 The marriage on, that by occasion¹⁴⁹ hence¹⁵⁰
 I might begin Israel's deliverance,
 The work to which I was divinely called.
 She proving false, the next I took to wife
 (O that I never had! fond¹⁵¹ wish, too late)
 Was in the Vale of Sorec, Dalila,¹⁵²
 That specious¹⁵³ monster, my accomplished¹⁵⁴ snare. 230
 I thought it lawful, from¹⁵⁵ my former act
 And the same end, still watching to oppress
 Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself
 Who, vanquished with a peal¹⁵⁶ of words (O weakness!),
 Gave up¹⁵⁷ my fort of silence to a woman.

¹⁴² Timnath, Philistine city

¹⁴³ so that

¹⁴⁴ Samson's parents

¹⁴⁵ proposed, planned

¹⁴⁶ inmost

¹⁴⁷ influence, incitement

¹⁴⁸ pressed, pushed

¹⁴⁹ opportunity, the course of events

¹⁵⁰ stemming from (the marriage)

¹⁵¹ foolish

¹⁵² [three syllables, second stressed]

¹⁵³ showily beautiful

¹⁵⁴ accomplished: completed, perfected

¹⁵⁵ because of

¹⁵⁶ outburst

¹⁵⁷ gave up = surrendered

CHOR. In seeking just occasion to provoke¹⁵⁸
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
 Thou never wast remiss:¹⁵⁹ I bear thee witness.
 Yet Israel still serves,¹⁶⁰ with all his sons. 240

SAM. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
 Who seeing those great acts which God had done
 Singly¹⁶¹ by me against their conquerors
 Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
 Deliverance offered. I on th' other side
 Used¹⁶² no ambition¹⁶³ to commend¹⁶⁴ my deeds:
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
 doer.

But they¹⁶⁵ persisted deaf, and would not seem
 To count them things worth notice, till at length 250
 Their lords the Philistines with gathered¹⁶⁶ powers
 Entered Judea, seeking me, who then
 Safe to the rock of Etham¹⁶⁷ was retired,
 Not flying,¹⁶⁸ but fore-casting¹⁶⁹ in what place
 To set upon them, what advantaged¹⁷⁰ best.
 Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
 The harass of their land, beset¹⁷¹ me round.

¹⁵⁸ challenge, fight

¹⁵⁹ negligent

¹⁶⁰ is in servitude

¹⁶¹ all alone

¹⁶² engaged in

¹⁶³ canvassing: soliciting (as for votes, in an election)

¹⁶⁴ praise, adorn

¹⁶⁵ "Israel's governors and heads of tribes"

¹⁶⁶ assembled

¹⁶⁷ see Judges 15:8

¹⁶⁸ fleeing

¹⁶⁹ planning, considering, estimating

¹⁷⁰ benefited, profited

¹⁷¹ besieged

I willingly (on some¹⁷² conditions) came
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
 To the uncircumcised, a welcome prey,¹⁷³ 260
 Bound with two cords¹⁷⁴—but cords to me were threads
 Touched with the flame. On their whole host I flew,
 Unarmed, and with a trivial¹⁷⁵ weapon felled
 Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
 Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
 They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,¹⁷⁶
 And lorded over them whom now they serve.
 But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt
 And by their vices brought to servitude,
 Than to love bondage more than liberty, 270
 Bondage with ease than¹⁷⁷ strenuous liberty,
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect
 Whom God hath of his special favor raised
 As their deliverer? If he aught begin,
 How frequent to desert him, and at last
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

CHOR. Thy words to my remembrance bring
 How Succoth and the fort of Penuel¹⁷⁸
 Their great deliverer contemned,
 The matchless Gideon, in pursuit 280
 Of Madian and her vanquished kings.
 And how ungrateful Ephraim¹⁷⁹
 Had dealt with Jephtha,¹⁸⁰ who by argument
 Not worse than by his shield and spear,

¹⁷² certain

¹⁷³ victim, quarry

¹⁷⁴ small ropes, braided for strength

¹⁷⁵ common

¹⁷⁶ a principal Philistine city

¹⁷⁷ rather than

¹⁷⁸ Succoth and Penuel: Israelite cities (see Judges 8:4–9)

¹⁷⁹ the tribe of Ephraim, in the hill region north of Bethel

¹⁸⁰ see Judges 12:1–4

Defended Israel from the Ammonite,¹⁸¹
 Had not his prowess quelled their pride
 In that sore battle when so many died,
 Without reprieve adjudged to death
 For want of well-pronouncing “shibboleth.”¹⁸²

SAM. Of such examples add me to the roll. 290
 Me easily indeed mine may neglect,¹⁸³
 But God’s proposed deliverance not so.

CHOR. Just are the ways of God,
 And justifiable to men,
 Unless there be who think not God at all.¹⁸⁴
 If any be, they walk obscure,¹⁸⁵
 For of such doctrine never was there school,
 But the heart of the fool,
 And no man therein doctor¹⁸⁶ but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt¹⁸⁷ His ways not just, 300
 As to His own edicts found contradicting,
 Then give the reins to wand’ring¹⁸⁸ thought,
 Regardless of His glory’s diminution,
 Till by their own perplexities involved¹⁸⁹
 They ravel¹⁹⁰ more, still less resolved,
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th’ interminable,¹⁹¹

¹⁸¹ Semitic tribe frequently hostile to Israel

¹⁸² the Ephraimites were identified by their inability to pronounce the “sh” in “shibboleth”: see Judges 12:5–6

¹⁸³ “my nation/people (“mine”) may easily neglect me”

¹⁸⁴ “unless there be those who think God does not exist”

¹⁸⁵ hidden, unknown

¹⁸⁶ teacher, learned man

¹⁸⁷ suspect

¹⁸⁸ disordered

¹⁸⁹ enwrapped

¹⁹⁰ are confused/perplexed/entangled

¹⁹¹ endless, everlasting

And tie Him to His own prescript,¹⁹²
 Who made our Laws to bind us, not Himself,
 And hath full right t' exempt 310
 Whom so it pleases Him by choice
 From national obstruction,¹⁹³ without taint
 Of sin, or legal debt,
 For with His own Laws He can best dispense.

He would not else (who never wanted¹⁹⁴ means,
 Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause
 To set His people free)
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,¹⁹⁵
 Against his vow of strictest purity,
 To seek in marriage that fallacious¹⁹⁶ bride, 320
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down¹⁹⁷ reason, then—at least, vain reasonings
 down,
 Though reason here aver¹⁹⁸
 That moral verdict quits¹⁹⁹ her²⁰⁰ of unclean:
 Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see, here comes thy reverend sire
 With careful²⁰¹ step, locks white as down,
 Old Manoa. Advise²⁰²
 Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

SAM. Aye me, another inward grief awaked: 330
 With mention of that name, renews th' assault.

¹⁹² commands, laws

¹⁹³ obligation (see Deuteronomy 7:2–5)

¹⁹⁴ lacked

¹⁹⁵ a person who had vowed to abstain from sex: see Numbers 6:2ff.

¹⁹⁶ deceitful

¹⁹⁷ put/go down

¹⁹⁸ plead, claim

¹⁹⁹ frees, releases, acquits

²⁰⁰ Dalila

²⁰¹ heavy, full of care

²⁰² consider

MAN. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
 Though in this uncouth²⁰³ place: if old respect,
 As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
 My son now captive, hither hath informed²⁰⁴
 Your younger feet, while mine, cast²⁰⁵ back with age,
 Came lagging after, say if he be here.

CHOR. As signal²⁰⁶ now, in low dejected state,
 As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

MAN. O miserable change! Is this the man, 340
 That invincible Samson, far renowned,
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
 Equivalent to Angels walked their streets,
 None offering fight? who single combatant
 Duelled their armies, ranked in proud array,
 Himself an army, now unequal match
 To save himself against a coward, armed,
 At one spear's length? O ever failing trust
 In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
 Deceivable and vain! Nay, what thing good 350
 Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?²⁰⁷
 I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
 In wedlock a reproach. I gained a son,
 And such a son as all men hailed me happy.
 Who would be now a father in my stead?
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,
 And as a blessing with such pomp²⁰⁸ adorned?
 Why are His gifts desirable,²⁰⁹ to tempt

²⁰³ strange, unfamiliar

²⁰⁴ guided, led

²⁰⁵ bent

²⁰⁶ notable

²⁰⁷ destroyer, poison

²⁰⁸ splendor

²⁰⁹ wished for

Our earnest prayers, then giv'n with solemn hand
 As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind? 360
 For this did th' Angel twice descend? For this
 Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant
 Select and sacred, glorious for a while,
 The miracle of men, then in an hour
 Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
 Alas, methinks whom God hath chosen once
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err
 He²¹⁰ should not so oerwhelm, and as a thrall²¹¹ 370
 Subject him to so foul indignities,
 Be it but for honor's sake, of former deeds.

SAM. Appoint²¹² not Heav'nly disposition, father.
 Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
 But justly. I myself have brought them on,
 Sole author I, sole cause. If aught seem vile,
 As²¹³ vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
 The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge
 Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
 A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380
 This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
 But warned by oft experience. Did not she
 Of Timna²¹⁴ first betray me, and reveal
 The secret wrested from me in her height
 Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
 To them who had corrupted her, my spies
 And rivals? In this other was there found

²¹⁰ God

²¹¹ slave

²¹² decide, declare

²¹³ equally

²¹⁴ biblical Timnath: see Judges 14:1–20

More faith? who also in her prime of love,
 Spousal embraces, vitiated²¹⁵ with gold,
 Though offered only, by the scent²¹⁶ conceived 390
 Her spurious²¹⁷ first-born, treason against me?
 Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs,
 And amorous reproaches, to win from me
 My capital²¹⁸ secret, in what part my strength
 Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know.
 Thrice I deluded²¹⁹ her, and turned to sport²²⁰
 Her importunity, each time perceiving
 How openly and with what impudence
 She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse
 Than undissembled hate) with what contempt 400
 She sought to make me traitor to myself.
 Yet the fourth time, when must'ring all her wiles,
 With blandished²²¹ parleys,²²² feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries,²²³ she surceased not day nor night
 To storm²²⁴ me, over-watched²²⁵ and wearied out.
 At times when men seek most repose and rest
 I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolved²²⁶
 Might easily have shook off all her snares.
 But foul effeminacy²²⁷ held me yoked 410

²¹⁵ corrupted

²¹⁶ i.e., of gold

²¹⁷ false

²¹⁸ major

²¹⁹ eluded

²²⁰ a jest/joke

²²¹ flattering

²²² speech

²²³ batteries = (1) battering rams, (2) artillery

²²⁴ to make a military assault

²²⁵ exhausted (from "watching" too long/much)

²²⁶ firm, steadfast

²²⁷ addiction to women

Her bondslave. O indignity, O blot
 To honor and religion! Servile mind
 Rewarded well with servile punishment!
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding,²²⁸ is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 That saw not how degenerately I served.

MAN. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son— 420
 Rather approved them not. But thou didst plead
 Divine impulsion²²⁹ prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infest²³⁰ our foes.
 I state not that. This I am sure: our foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
 Their captive, and their triumph. Thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
 To violate the sacred trust of silence
 Deposited within thee, which t' have kept
 Tacit²³¹ was in thy power. True: and thou bear'st 430
 Enough, and more, the burden of that fault.
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
 That rigid²³² score.²³³ A worse thing yet remains.
 This day the Philistines a popular feast
 Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim
 Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
 To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
 Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
 Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.

²²⁸ working laboriously

²²⁹ instigation, incitement

²³⁰ attack

²³¹ unspoken

²³² harsh, unyielding

²³³ account

So Dagon shall be magnified, and God, 440
 Besides whom is no God, compared with idols,
 Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
 By th' idolatrous rout²³⁴ amidst their wine,
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
 Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
 Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.²³⁵

SAM. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
 That I this honor, I this pomp have brought
 To Dagon, and advanced his praises high 450
 Among the heathen round²³⁶—to God have brought
 Dishonor, obloquy,²³⁷ and op't²³⁸ the mouths
 Of idolists, and atheists, have brought scandal
 To Israel, diffidence²³⁹ of God, and doubt
 In feeble hearts, propense²⁴⁰ enough before
 To waver, or fall off and join with idols.
 Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
 The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
 Mine eye to harbor²⁴¹ sleep, or thoughts to rest.
 This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460
 With me hath end: all the contest is now
 'Twixt God and Dagon. Dagon hath presumed
 (Me overthrown) to enter lists²⁴² with God,
 His deity comparing and preferring

²³⁴ mob, crowd

²³⁵ lineage

²³⁶ assemblage [noun]

²³⁷ reproach

²³⁸ opened

²³⁹ mistrust, distrust

²⁴⁰ ready, willing

²⁴¹ find room for, hold, shelter

²⁴² literally, the enclosed space where jousting took place; metaphorically, "enter lists" = to fight/challenge

Before the God of Abraham. He,²⁴³ be sure,
 Will not connive,²⁴⁴ or linger, thus provoked,
 But will arise and His great name assert.
 Dagon must stoop,²⁴⁵ and shall ere long receive
 Such a discomfit²⁴⁶ as shall quite despoil²⁴⁷ him
 Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470
 And with confusion blank²⁴⁸ his worshippers.

MAN. With cause²⁴⁹ this hope relieves thee, and these
 words

I as a prophecy receive, for God—
 Nothing more certain—will not long defer
 To vindicate the glory of His name
 Against all competition, nor will long
 Endure it, doubtful²⁵⁰ whether God be Lord
 Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
 Thou must not in the meanwhile here forgot
 Lie, in this miserable, loathsome plight 480
 Neglected. I already have made way²⁵¹
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat²⁵²
 About thy ransom. Well they may by this²⁵³
 Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
 By pains and slaveries worse than death inflicted
 On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

²⁴³ God

²⁴⁴ shut His eyes

²⁴⁵ bow

²⁴⁶ defeat

²⁴⁷ deprive, strip

²⁴⁸ frustrate, confound

²⁴⁹ reason

²⁵⁰ that it be unsettled/uncertain

²⁵¹ connection, opportunity

²⁵² deal, negotiate

²⁵³ this time

SAM. Spare²⁵⁴ that proposal, father, spare the trouble
 Of that solicitation. Let me here,
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment,
 And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490
 Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
 Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
 How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
 Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
 All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
 The mark of fool set on his front?²⁵⁵ But I
 God's counsel have not kept, His holy secret
 Presumptuously have published,²⁵⁶ impiously,
 Weakly at least, and shamefully, a sin
 That gentiles in their parables²⁵⁷ condemn²⁵⁸ 500
 To their abyss and horrid pains confined.²⁵⁹

MAN. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
 But act not in thy own affliction, son.
 Repent the sin, but if the punishment
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids,
 Or th' execution leave to high disposal,²⁶⁰
 And let another hand, not thine, exact
 Thy penal forfeit²⁶¹ from thyself. Perhaps
 God will relent, and quit²⁶² thee all His debt,
 Who evermore approves and more accepts 510
 (Best pleased with humble and filial submission)

²⁵⁴ leave, abstain, refrain

²⁵⁵ forehead

²⁵⁶ made public

²⁵⁷ fictitious narratives

²⁵⁸ Tantalus, Zeus' son, was thus punished for telling the gods' secrets to his friends

²⁵⁹ [adjective]

²⁶⁰ ordering, arranging

²⁶¹ a fine/penalty

²⁶² free, release

Him who imploring mercy sues²⁶³ for life,
 Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due,
 Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
 For self-offence, more than for God offended.
 Reject not then what offered means²⁶⁴ (who knows
 But God hath set before us) to return thee
 Home to thy country and His sacred house,
 Where thou may'st bring thy off'rings, to avert
 His further ire with prayers and vows renewed.

520

SAM. His pardon I implore. But as for life,
 To what end should I seek it? When in strength
 All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes
 With youthful courage and magnanimous²⁶⁵ thoughts
 Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
 Full of divine instinct,²⁶⁶ after some proof
 Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
 The sons of Anac,²⁶⁷ famous now and blazed,²⁶⁸
 Fearless of danger, like a petty god
 I walked about, admired of all and dreaded
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront.²⁶⁹
 Then swoll'n with pride into the snare I fell
 Of fair fallacious²⁷⁰ looks, venereal trains,²⁷¹
 Softn'd with pleasure and voluptuous life,
 At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge²⁷²
 Of all my strength in the lascivious lap

530

²⁶³ pleads, petitions

²⁶⁴ instrumentality [noun]

²⁶⁵ lofty, high-souled

²⁶⁶ impulse

²⁶⁷ sons of Anak: the race of giants

²⁶⁸ celebrated, proclaimed

²⁶⁹ confrontation

²⁷⁰ false

²⁷¹ venereal trains = love's tricks/snares

²⁷² sign of favor

Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
 Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
 Shav'n, and disarmed among my enemies. 540

CHOR. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,
 Thou could'st repress, nor did the dancing ruby²⁷³
 Sparkling, out-poured, the flavor, or the smell,
 Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
 Allure thee from²⁷⁴ the cool crystalline stream.

SAM. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
 Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
 With touch aetherial of Heav'ns fiery rod,²⁷⁵
 I drank, from the clear milky²⁷⁶ juice²⁷⁷ allaying 550
 Thirst, and refreshed, nor envied them the grape
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

CHOR. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
 When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
 His mighty champion, strong above compare,
 Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

SAM. But what availed this temperance, not complete
 Against another object more enticing?
 What boots it at one gate to make defence 560
 And at another to let in the foe,
 Effeminately vanquished? By which means,
 Now blind, disheart'ned, shamed, dishonored, quelled,²⁷⁸
 To what can I be useful? wherein serve

²⁷³ i.e., red wine

²⁷⁴ away from

²⁷⁵ the sun's beams?

²⁷⁶ soft?

²⁷⁷ fluid

²⁷⁸ ruined, destroyed

My nation, and the work from Heav'n imposed,
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,
 A burdenous drone? to visitants a gaze,²⁷⁹
 Or pitied object, these redundant²⁸⁰ locks
 Robustious²⁸¹ to no purpose clust'ring down,
 Vain monument of strength, till length of years 570
 And sedentary numbness craze²⁸² my limbs
 To a contemptible old age obscure.
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
 Till vermin or the draff²⁸³ of servile food
 Consume me, and oft-invoked death
 Hast'n the welcome end of all my pains.

MAN. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
 Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy²⁸⁴ them?
 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle—
 Inglorious, unemployed,²⁸⁵ with age out-worn. 580
 But God who caused a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
 After the brunt²⁸⁶ of battle,²⁸⁷ can as easy
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
 Wherewith to serve Him better than thou hast.
 And I persuade me so. Why else this strength
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
 His might continues in thee, not for naught,
 Nor shall His wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

²⁷⁹ something to stare at

²⁸⁰ plentiful, flowing, excessive

²⁸¹ healthy-looking, strong

²⁸² break down, destroy

²⁸³ garbage, refuse, offal

²⁸⁴ to trouble, molest, injure

²⁸⁵ unoccupied

²⁸⁶ violence, shock

²⁸⁷ see Judges 15:18–19

SAM. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,²⁸⁸ 590
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat²⁸⁹ with light,
 Nor th' other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand.
 So much I feel my genial²⁹⁰ spirits droop,
 My hopes all flat. Nature within me seems
 In all her functions weary of herself,
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

MAN. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
 From anguish of the mind and humors²⁹¹ black, 600
 That mingle with thy fancy.²⁹² I however
 Must not omit a father's timely care
 To prosecute²⁹³ the means of thy deliverance,
 By ransom or how else. Meanwhile be calm,
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.²⁹⁴

SAM. O that torment²⁹⁵ should not be confined²⁹⁶
 To the body's wounds and sores,
 With maladies innumerable
 In heart, head, breast, and reins,²⁹⁷
 But must secret passage find 610
 To th' inmost mind,
 There exercise²⁹⁸ all his fierce accidents,²⁹⁹

²⁸⁸ point to, indicate, foretell

²⁸⁹ entertain, deal with

²⁹⁰ natural

²⁹¹ state of mind, disposition

²⁹² fantasy, whim, inclination

²⁹³ pursue, perform

²⁹⁴ receive

²⁹⁵ that which produces pain/suffering

²⁹⁶ limited

²⁹⁷ kidneys

²⁹⁸ employ, perform

²⁹⁹ appearances, symptoms

And on her purest spirits prey,
 As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
 With answerable³⁰⁰ pains, but more intense,
 Though void of corporal sense.³⁰¹

My griefs not only pain me
 As a ling'ring disease,
 But finding no redress, ferment³⁰² and rage,
 Nor less than wounds immedicable³⁰³ 620
 Rankle,³⁰⁴ and fester, and gangrene³⁰⁵
 To black mortification.³⁰⁶

Thoughts (my tormentors) armed with deadly stings
 Mangle my apprehensive³⁰⁷ tenderest parts,
 Exasperate,³⁰⁸ exulcerate, and raise
 Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
 Or med'cinal liquor can assuage,³⁰⁹
 Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
 Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er
 To death's benumbing opium as my only cure. 630
 Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
 And sense of Heav'n's desertion.

I was His nursling once, and choice delight,
 His destined³¹⁰ from the womb,
 Promised by Heav'nly message twice descending.
 Under His special³¹¹ eye

³⁰⁰ corresponding

³⁰¹ sensation, feeling

³⁰² excite, stir up

³⁰³ incurable

³⁰⁴ continue to cause pain, fester

³⁰⁵ [verb]

³⁰⁶ necrosis, destruction

³⁰⁷ conscious

³⁰⁸ irritate

³⁰⁹ abate

³¹⁰ [adjective]

³¹¹ particular, intimate

Abstemious³¹² I grew up and thrived amain.³¹³

He led me on to mightiest deeds

(Above the nerve³¹⁴ of mortal arm)

Against th' uncircumcised, our enemies,

640

But now hath cast me off as³¹⁵ never known,

And to those cruel enemies,

Whom I by His appointment³¹⁶ had provoked,³¹⁷

Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss

Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated³¹⁸

The subject of their cruelty, or scorn.

Nor am I in the list³¹⁹ of them that hope.

Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless.

This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard:

No long petition, speedy death,

650

The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

CHOR. Many are the sayings of the wise,

In ancient and in modern books enrolled,³²⁰

Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,³²¹

And to the bearing well of all calamities,

All chances incident to man's frail life,

Consolatories writ

With studied³²² argument, and much persuasion³²³

sought,³²⁴

³¹² temperate, abstinent

³¹³ exceedingly

³¹⁴ strength

³¹⁵ as if

³¹⁶ assignment

³¹⁷ defied, incited

³¹⁸ repeatedly [adverb]

³¹⁹ roll, catalogue

³²⁰ written, placed, entered

³²¹ strength

³²² learned, carefully thought out, practiced

³²³ belief, conviction

³²⁴ searched for, obtained

Lenient³²⁵ of grief and anxious thought.
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound 660
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings, that repair³²⁶ his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.
 God of our fathers, what is man!
 That Thou towards him with hand so various,³²⁷
 Or might I say contrarious,
 Temper'st Thy providence through his short course³²⁸ 670
 Not evenly, as thou rul'st
 The Angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
 Irrational and brute.
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,³²⁹
 That wand'ring loose³³⁰ about
 Grow up and perish, as³³¹ the summer fly,
 Heads without name no more remembered!
 But such as Thou hast solemnly³³² elected,³³³
 With gifts and graces eminently adorned
 To some great work, Thy glory 680
 And people's safety,³³⁴ which in part they effect.
 Yet toward these thus dignified,³³⁵ Thou oft
 Amidst their height of noon
 Changest Thy countenance and Thy hand, with no regard

³²⁵ mild, soothing

³²⁶ restore

³²⁷ (1) changing, (2) unstable, fickle

³²⁸ path

³²⁹ crowd, mob

³³⁰ lax, stray, random

³³¹ like

³³² formally, seriously

³³³ chosen, picked

³³⁴ protection, safeguard

³³⁵ honored

Of highest favors past
From Thee on them, or them to Thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit³³⁶
To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than Thou did'st exalt them
high,

Unseemly falls,³³⁷ in human eye, 690

Too grievous for the trespass or omission—

Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword

Of heathen and profane,³³⁸ their carcasses

To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,

Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,

And condemnation of the ungrateful multitude.

If these they scape, perhaps in poverty

With sickness and disease Thou bow'st them down,

Painful diseases and deformed,

In crude³³⁹ old age, 700

Though not disordinate,³⁴⁰ yet causeless suff'ring

The punishment of dissolute days. In fine,³⁴¹

Just or unjust alike seem miserable,

For oft alike both come to evil end.

So³⁴² deal not, with this once Thy glorious
champion,

The image of Thy strength, and mighty minister.³⁴³

What do I beg? How hast Thou dealt³⁴⁴ already?

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn

His labors—for Thou canst—to peaceful end.

³³⁶ abandon

³³⁷ [noun]

³³⁸ unclean, polluted

³³⁹ rough

³⁴⁰ excessive

³⁴¹ conclusion

³⁴² in that way

³⁴³ servant, officer

³⁴⁴ acted

But who is this, what thing of sea or land? 710
 Female of sex it seems,
 That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
 Comes this way sailing
 Like a stately ship
 Of Tarsus,³⁴⁵ bound for th' Isles
 Of Javan³⁴⁶ or Gadier,³⁴⁷
 With all her bravery³⁴⁸ on, and tackle³⁴⁹ trim,³⁵⁰
 Sails filled, and streamers³⁵¹ waving
 (Courted by all the winds that hold them play),³⁵²
 An amber scent of odorous perfume 720
 Her harbinger,³⁵³ a damsel train³⁵⁴ behind.
 Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
 And now at nearer view, no other, certain,
 Than Dalila, thy wife.

SAM. My wife, my traitress, let her not come near me.

CHOR. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee
 fixed,³⁵⁵

About t' have spoke, but now, with head declined
 Like a fair flower surcharged³⁵⁶ with dew, she weeps
 And words addressed³⁵⁷ seem into tears dissolved,

³⁴⁵ biblical Tarshish: see 2 Chronicles 9:21 ("the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks")

³⁴⁶ Javan, son of Japhet, was the founder of Ionia: the islands of Greece

³⁴⁷ Cadiz

³⁴⁸ show, display, finery

³⁴⁹ apparatus, rigging, implements of war

³⁵⁰ beautiful, smartly made

³⁵¹ flags, banners

³⁵² strut, flutter

³⁵³ forerunner

³⁵⁴ retinue, suite: i.e., maids, female attendants

³⁵⁵ unchanging, firmly resolved

³⁵⁶ overloaded

³⁵⁷ prepared

Wetting the borders of her silken veil. 730
 But now again she makes address³⁵⁸ to speak.

DAL. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
 I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
 Which to have merited, without excuse,
 I cannot but acknowledge. Yet if tears
 May expiate (though the fact more evil drew³⁵⁹
 In the perverse³⁶⁰ event than I foresaw)
 My penance hath not slack'ned, though my pardon
 No way assured. But conjugal affection 740
 Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
 Hath led me on, desirous to behold
 Once more thy face, and know of thy estate.³⁶¹
 If aught in my ability may serve
 To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
 Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
 Though late, yet in some part to recompense
 My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

SAM. Out, out hyena! These are thy wonted³⁶² arts,
 And arts of every woman false like thee,
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray, 750
 Then as³⁶³ repentant to submit, beseech
 And reconcilment move³⁶⁴ with feigned remorse,
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
 Not truly penitent, but chief³⁶⁵ to try³⁶⁶

³⁵⁸ preparation

³⁵⁹ pulled after it, led to

³⁶⁰ wicked, evil

³⁶¹ condition

³⁶² accustomed

³⁶³ as if

³⁶⁴ propose, urge

³⁶⁵ chiefly, principally

³⁶⁶ test

Her husband, how far urged³⁶⁷ his patience bears,
 His virtue or weakness which way t' assail,
 Then with more cautious and instructed³⁶⁸ skill
 Again transgresses, and again submits,
 That³⁶⁹ wisest and best men full oft beguiled
 With goodness, principled³⁷⁰ not to reject 760
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
 Entangled with a pois'nous bosom³⁷¹ snake,
 If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
 As I by thee, to ages an example.

DAL. Yet hear me Samson. Not that I endeavor
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,
 But that on th' other side if it be weighed
 By itself, with aggravations³⁷² not surcharged,³⁷³
 Or else with just allowance counterpoised,³⁷⁴ 770
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
 In me, but incident³⁷⁵ to all our sex,
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune³⁷⁶
 Of secrets, then with like infirmity
 To publish³⁷⁷ them, both common female faults.
 Was it not weakness also to make known,

³⁶⁷ pushed, driven

³⁶⁸ skillful

³⁶⁹ so that

³⁷⁰ trained, habituated

³⁷¹ interior, inward

³⁷² exaggerations

³⁷³ overloaded

³⁷⁴ counterbalanced

³⁷⁵ likely, natural

³⁷⁶ pressing, persistent

³⁷⁷ make public, proclaim

For³⁷⁸ importunity (that is, for naught),
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety? 780
 To what I did thou show'd'st me first the way.
 But I to enemies revealed, and should not.
 Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
 Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
 Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,³⁷⁹
 So near related, or the same of kind,
 Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not
 More strength from me than in thyself was found.
 And what if love, which thou interpret'st³⁸⁰ hate, 790
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
 Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable³⁸¹
 Of fancy,³⁸² feared lest one day thou would'st leave me
 As her at Timna,³⁸³ sought by all means therefore
 How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest.
 No better way I saw than by importuning
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power
 Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
 Why then revealed? I was assured by those 800
 Who tempted me that nothing was designed³⁸⁴
 Against thee but safe custody, and hold.³⁸⁵
 That made for me.³⁸⁶ I knew that liberty
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears,

³⁷⁸ because of

³⁷⁹ discussion

³⁸⁰ interpret as

³⁸¹ unsettled, variable, fickle

³⁸² (1) mind, (2) affection, love

³⁸³ his first wife: see lines 219–27, above

³⁸⁴ intended, planned

³⁸⁵ confinement

³⁸⁶ “that was sufficient/did it for me”

Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed.
 Here³⁸⁷ I should still enjoy thee day and night,
 Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
 Whole³⁸⁸ to myself, unhazarded³⁸⁹ abroad,
 Fearless³⁹⁰ at home of partners³⁹¹ in my love. 810
 These reasons in love's law have passed for good,
 Though fond³⁹² and reasonless to some, perhaps.
 And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
 Be not unlike all others, not austere³⁹³
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

SAM. How cunningly the sorceress displays
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine! 820
 That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
 By this appears. I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
 I led the way. Bitter reproach, but true.
 I to myself was false ere thou to me.
 Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
 Take to thy wicked deed, which when thou see'st
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
 Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,
 And I believe it—weakness to resist 830
 Philistian gold! If weakness may excuse,
 What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
 Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?

³⁸⁷ this way

³⁸⁸ wholly, entirely

³⁸⁹ not risked

³⁹⁰ not afraid

³⁹¹ sharers

³⁹² foolish

³⁹³ harsh, grim, bitter

All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
 With God or man will gain thee no remission.
 But love constrain'd³⁹⁴ thee! Call it furious³⁹⁵ rage³⁹⁶
 To satisfy thy lust. Love seeks to have love.
 My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
 To raise in me inexpiable³⁹⁷ hate,
 Knowing,³⁹⁸ as needs I must, by thee betrayed? 840
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

DAL. Since thou determin'st³⁹⁹ weakness for no plea
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
 What sieges girt me round, ere I consented,
 Which might have awed the best resolved of men,
 The constantest t' have yielded without blame.

It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
 That wrought⁴⁰⁰ with me. Thou know'st the
 magistrates⁴⁰¹ 850

And princes of my country came in person,
 Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
 Adjured⁴⁰² by all the bonds of civil duty
 And of religion, pressed⁴⁰³ how just it was,
 How honorable, how glorious to entrap
 A common⁴⁰⁴ enemy, who had destroyed

³⁹⁴ forced, compelled

³⁹⁵ frantic

³⁹⁶ passion, appetite

³⁹⁷ irreconcilable

³⁹⁸ knowing that I had been

³⁹⁹ decides, ordains

⁴⁰⁰ worked, prevailed

⁴⁰¹ officers of the executive government

⁴⁰² swore, solemnly entreated

⁴⁰³ insisted, urged

⁴⁰⁴ communal, general

Such numbers of our nation. And the priest
 Was not behind,⁴⁰⁵ but ever at my ear,
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious 860
 Dishonorer of Dagon. What had I
 T' oppose against such powerful arguments?
 Only my love of thee held long debate,
 And combated in silence all these reasons
 With hard contest.⁴⁰⁶ At length that grounded⁴⁰⁷ maxim,
 So rife⁴⁰⁸ and celebrated in the mouths
 Of wisest men, that to the public good
 Private respects⁴⁰⁹ must yield, with grave authority
 Took full possession of me, and prevailed,
 Virtue, as I thought—truth—duty so enjoining.⁴¹⁰ 870

SAM. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end!
 In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy.
 But had thy love, still odiously⁴¹¹ pretended,
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
 I before⁴¹² all the daughters of my tribe
 And of my nation chose thee from among
 My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st—
 Too well—unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
 Not out of levity,⁴¹³ but over-pow'ed 880
 By thy request, who⁴¹⁴ could deny thee nothing,

⁴⁰⁵ backward

⁴⁰⁶ struggle

⁴⁰⁷ well-founded

⁴⁰⁸ common, widespread

⁴⁰⁹ considerations

⁴¹⁰ prescribing, imposing

⁴¹¹ offensively

⁴¹² over, in preference to

⁴¹³ frivolity, lack of serious thought

⁴¹⁴ I who

Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
 Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed?⁴¹⁵
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
 Parents and country, nor was I their⁴¹⁶ subject,⁴¹⁷
 Nor under their protection, but my own,
 Thou mine,⁴¹⁸ not theirs. If aught against my life
 Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
 Against the law of Nature, law of nations, 890
 No more thy country, but an impious crew
 Of men conspiring to uphold their state
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
 For which our country is a name so dear,
 Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee!
 To please thy gods thou didst it—gods unable
 To acquit⁴¹⁹ themselves and prosecute their foes.
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 Of their own deity, gods cannot be—
 Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared. 900
 These false pretexts and varnished colors failing,
 Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear!

DAL. In argument with men a woman ever
 Goes by the worse,⁴²⁰ whatever be her cause.

SAM. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath!
 Witness when I was worried with⁴²¹ thy peals.⁴²²

DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.

⁴¹⁵ acknowledged, openly declared

⁴¹⁶ the Philistines'

⁴¹⁷ subject of a realm, citizen

⁴¹⁸ thou mine = thou under my protection

⁴¹⁹ free

⁴²⁰ goes by the worse = gets the worst of it

⁴²¹ by

⁴²² outbursts/volleys of sound (words)

Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson!
 Afford⁴²³ me place⁴²⁴ to show what recompense 910
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdome,
 Misguided. Only what remains past cure
 Bear not too sensibly,⁴²⁵ nor still insist
 T' afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
 Where other senses want⁴²⁶ not their delights,
 At home in leisure and domestic ease,
 Exempt from many a care and chance⁴²⁷ to which
 Eye-sight exposes, daily, men abroad.⁴²⁸
 I to the lords will intercede, not doubting 920
 Their favorable ear,⁴²⁹ that I may fetch thee
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, t' abide
 With me, where my redoubled love and care,
 With nursing diligence (to me glad office),⁴³⁰
 May ever tend about thee to⁴³¹ old age
 With all things grateful⁴³² cheered, and so supplied
 That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.
 SAM. No, no, of my condition take no care!
 It fits not.⁴³³ Thou and I long since are twain,⁴³⁴
 Nor think me so unwary or accurst 930
 To bring my feet again into the snare

⁴²³ spare, give, yield

⁴²⁴ occasion, opportunity

⁴²⁵ acutely

⁴²⁶ lack

⁴²⁷ accident

⁴²⁸ out of their houses

⁴²⁹ attention

⁴³⁰ duty, function

⁴³¹ up to, until

⁴³² pleasant

⁴³³ fits not = is not suitable

⁴³⁴ separated, disunited, estranged

Where once I have been caught. I know thy trains,⁴³⁵
 Though dearly to my cost! Thy ginns,⁴³⁶ and toils.⁴³⁷
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
 No more on me have power, their force is nulled.⁴³⁸
 So much of adders' wisdom⁴³⁹ I have learned
 To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
 Loved, honored, feared me, thou alone could hate me,
 Thy husband, slight⁴⁴⁰ me, sell⁴⁴¹ me, and forego⁴⁴² me, 940
 How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
 Deceiveable, in most things as a child
 Helpless, thence easily contemned,⁴⁴³ and scorned,
 And last⁴⁴⁴ neglected? How would'st thou insult⁴⁴⁵
 When I must live uxorious⁴⁴⁶ to thy will
 In perfect⁴⁴⁷ thralldom?⁴⁴⁸ How again betray me,
 Bearing my words and doings to the lords
 To gloss⁴⁴⁹ upon, and censuring,⁴⁵⁰ frown or smile?
 This jail I count⁴⁵¹ the house of liberty
 To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter! 950

⁴³⁵ tricks

⁴³⁶ devices, contrivances

⁴³⁷ nets and snares

⁴³⁸ annulled

⁴³⁹ "they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers" (Psalm 58:4-5)

⁴⁴⁰ disdain

⁴⁴¹ betray

⁴⁴² leave

⁴⁴³ despised

⁴⁴⁴ finally, at last

⁴⁴⁵ affront, exult

⁴⁴⁶ displaying excessive affection/regard for one's wife

⁴⁴⁷ complete, unqualified

⁴⁴⁸ slavery

⁴⁴⁹ explain, interpret

⁴⁵⁰ judging, criticizing

⁴⁵¹ hold, reckon

DAL. Let me approach, at least, and touch thy hand.

SAM. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee, go with that.
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives.
Cherish thy hast'ned widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason. So farewell.

DAL. I see thou art implacable,⁴⁵² more deaf 960
To prayers than winds and seas. Yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore.
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing⁴⁵³
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate—
Bid go,⁴⁵⁴ with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments⁴⁵⁵ I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970
Fame if not double-faced is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds.
On both his wings, one black, th' other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcised⁴⁵⁶
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵² inexorable, irreconcilable

⁴⁵³ pursuing, petitioning

⁴⁵⁴ bid (directed) to go (to leave)

⁴⁵⁵ affairs

⁴⁵⁶ the Jews

⁴⁵⁷ slandered

But in my country, where I most desire, 980
 In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath
 I shall be named among the famousest
 Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
 Living and dead recorded,⁴⁵⁸ who to save
 Her country from a fierce destroyer chose
 Above⁴⁵⁹ the faith of wedlock-bands⁴⁶⁰—my tomb
 With odors⁴⁶¹ visited and annual flowers.
 Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
 Jael, who with inhospitable guile
 Smote Sisera sleeping through the temples nailed.⁴⁶² 990
 Nor shall I count it heinous⁴⁶³ to enjoy
 The public marks of honor and reward
 Conferred upon me, for the piety
 Which to my country I was judged t' have shown.
 At this whoever envies or repines⁴⁶⁴
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHOR. She's gone, a manifest⁴⁶⁵ serpent by her sting
 Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

SAM. So let her go. God sent her to debase me
 And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000
 To such a viper his most sacred trust
 Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

CHOR. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
 After offence returning, to regain

⁴⁵⁸ recited, sung, narrated

⁴⁵⁹ higher than

⁴⁶⁰ ties, agreements

⁴⁶¹ incense, perfume

⁴⁶² Sisera, a Canaanite hostile to the Jews, fled their pursuit; Jael, wife of Sisera's host, drove a nail through his head as he lay sleeping: see Judges 4, 5

⁴⁶³ criminal

⁴⁶⁴ is discontented

⁴⁶⁵ evident, obvious

Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAM. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end.
Not wedlock-treachery, endangering life.

CHOR. It is not virtue, wisdom, valor, wit, 1010
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit
That woman's love can win or long inherit,⁴⁶⁶
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit⁴⁶⁷

(Which way soever men refer⁴⁶⁸ it),
Much like thy riddle, Samson,⁴⁶⁹ in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymp⁴⁷⁰, worthless to thee compared, 1020
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both⁴⁷¹ so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal⁴⁷² harvest of thy head.
Is it for that⁴⁷³ such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,⁴⁷⁴
Capacity not raised⁴⁷⁵ to apprehend

⁴⁶⁶ receive, hold

⁴⁶⁷ find, light upon

⁴⁶⁸ consult upon

⁴⁶⁹ the "secret" referred to in line 384, above

⁴⁷⁰ best man at a wedding: Samson's first wife was subsequently married to his former best man

⁴⁷¹ neither would both wives have

⁴⁷² destined, ruinous, deadly

⁴⁷³ for that = because

⁴⁷⁴ limited, very little

⁴⁷⁵ formed, created, produced

Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect⁴⁷⁶ the wrong? 1030
 Or was too much of self-love mixed,
 Of constancy no root⁴⁷⁷ infixed,⁴⁷⁸
 That either they love nothing, or not long?
 What e'er it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all Heav'nly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,⁴⁷⁹
 Once joined the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestine, far within defensive⁴⁸⁰ arms
 A cleaving⁴⁸¹ mischief, in⁴⁸² his way to virtue
 Adverse and turbulent,⁴⁸³ or by her charms 1040
 Draws him awry,⁴⁸⁴ enslaved
 With dotage,⁴⁸⁵ and his sense depraved⁴⁸⁶
 To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
 What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
 Embarked with such a steer-mate at the helm?
 Favored of Heav'n who finds
 One⁴⁸⁷ virtuous (rarely found),
 That in domestic good combines.⁴⁸⁸
 Happy that house! His way to peace is smooth.
 But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
 And all temptation can remove,

⁴⁷⁶ prefer

⁴⁷⁷ basis, inner/essential part

⁴⁷⁸ implanted

⁴⁷⁹ serious, calm

⁴⁸⁰ defending

⁴⁸¹ (1) sundering, separating, (2) clinging, adhering

⁴⁸² on, along

⁴⁸³ disorderly, troubling

⁴⁸⁴ out of the right path

⁴⁸⁵ excessive fondness

⁴⁸⁶ corrupted

⁴⁸⁷ a woman

⁴⁸⁸ joins/unites (with her virtue)

Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal Law
 Gave to the man despotic⁴⁸⁹ power
 Over his female in due⁴⁹⁰ awe,⁴⁹¹
 Nor from that right to part⁴⁹² an hour,
 Smile she⁴⁹³ or frown.⁴⁹⁴
 So shall he least confusion draw
 On his whole life, not swayed
 By female usurpation, nor dismayed.

1060

But had we best retire, I see a storm?

SAM. Fair days have oft contracted⁴⁹⁵ wind and rain.

CHOR. But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAM. Be less abstruse,⁴⁹⁶ my riddling days are past.

CHOR. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
 The bait of honeyed words. A rougher tongue
 Draws hitherward. I know him by his stride,
 The giant Harapha⁴⁹⁷ of Gath, his look
 Haughty as is his pile⁴⁹⁸ high-built and proud.
 Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him
 hither

1070

I less conjecture⁴⁹⁹ than when first I saw
 The sumptuous⁵⁰⁰ Dalila floating this way.
 His habit⁵⁰¹ carries peace, his brow defiance.

⁴⁸⁹ arbitrarily/absolutely authoritative

⁴⁹⁰ proper

⁴⁹¹ dread mixed with veneration

⁴⁹² sever, quit

⁴⁹³ smile she = whether she smiles

⁴⁹⁴ frown, scowl

⁴⁹⁵ been involved in

⁴⁹⁶ hidden, secret, recondite

⁴⁹⁷ "the giant"

⁴⁹⁸ home

⁴⁹⁹ can guess/predict

⁵⁰⁰ magnificent, splendid

⁵⁰¹ dress

SAM. Or⁵⁰² peace or not, alike to me he comes.

CHOR. His fraught⁵⁰³ we soon shall know. He now arrives.

HAR. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,⁵⁰⁴

As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,

Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath.

Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned

As Og⁵⁰⁵ or Anak⁵⁰⁶ and the Emims⁵⁰⁷ old 1080

That Kiriathaim⁵⁰⁸ held: thou knowst me now,

If thou at all art known. Much I have heard

Of thy prodigious⁵⁰⁹ might and feats performed,

Incredible to me, in this displeased,

That I was never present on the place

Of those encounters, where we might have tried⁵¹⁰

Each other's force in camp⁵¹¹ or listed field:⁵¹²

And now am come to see of whom such noise

Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,

If thy appearance answer loud report.⁵¹³ 1090

SAM. The way to know were not to see but taste.

HAR. Dost thou already single⁵¹⁴ me? I thought

Gyves⁵¹⁵ and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune

⁵⁰² whether

⁵⁰³ freight

⁵⁰⁴ mischance, luck

⁵⁰⁵ see Deuteronomy 3:1–11

⁵⁰⁶ see Numbers 13:33

⁵⁰⁷ a race of giants dwelling east of the River Jordan: see Deuteronomy 2:10–11

⁵⁰⁸ see Genesis 14:5

⁵⁰⁹ unnatural, amazing, vast, monstrous

⁵¹⁰ tested

⁵¹¹ in camp: on a campaign

⁵¹² listed field: battlefield divided into lists (areas for jousting tournaments)

⁵¹³ rumor, common talk

⁵¹⁴ challenge to single combat

⁵¹⁵ shackles, fetters

Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
 T' have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw!
 I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,
 Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.
 So had the glory of prowess been recovered
 To Palestine, won by a Philistine
 From⁵¹⁶ the unforeskinned race,⁵¹⁷ of whom thou
 bear'st

1100

The highest name for valiant acts. That honor
 Certain t' have won by mortal⁵¹⁸ duel from thee,
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

SAM. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do
 What then thou would'st. Thou see'st it in thy hand.

HAR. To combat with a blind man I disdain.
 And thou hast need much washing to be⁵¹⁹ touched.

SAM. Such usage as your honorable lords
 Afford me, assassinated⁵²⁰ and betrayed,
 Who durst not with their whole united powers
 In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
 Nor in the house with chamber⁵²¹ ambushes
 Close-banded⁵²² durst attack me—no, not sleeping—
 Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
 Breaking her marriage faith to circumvent⁵²³ me.
 Therefore without feigned shifts⁵²⁴ let be assigned
 Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee

1110

⁵¹⁶ away from

⁵¹⁷ the circumcised, the Jews

⁵¹⁸ deadly

⁵¹⁹ in order to be

⁵²⁰ destroyed by treachery

⁵²¹ room (in a house)

⁵²² close-banded = closely joined

⁵²³ get the better of

⁵²⁴ expedients, stratagems

(Or rather flight) no great advantage on me.
 Then put on all thy gorgeous⁵²⁵ arms,⁵²⁶ thy helmet
 And brigandine⁵²⁷ of brass, thy broad habergeon,⁵²⁸ 1120
 Vant-brass⁵²⁹ and greves,⁵³⁰ and gauntlet,⁵³¹ add thy spear,
 A weaver's beam,⁵³² and seven-times-folded⁵³³ shield.
 I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
 And raise such out-cries on thy clattered⁵³⁴ iron
 Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head,
 That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
 Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast
 Again in safety what thou would'st have done
 To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

HAR. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms, 1130
 Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
 Their ornament and safety, had not spells
 And black enchantments, some magician's art
 Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from
 Heav'n
 Feign'd'st at thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair,
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
 Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
 Of chafed⁵³⁵ wild boars or ruffled⁵³⁶ porcupines.

SAM. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts.
 My trust is in the living God who gave me 1140

⁵²⁵ showy

⁵²⁶ armor

⁵²⁷ body armor: rings (or plates) of metal covered with canvas, linen, or leather

⁵²⁸ upper-body armor

⁵²⁹ vant-brace: armor for forearms

⁵³⁰ leg armor

⁵³¹ glove of leather, covered with metal plates

⁵³² weaver's beam: wooden cylinder in a loom, on which, before weaving, the warp is wound (see 1 Samuel 7:7)

⁵³³ i.e., seven laminations (layers) of leather

⁵³⁴ rattling, noisy

⁵³⁵ raging

⁵³⁶ stiff-spined

At my nativity this strength, diffused
 No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
 Than thine, while⁵³⁷ I preserved these locks unshorn,
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
 Go to his temple, invoke⁵³⁸ his aid
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him
 How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
 Which I to be the power of Israel's God
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
 Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,
 With th' utmost of his godhead seconded:⁵³⁹
 Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

1150

HAR. Presume not on thy God, what e'er He be.
 Thee He regards⁵⁴⁰ not, owns⁵⁴¹ not, hath cut off
 Quite from his⁵⁴² people and delivered up
 Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
 To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee
 Into the common prison, there to grind⁵⁴³
 Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,
 As good for nothing else, no better service
 With those thy boist'rous⁵⁴⁴ locks. No worthy match
 For valor to assail, nor by the sword
 Of noble warrior, so to stain his honor,
 But by the barber's razor best subdued.⁵⁴⁵

1160

⁵³⁷ as long as

⁵³⁸ invoke

⁵³⁹ supported

⁵⁴⁰ notices, cares about

⁵⁴¹ acknowledges

⁵⁴² Samson's

⁵⁴³ labor

⁵⁴⁴ coarse-growing, rank, rough

⁵⁴⁵ conquered, overcome

SAM. All these indignities, for such they are
 From thine,⁵⁴⁶ these evils I deserve and more,
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170
 Justly, yet despair not of His final pardon
 Whose ear is ever open, and His eye
 Gracious⁵⁴⁷ to re-admit the suppliant.
 In confidence whereof I once again
 Defy⁵⁴⁸ thee to the trial of mortal fight,
 By combat to decide whose god is God,
 Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

HAR. Fair honor that thou dost thy God, in trusting
 He will accept thee to defend his cause—
 A murderer, a revolter,⁵⁴⁹ and a robber. 1180

SAM. Tongue-doughty⁵⁵⁰ giant, how dost thou prove
 me these?

HAR. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
 Their magistrates confessed it, when they took thee
 As a league⁵⁵¹ breaker and delivered, bound,
 Into our hands—for hadst thou not committed
 Notorious⁵⁵² murder on those thirty men
 At Askalon, who never did thee harm,
 Then like a robber strip'dst them of their robes?⁵⁵³
 The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
 Went up with armèd powers, thee only seeking, 1190
 To others did no violence nor spoil.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁶ thine (your) people

⁵⁴⁷ indulgent, beneficent

⁵⁴⁸ challenge

⁵⁴⁹ rebel

⁵⁵⁰ tongue-valiant

⁵⁵¹ treaty

⁵⁵² well-known (and bad)

⁵⁵³ see Judges 14:10–19

⁵⁵⁴ booty, loot

SAM. Among the daughters of the Philistines
 I chose a wife, which argued⁵⁵⁵ me no foe,
 And in your city held my nuptial feast.
 But your ill-meaning politician⁵⁵⁶ lords,
 Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
 Appointed to await me thirty spies,
 Who threat'ning cruel death constrained⁵⁵⁷ the bride
 To wring from me and tell to them my secret
 That solved the riddle which I had proposed. 1200
 When I perceived all set on enmity,
 As⁵⁵⁸ on my enemies, wherever chanced,
 I used⁵⁵⁹ hostility, and took their spoil
 To pay my underminers⁵⁶⁰ in their coin.
 My nation was subjected to your lords.
 It was the force of conquest; force with force
 Is well ejected when the conquered can.
 But I a private⁵⁶¹ person, whom my country
 As a league⁵⁶²-breaker gave up,⁵⁶³ bound, presumed⁵⁶⁴
 Single⁵⁶⁵ rebellion and did hostile acts? 1210
 I was no private but a person raised
 With strength sufficient, and command from Heav'n,
 To free my country. If their servile minds
 Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
 But to their masters gave me up for nought,
 Th' unworthier they. Whence to this day they serve.

⁵⁵⁵ indicated, proved

⁵⁵⁶ crafty intriguers

⁵⁵⁷ forced, compelled

⁵⁵⁸ so

⁵⁵⁹ engaged in, employed

⁵⁶⁰ secret enemies

⁵⁶¹ holding no official position

⁵⁶² treaty

⁵⁶³ gave up = surrendered

⁵⁶⁴ undertook, ventured, dared

⁵⁶⁵ solitary

I was to do my part from Heav'n assigned,
 And had performed it if my known⁵⁶⁶ offense
 Had not disabled me⁵⁶⁷—not all your force.
 These shifts⁵⁶⁸ refuted, answer thy appellat⁵⁶⁹ 1220
 (Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts)
 Who now defies⁵⁷⁰ thee thrice⁵⁷¹ to single fight,
 As a petty⁵⁷² enterprise⁵⁷³ of small⁵⁷⁴ enforce.⁵⁷⁵

HAR. With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
 Due by the law to capital punishment?
 To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

SAM. Can'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey⁵⁷⁶ me,
 To descant⁵⁷⁷ on my strength, and give thy verdict?
 Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed—
 But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

HAR. O Baal-zebul!⁵⁷⁸ Can my ears, unused,⁵⁷⁹
 Hear these dishonors and not render⁵⁸⁰ death?

SAM. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
 Fear I incurable: bring up thy van!⁵⁸¹
 My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

⁵⁶⁶ familiar, well-known

⁵⁶⁷ i.e., revealing the secret of his strength to Dalila, who then cut off his hair

⁵⁶⁸ tricks, sophistries, evasions

⁵⁶⁹ challenger

⁵⁷⁰ challenges

⁵⁷¹ for the third time, three times in succession

⁵⁷² trivial, minor, unimportant

⁵⁷³ undertaking, business

⁵⁷⁴ little, slight, no great

⁵⁷⁵ exercise

⁵⁷⁶ examine, inspect, evaluate

⁵⁷⁷ comment on, carp about

⁵⁷⁸ Philistine god

⁵⁷⁹ unaccustomed

⁵⁸⁰ give in return, cause

⁵⁸¹ front line of battle formations

HAR. This insolence⁵⁸² other kind of answer fits.⁵⁸³

SAM. Go, baffled⁵⁸⁴ coward, lest I run upon thee,
 Though in these chains—bulk⁵⁸⁵ without spirit vast!—⁵⁸⁶
 And with one buffet⁵⁸⁷ lay thy structure⁵⁸⁸ low,
 Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down 1240
 To th' hazard⁵⁸⁹ of thy brains and shattered sides.

HAR. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
 These braveries,⁵⁹⁰ in irons loaden on thee.

CHOR. His giantship is gone, somewhat crestfall'n,
 Stalking⁵⁹¹ with less unconscionable⁵⁹² strides
 And lower looks, but in a sultry⁵⁹³ chafe.⁵⁹⁴

SAM. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
 Though fame⁵⁹⁵ divulge⁵⁹⁶ him father of five sons,
 All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.⁵⁹⁷

CHOR. He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250
 And with malicious counsel stir them up
 Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

SAM. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
 Will not dare mention, lest a question rise

⁵⁸² offensive arrogance

⁵⁸³ is appropriate for

⁵⁸⁴ bewildered

⁵⁸⁵ huge/massy frame

⁵⁸⁶ large

⁵⁸⁷ blow (of the hand)

⁵⁸⁸ frame, body

⁵⁸⁹ peril

⁵⁹⁰ acts of bravado/defiance

⁵⁹¹ marching

⁵⁹² unconcerned, indifferent, uncaring

⁵⁹³ passionate

⁵⁹⁴ temper

⁵⁹⁵ common talk

⁵⁹⁶ publicly declare

⁵⁹⁷ the greatest

Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
 And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
 Much more affliction than already felt
 They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
 If they intend advantage⁵⁹⁸ of my labors,
 The work of many hands, which earns my keeping 1260
 With no small profit daily to my owners.

But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
 My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence:
 The worst that he can give, to me the best.
 Yet so it may fall out, because their end
 Is hate, not help to me, it may—with mine—⁵⁹⁹
 Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHOR. Oh how comely⁶⁰⁰ it is, and how reviving
 To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
 When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270
 Puts invincible might
 To quell⁶⁰¹ the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,
 The brute and boist'rous⁶⁰² force of violent men,
 Hardy⁶⁰³ and industrious⁶⁰⁴ to support
 Tyrannic power, but raging⁶⁰⁵ to pursue
 The righteous and all such as honor truth!
 He⁶⁰⁶ all their ammunition⁶⁰⁷
 And feats of war defeats
 With plain heroic magnitude of mind
 And celestial vigor armed, 1280

⁵⁹⁸ benefit, profit

⁵⁹⁹ my death

⁶⁰⁰ pleasing, proper

⁶⁰¹ overcome, vanquish

⁶⁰² violent, truculent

⁶⁰³ bold

⁶⁰⁴ zealous, assiduous

⁶⁰⁵ frenzied, furious

⁶⁰⁶ their deliverer

⁶⁰⁷ military stores/equipment

Their armories and magazines contemns,⁶⁰⁸
 Renders them useless, while
 With wingèd expedition,⁶⁰⁹
 Swift as the lightning glance,⁶¹⁰ he executes⁶¹¹
 His errand on the wicked, who surprised
 Lose their defence, distracted⁶¹² and amazed.⁶¹³

But patience is more oft the exercise⁶¹⁴
 Of Saints, the trial of their fortitude,⁶¹⁵
 Making them each his own deliverer,
 And victor over all⁶¹⁶
 That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
 Either of these is in thy lot,
 Samson, with might endued⁶¹⁷
 Above the sons of men. But sight bereaved⁶¹⁸
 May chance to number thee with those
 Whom patience finally must crown.

1290

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
 Laboring thy mind
 More than the working day thy hands.
 And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.⁶¹⁹

1300

For I descry this way
 Some other tending.⁶²⁰ In his hand

⁶⁰⁸ disdains

⁶⁰⁹ speed

⁶¹⁰ flash

⁶¹¹ performs, fulfills, discharges

⁶¹² perplexed, confused, disordered

⁶¹³ panicked, overwhelmed, astonished

⁶¹⁴ act of worship, religious observance

⁶¹⁵ moral strength/courage

⁶¹⁶ everything

⁶¹⁷ endowed

⁶¹⁸ deprived, stripped

⁶¹⁹ in reserve, still to come

⁶²⁰ making his way

A scepter or quaint⁶²¹ staff he bears,
 Comes on amain,⁶²² speed in his look.
 By his habit I discern him now
 A public officer, and now at hand.
 His message will be short and voluble.⁶²³

OFF. Hebrews, the pris'ner Samson here I seek.

CHOR. His manacles remark⁶²⁴ him. There he sits.

OFF. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say: 1310
 This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
 With sacrifices, triumph, pomp,⁶²⁵ and games.
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,⁶²⁶
 And now some public proof⁶²⁷ thereof require
 To honor this great feast and great assembly.
 Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
 Where I will see thee heartn'd⁶²⁸ and fresh clad
 To appear as fits before th' illustrious lords.

SAM. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew. Therefore tell them
 Our Law forbids at their religious rites 1320
 My presence. For that cause I cannot come.

OFF. This answer, be assured, will not content them.

SAM. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
 Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
 Jugglers and dancers, antics,⁶²⁹ mummers,⁶³⁰ mimics,⁶³¹

⁶²¹ skillfully worked

⁶²² at full speed

⁶²³ fluent

⁶²⁴ distinguish, mark out

⁶²⁵ pageants, parades, displays

⁶²⁶ standard, degree

⁶²⁷ evidence

⁶²⁸ strengthened, cheered (often by alcohol)

⁶²⁹ clowns

⁶³⁰ actors

⁶³¹ mimes, burlesque actors

But they must pick me out, with shackles tired
 And over-labored at their public mill,
 To make⁶³² them sport⁶³³ with blind activity?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress⁶³⁴ me more, 1330
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st. I will not come.

OFF. Regard⁶³⁵ thyself: this will offend them highly.

SAM. Myself? My conscience and internal peace!
 Can they think me so broken, so debased
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although their drudge,⁶³⁶ to be their fool or jester,
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
 To show them feats, and play⁶³⁷ before their god, 1340
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me
 Joined⁶³⁸ with extreme contempt? I will not come.

OFF. My message was imposed on me with speed,
 Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?⁶³⁹

SAM. So take it, with what speed thy message needs.

OFF. I am sorry⁶⁴⁰ what this stoutness⁶⁴¹ will produce.

SAM. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

CHOR. Consider, Samson. Matters now are strained
 Up to the height, whether to hold or break.

⁶³² furnish

⁶³³ diversion

⁶³⁴ afflict, strain, make miserable

⁶³⁵ look to

⁶³⁶ worker at low/servile/hard/distasteful tasks

⁶³⁷ frolic, exercise

⁶³⁸ enjoined, commanded

⁶³⁹ formal decision

⁶⁴⁰ pained

⁶⁴¹ defiance

He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350
 Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
 Expect another message more imperious,
 More lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

SAM. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
 Of strength, again returning with my hair
 After my great transgression? So requite⁶⁴²
 Favor⁶⁴³ renewed, and add a greater sin
 By prostituting holy things to idols?
 A Nazarite⁶⁴⁴ in place abominable
 Vaunting⁶⁴⁵ my strength in honor to their Dagon? 1360
 Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
 What act more execrably unclean, profane?

CHOR. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
 Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

SAM. Not in their idol-worship, but by labor
 Honest and lawful to deserve my food
 Of those who have me in their civil⁶⁴⁶ power.

CHOR. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

SAM. Where outward force constrains,⁶⁴⁷ the sentence⁶⁴⁸
 holds.

But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, 1370
 Not dragging? The Philistian lords command!
 Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
 I do it freely, venturing to displease
 God for the fear of man, and man prefer,

⁶⁴² pay back

⁶⁴³ God's favor

⁶⁴⁴ one pledged to abstinence

⁶⁴⁵ glorifying

⁶⁴⁶ legal

⁶⁴⁷ compels

⁶⁴⁸ saying, maxim

Set God behind—which in His jealousy⁶⁴⁹
 Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
 Yet that He may dispense⁶⁵⁰ with me or thee,
 Present in temples at idolatrous rites
 For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

CHOR. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my
 reach.

1380

SAM. Be of good courage. I begin to feel
 Some rousing⁶⁵¹ motions in me which dispose⁶⁵²
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.
 I with this messenger will go along—
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonor
 Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
 If there be aught of presage⁶⁵³ in the mind,
 This day will be remarkable in my life
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

CHOR. In time thou hast resolved: the man returns. 1390

OFF. Samson, this second message from our lords
 To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
 And dar'st thou at our sending and command
 Dispute thy coming? Come without delay,
 Or we shall find⁶⁵⁴ such engines⁶⁵⁵ to assail⁶⁵⁶
 And hamper⁶⁵⁷ thee, as thou shalt come of force,
 Though thou wert firmler fast'ned than a rock.

⁶⁴⁹ anger

⁶⁵⁰ relax rules, grant dispensations/permission

⁶⁵¹ waking, stirring

⁶⁵² incline toward, prepare

⁶⁵³ prognostication, prediction

⁶⁵⁴ obtain, invent, provide for

⁶⁵⁵ devices, usually but not necessarily mechanical

⁶⁵⁶ assault, attack

⁶⁵⁷ confine

SAM. I could be well content to try⁶⁵⁸ their art,⁶⁵⁹
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.⁶⁶⁰ 1400
 Yet knowing their advantages too many,
 Because they shall⁶⁶¹ not trail⁶⁶² me through their streets
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
 Masters' commands come with a power resistless
 To such as owe them absolute subjection,
 And for a life who will not change his purpose?
 (So mutable are all the ways of men)
 Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
 Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

OFF. I praise thy resolution. Doff⁶⁶³ these links:⁶⁶⁴ 1410
 By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
 To favor, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAM. Brethren, farewell. Your company along
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
 To see me girt⁶⁶⁵ with friends. And how the sight
 Of me as of a common enemy,
 So dreaded once, may now exasperate⁶⁶⁶ them
 I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine,
 And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
 With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned. 1420
 No less the people on their holy-days
 Impetuous,⁶⁶⁷ insolent,⁶⁶⁸ unquenchable.
 Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear

⁶⁵⁸ test

⁶⁵⁹ technical skill

⁶⁶⁰ fatal

⁶⁶¹ must

⁶⁶² drag

⁶⁶³ take off, lay aside

⁶⁶⁴ chains

⁶⁶⁵ surrounded

⁶⁶⁶ irritate

⁶⁶⁷ violent

⁶⁶⁸ arrogant, immoderate

Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
 Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself.
 The last of me or no, I cannot warrant.⁶⁶⁹

CHOR. Go, and the Holy One

Of Israel be thy guide

To what may serve

His glory best, and spread His name

Great among the heathen round—⁶⁷⁰

1430

Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand

Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field

Rode up in flames after his message told

Of thy conception, and be now a shield

Of fire—that Spirit that first rushed on thee

In the camp of Dan

Be efficacious in thee, now at need.

For never was from Heav'n imparted

Measure⁶⁷¹ of strength so great to mortal seed,

As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.

1440

But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste,

With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile

He seems: supposing here to find his son,

Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

MAN. Peace with you, brethren. My inducement⁶⁷² hither

Was not at present here to find my son,

By order of the lords new parted hence

To come and play⁶⁷³ before them at their feast.

I heard all as I came, the city rings

And numbers thither flock. I had no will,⁶⁷⁴

1450

Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.

⁶⁶⁹ guarantee, promise

⁶⁷⁰ round about, all around

⁶⁷¹ quantity, degree

⁶⁷² my inducement = what has led/brought me

⁶⁷³ frolic, exercise

⁶⁷⁴ desire

But that which moved my coming, now, was chiefly
 To give ye part⁶⁷⁵ with me what hope I have
 With good success to work his liberty.

CHOR. That hope would much rejoice us to partake⁶⁷⁶
 With thee. Say reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

MAN. I have attempted⁶⁷⁷ one by one the lords,
 Either at home, or through the high street passing,
 With supplication prone and father's tears,
 T' accept of ransom for my son, their pris'ner. 1460
 Some much averse⁶⁷⁸ I found, and wondrous harsh,
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
 That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests.
 Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
 Private reward, for which both god and state
 They easily would set to sale. A third
 More generous⁶⁷⁹ far and civil,⁶⁸⁰ who confessed
 They had enough revenged, having reduced
 Their foe to misery beneath their fears.
 The rest⁶⁸¹ was⁶⁸² magnanimity⁶⁸³ to remit,⁶⁸⁴ 1470
 If some convenient⁶⁸⁵ ransom were proposed.

What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.

CHOR. Doubtless the people shouting, to behold
 Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
 Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

⁶⁷⁵ share

⁶⁷⁶ share, participate in

⁶⁷⁷ tried to make use of

⁶⁷⁸ disinclined, opposed

⁶⁷⁹ liberal, magnanimous

⁶⁸⁰ courteous

⁶⁸¹ of his sentence/punishment

⁶⁸² would be

⁶⁸³ high-souled kindness

⁶⁸⁴ pardon, forgive, release

⁶⁸⁵ agreeable

MAN. His ransom, if my whole inheritance⁶⁸⁶
 May compass⁶⁸⁷ it, shall willingly be paid
 And numbered down.⁶⁸⁸ Much rather I shall choose
 To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
 And he in that calamitous⁶⁸⁹ prison left. 1480
 No, I am fixed⁶⁹⁰ not to part hence without him.
 For his redemption all my patrimony,
 If need be, I am ready to forego
 And quit: not wanting⁶⁹¹ him, I shall want nothing.

CHOR. Fathers are wont⁶⁹² to lay up⁶⁹³ for their sons:
 Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all.
 Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age:
 Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
 Made older than thy age, through eye-sight lost.

MAN. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
 And view him sitting in the house, enobled⁶⁹⁴
 With all those high exploits by him achieved,
 And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
 That of a nation armed⁶⁹⁵ the strength contained.
 And I persuade me God had not permitted
 His strength again to grow up, with his hair
 Garrisoned⁶⁹⁶ round about him like a camp⁶⁹⁷
 Of faithful soldiery, were not His purpose
 To use him further yet in some great service,

⁶⁸⁶ property, estate

⁶⁸⁷ accomplish

⁶⁸⁸ numbered down = counted out, paid down

⁶⁸⁹ miserable

⁶⁹⁰ firm, settled, determined

⁶⁹¹ lacking, missing

⁶⁹² accustomed

⁶⁹³ lay up = save

⁶⁹⁴ elevated, dignified

⁶⁹⁵ [adjective]

⁶⁹⁶ on garrison (protection, defense) duty

⁶⁹⁷ body of troops

Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
 Useless, and thence ridiculous⁶⁹⁸ about him.
 And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
 God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

CHOR. Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain⁶⁹⁹
 Of His delivery,⁷⁰⁰ and thy joy thereon
 Conceived,⁷⁰¹ agreeable⁷⁰² to a father's love,
 In both which we, as next,⁷⁰³ participate.

MAN. I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!
 Mercy of Heav'n, what hideous noise was that!
 Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

CHOR. Noise call you it? or universal groan,
 As if the whole inhabitation⁷⁰⁴ perished.
 Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
 Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MAN. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
 Oh it continues, they have slain my son!

CHOR. Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry
 From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

MAN. Some dismal⁷⁰⁵ accident⁷⁰⁶ it needs must be.
 What shall we do, stay here or run and see? 1520

CHOR. Best keep together here, lest running thither
 We unawares run into danger's mouth.
 This evil on the Philistines is fall'n:

⁶⁹⁸ laughable, absurd

⁶⁹⁹ empty, unavailing

⁷⁰⁰ action, accomplishing

⁷⁰¹ formed

⁷⁰² consistent/harmonious with

⁷⁰³ of the same tribe, they are in a sense next of kin

⁷⁰⁴ place, population

⁷⁰⁵ disastrous, evil

⁷⁰⁶ happening

From whom could else a general cry be heard?
 The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;
 From other hands we need not much to fear.
 What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
 Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
 He now be dealing dole⁷⁰⁷ among his foes,
 And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way? 1530

MAN. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

CHOR. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
 For His people of old. What hinders now?

MAN. He can, I know, but doubt to think He will,
 Yet hope would fain subscribe,⁷⁰⁸ and tempts belief.
 A little stay⁷⁰⁹ will bring some notice hither.

CHOR. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner,
 For evil news rides post,⁷¹⁰ while good news baits.⁷¹¹
 And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
 An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

MESS. O whither shall I run, or which way fly⁷¹²
 The sight of this so horrid spectacle
 Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold,
 For dire⁷¹³ imagination still pursues me?
 But providence or instinct of nature seems,
 Or reason (though disturbed, and scarce consulted)
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,
 To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these
 My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
 As at some distance from the place of horror, 1550

⁷⁰⁷ sorrow, grief

⁷⁰⁸ assent

⁷⁰⁹ wait, delay

⁷¹⁰ express (fast)

⁷¹¹ abates, stops for a while

⁷¹² flee

⁷¹³ dreadful, terrible

So in the sad event too much concerned.

MAN. The accident⁷¹⁴ was loud, and here before thee,
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not.
No preface needs: thou see'st we long to know.

MESS. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract,⁷¹⁵ to know well what I utter.

MAN. Tell us the sum,⁷¹⁶ the circumstance⁷¹⁷ defer.

MESS. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fall'n.

MAN. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest, 1560
The desolation of a hostile city.

MESS. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.⁷¹⁸

MAN. Relate by whom.

MESS. By Samson.

MAN. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

MESS. Ah Manoa, I refrain too suddenly⁷¹⁹
To utter what will come at last too soon,⁷²⁰
Lest evil tidings with too rude eruption⁷²¹
Hitting thy agèd ear should pierce too deep.

MAN. Suspense in news is torture: speak them out.

MESS. Then take the worst in brief: Samson is dead. 1570

MAN. The worst indeed. O all my hope's defeated

⁷¹⁴ event

⁷¹⁵ confused, disordered, deranged

⁷¹⁶ upshot, conclusion

⁷¹⁷ details, particulars

⁷¹⁸ excess, more than enough

⁷¹⁹ promptly, hastily

⁷²⁰ quickly

⁷²¹ bursting out

To free him hence! But death who sets all free
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
 What windy⁷²² joy this day had I conceived,
 Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
 Nipped with the lagging rear of winter's frost.
 Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
 How died he? Death to life is crown or shame.
 All by him fell, thou say'st. By whom fell he? 1580
 What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

MESS. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MAN. Wearied with slaughter, then, or how? Explain.

MESS. By his own hands.

MAN. Self-violence? What cause
 Brought him so soon at variance⁷²³ with himself,
 Among his foes?

MESS. Inevitable cause
 At once both to destroy and be destroyed.
 The edifice where all were met to see him
 Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.

MAN. O lastly⁷²⁴ over-strong against thyself! 1590
 A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
 More than enough we know, but while things yet
 Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
 Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
 Relation⁷²⁵ more particular and distinct.

MESS. Occasions⁷²⁶ drew me early to this city,
 And as the gates I entered with sun-rise,

⁷²² worthless, vain

⁷²³ discord, quarrel

⁷²⁴ finally, in the end

⁷²⁵ narration

⁷²⁶ business

The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
 Through each high street.⁷²⁷ Little I had dispatched⁷²⁸
 When all abroad⁷²⁹ was rumored that this day 1600
 Samson should be brought forth to show the people
 Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.
 I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded⁷³⁰
 Not to be absent at that spectacle.
 The building was a spacious theater⁷³¹
 Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
 With seats where all the lords and each degree
 Of sort⁷³² might sit in order to behold.
 The other side was open, where the throng
 On banks⁷³³ and scaffolds under sky might stand. 1610
 I among these aloof⁷³⁴ obscurely⁷³⁵ stood.
 The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
 Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
 When to their sports⁷³⁶ they turned. Immediately
 Was Samson as a public servant brought,
 In their state livery⁷³⁷ clad. Before him pipes⁷³⁸
 And timbrels,⁷³⁹ on each side went armèd guards,
 Both horse and foot before him, and behind
 Archers, and slingers, cataphracts⁷⁴⁰ and spears.

⁷²⁷ high street = main road

⁷²⁸ gotten done

⁷²⁹ all abroad = widely

⁷³⁰ thought, decided

⁷³¹ hall, amphitheater

⁷³² quality, rank

⁷³³ benches

⁷³⁴ at a distance

⁷³⁵ inconspicuous, unnoticed

⁷³⁶ diversions

⁷³⁷ distinctive clothing, uniform

⁷³⁸ flutes

⁷³⁹ tambourines

⁷⁴⁰ soldiers in full armor

At sight of him the people with a shout 1620
 Rifted⁷⁴¹ the air, clamoring⁷⁴² their god with praise,
 Who had made their dreadful⁷⁴³ enemy their thrall.⁷⁴⁴
 He patient but undaunted where they led him
 Came to the place, and what was set before him
 Which without help of eye, might be assayed,
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
 All with incredible, stupendous force,
 None daring to appear antagonist.⁷⁴⁵
 At length for intermission sake they led him
 Between the pillars. He his guide requested 1630
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
 As over-tired to let him lean a while
 With both his arms on those two massy pillars
 That to the archèd roof gave main support.
 He⁷⁴⁶ unsuspecting led him, which when Samson
 Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined⁷⁴⁷
 And eyes fast fixed he stood, as one who prayed,
 Or some great matter in his mind revolved.
 At last with head erect thus cried aloud,
 "Hitherto, lords, what your commands imposed 1640
 I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
 Not without wonder or delight beheld.
 Now of my own accord such other trial⁷⁴⁸
 I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
 This uttered, straining all his nerves⁷⁴⁹ he bowed.

⁷⁴¹ split

⁷⁴² raising an outcry for

⁷⁴³ fearful, terrible

⁷⁴⁴ slave

⁷⁴⁵ as opponent/adversary

⁷⁴⁶ the guard

⁷⁴⁷ bowed

⁷⁴⁸ test

⁷⁴⁹ sinews

As with the force of winds and waters pent⁷⁵⁰
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
 With horrible convulsion⁷⁵¹ to and fro
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew 1650
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, councillors, or priests,
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this but each Philistian city round,
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
 Samson with these immixed,⁷⁵² inevitably
 Pulled down the same destruction on himself.
 The vulgar⁷⁵³ only scaped, who stood without.⁷⁵⁴

CHOR. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious! 1660
 Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain, self-killed
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold⁷⁵⁵
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoined
 Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
 Than all thy life had slain before.

SEMICHOR. While their hearts were jocund⁷⁵⁶ and
 sublime,⁷⁵⁷
 Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine 1670
 And fat regorged⁷⁵⁸ of bulls and goats,

⁷⁵⁰ confined, shut in

⁷⁵¹ wrenching

⁷⁵² commingled

⁷⁵³ common/ordinary people

⁷⁵⁴ outside

⁷⁵⁵ (1) coils, wrappings, (2) pen, enclosure

⁷⁵⁶ happy

⁷⁵⁷ proud, lofty

⁷⁵⁸ swallowed

Chanting their idol, and preferring⁷⁵⁹
 Before our living Dread who dwells
 In Silo⁷⁶⁰ His bright sanctuary:
 Among them He a Spirit of frenzy⁷⁶¹ sent,
 Who⁷⁶² hurt⁷⁶³ their minds,
 And urged them on with mad desire
 To call in haste for their destroyer.
 They only set on sport⁷⁶⁴ and play
 Unweetingly⁷⁶⁵ importuned 1680
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
 So fond⁷⁶⁶ are mortal men
 Fallen into⁷⁶⁷ wrath divine,
 As their own ruin on themselves t' invite,
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,⁷⁶⁸
 And with blindness internal struck.

SEMICHOR. But he though blind of sight,
 Despised and thought extinguished quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated,
 His fiery virtue⁷⁶⁹ roused 1690
 From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an ev'ning dragon⁷⁷⁰ came,
 Assailant on the perchèd roosts
 And nests, in order ranged

⁷⁵⁹ preferring him (their idol)

⁷⁶⁰ Shiloh

⁷⁶¹ derangement, madness

⁷⁶² i.e., the spirit of frenzy

⁷⁶³ injured

⁷⁶⁴ diversion

⁷⁶⁵ unknowingly

⁷⁶⁶ foolish, stupid

⁷⁶⁷ onto

⁷⁶⁸ corrupt

⁷⁶⁹ powers

⁷⁷⁰ serpent

Of tame villatic⁷⁷¹ fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted⁷⁷² on their heads.

So virtue giv'n for lost,

Depressed,⁷⁷³ and overthrown (as seemed),

Like that self-begotten bird⁷⁷⁴

In th' Arabian woods embossed,⁷⁷⁵

1700

That no second knows nor third,

And lay erewhile a holocaust,⁷⁷⁶

From out her ashy womb now teemed—⁷⁷⁷

Revives, re flourishes, then⁷⁷⁸ vigorous most

When most unactive deemed.

And though her body die, her fame survives

(A secular⁷⁷⁹ bird) ages of lives.

MAN. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,

Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit⁷⁸⁰ himself

Like Samson, and heroically hath finished

1710

A life heroic, on his enemies

Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning,

And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor⁷⁸¹

Through all Philistian bounds.⁷⁸² To Israel

Honor hath left, and freedom. Let but them

Find courage to lay hold⁷⁸³ on this occasion—

⁷⁷¹ rural, farmhouse

⁷⁷² discharged

⁷⁷³ rendered weak

⁷⁷⁴ the phoenix

⁷⁷⁵ wrapped

⁷⁷⁶ sacrificial fire, complete destruction

⁷⁷⁷ brought forth, generated

⁷⁷⁸ at the time

⁷⁷⁹ long-lived (for centuries)

⁷⁸⁰ (1) redeemed, acquitted, (2) ended

⁷⁸¹ original location of the Philistines

⁷⁸² (1) boundaries, (2) lands

⁷⁸³ lay hold = grasp

To himself and father's house⁷⁸⁴ eternal fame.
 And which is best and happiest yet, all this
 With God not parted from him, as was feared,
 But favoring and assisting to the end. 1720

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Let us go find the body where it lies
 Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
 With lavers⁷⁸⁵ pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
 The clotted gore.⁷⁸⁶ I with what speed the while
 (Gaza is not in plight⁷⁸⁷ to say us nay)
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends 1730
 To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
 With silent obsequy⁷⁸⁸ and funeral train⁷⁸⁹
 Home to his father's house. There will I build him
 A monument, and plant it round with shade
 Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
 With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled⁷⁹⁰
 In copious legend⁷⁹¹ or sweet lyric song.
 Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,⁷⁹²
 And from his memory inflame their breasts
 To matchless valor, and adventures high. 1740
 The virgins also shall on feastful days
 Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing

⁷⁸⁴ lineage

⁷⁸⁵ vessels of water

⁷⁸⁶ dried blood

⁷⁸⁷ condition, state

⁷⁸⁸ rites (funereal)

⁷⁸⁹ procession

⁷⁹⁰ recorded, written

⁷⁹¹ story

⁷⁹² come, proceed

His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHOR. All is best, though we oft doubt,
What th' unsearchable⁷⁹³ dispose⁷⁹⁴
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft He seems to hide His face,
But unexpectedly returns —
And to His faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously. Whence Gaza mourns
And all that band⁷⁹⁵ them to resist
His uncontrollable⁷⁹⁶ intent,⁷⁹⁷
His servants He with new acquist⁷⁹⁸
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,⁷⁹⁹
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

1750

⁷⁹³ inscrutable

⁷⁹⁴ disposition

⁷⁹⁵ organize [verb]

⁷⁹⁶ absolute

⁷⁹⁷ will, purpose, pleasure

⁷⁹⁸ acquisition

⁷⁹⁹ sent away

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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

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