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JOHN MILTON.



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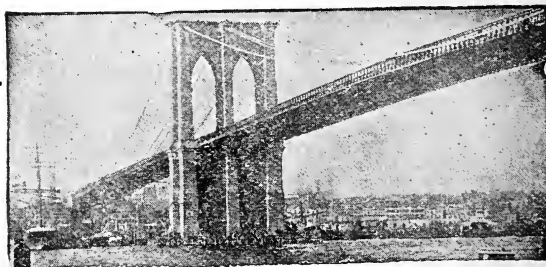


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## INTRODUCTION.

MILTON, the author of *Paradise Lost*, was born in London, England, on the 9th of December, 1608. His education was carried on at home by various masters, and by his father, who taught him to sing and to play the organ, and implanted in him his own love of music. Although his home was a cheerful and happy place, he seems to have been an unusually quiet, serious child, and prematurely studious, if we may judge from some lines placed by the engraver under a portrait of him, made when he was ten years old :

“ 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 thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
All righteous things.” (*Paradise Regained.*)

At twelve he was sent to St. Paul's School, quite near his home in the city of London, and he still had tutors at home. He now worked very hard indeed for several years; no trouble or expense was grudged by his parents; for they were very proud of him, and had formed the highest hopes as to his future. “ My father,” Milton says, “ destined me, while yet a little boy, for the study of humane letters, which I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarce ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight, which indeed was the first cause of injury to my eyes, to whose natural weakness there were also added frequent headaches.” In 1625, when in his seventeenth

year, he entered Christ's College, Cambridge, and remained there until he was twenty-three.

Here came a break in his education, and with it the question, What was he going to do in life? His parents had destined him for the church; but the system of government by bishops and the tyranny of Laud deterred him from entering the ministry. His father seems to have left him free to choose a calling for himself, and so we find him, about the time of his leaving college, finally determined to fit himself, by continued labor and study, and by a strictly pure and blameless life, to achieve some great work as a poet. Accordingly he now settled at Horton, a quiet hamlet in Buckinghamshire, within a short distance of Windsor and the Thames in the house of his father, who had retired thither to spend his old age.

Of the poems which he had already written the chief was *The Nativity Hymn*, begun on Christmas Day, 1629. His sonnet *On Arriving at his 23rd Year* is of special interest at this point:

“ How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
 Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
 My hasting days fly on with full career,  
 But my late Spring no bud or blossom shew'th.  
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth  
 That I to manhood am arrived so near;  
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
 Than some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.  
 Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
 It shall be still in strictest measure even  
 To that same lot, however mean or high,  
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;  
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
 As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.”

He seems to have devoted himself to an extensive course of “select reading,” especially to a revision



of classical and Italian literature, storing his mind with all that was best worth appropriating, and becoming almost as familiar with Latin, Greek, and Italian as with his native tongue. He did not write more than five English poems of any great length during this period — *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas* — but they are amongst the very best in the language: and yet, in the last and the best of them, he is still dissatisfied with his powers. In the spring of 1637 he had lost his mother; next spring he started off to see Italy and Greece, which for him would be exceptionally interesting. But the tyranny of King Charles had at last provoked his subjects in Scotland to rebellion. On hearing of this, Milton at once resolved to return and take his part with his countrymen in the impending contest. In 1639 he was back. He took a house in London, and settled there for the rest of his life.

So far Milton's life had been one of quiet, secluded study. For the next twenty years poetry was banished, study and self-preparation were all but given up, and he was to be found in the very thick of the controversies of the day, — writing against Episcopacy, defending the Execution of Charles (in two books — *the First* and *the Second Defence*), and exposing the notorious *Eikon Basiliké*. He had, on settling in London, begun to take a few pupils: this led him to write an essay on *Education*. But his only great and enduring work in prose was his *Areopagitica*, a plea for freedom of opinion, and for freedom to express that opinion by means of the printing-press, without the previous sanction of the Government Licenser. His activity in the Parliamentary cause had led to his

being appointed, in 1649, Latin Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, a post for which his knowledge of foreign languages specially qualified him. It was during his tenure of this office that he deliberately hastened his blindness, which had been coming on for some years, over the writing of the *First Defence*, mentioned above.

It is evident that this must have been, in his case, a terrible calamity, for he had not yet even begun his great poem. The truly admirable way in which he bore it is shown by the courage and patience which characterized his subsequent life, and by the various references to it which we find in his writings.

But there were other misfortunes in store for him: in 1660 the Parliamentary cause failed completely—for the time; Milton was imprisoned, some of his prose writings were burnt by the hangman, and he lost most of his savings. He had indeed “fallen on evil days,” and yet he bravely took up and carried to completion the great work of his life—his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*. He had begun it before the Restoration, probably in 1658; he finished it about 1663, spent two years or so on its revision, and published it in 1667. Meanwhile he had commenced its sequel, *Paradise Regained*; then he wrote *Samson Agonistes*, a dramatic poem, and several prose works.

His latter years were greatly cheered and brightened by the fame which *Paradise Lost* brought him, and by the frank recognition of his pre-eminence by all parties. He died in London in 1674, and was buried in the church at St. Giles, Cripplegate.

Three qualities stand out conspicuously in Milton's character. First, his deep sense of duty. He

seems never to falter in his entire devotion to that which he believes he ought to do at any particular juncture. Two striking instances of this are, the return from Italy in 1639, and the employment of his failing eyesight in writing the *Defence*. Second, the sincerity and the earnestness of his religious and political convictions. Third, his magnanimity and patience. Twenty years spent in a cause that, for the time, failed; loss of eyesight; loss of savings; loss of friends; the restoration of a dissolute monarch; all this produced neither bitterness nor murmur. "Who best bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best." So he wrote and so he lived. Truly, as Macaulay says, he was weighed in the balance and *not* found wanting.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

LITERARY.	GENERAL.
Spenser born . . . . . 1552	
	The Marian Persecution, 1555
Bacon born . . . . . 1561	
Shakespeare born . . . . . 1564	
Galileo born . . . . . "	Massacre of St. Bartho- lomew . . . . . 1572
Jonson born . . . . . 1574	
<i>The Faerie Queen</i> pub- lished . . . . . 1590 6	The Armada . . . . . 1588
Shakespeare's earlier plays acted . . . . . 1597	Battle of Ivry . . . . . 1590
Bacon's <i>Essays</i> pub- lished . . . . . 1598	Edict of Nantes . . . . . 1598
	Gunpowder Plot . . . . . 1605
Milton born . . . . . 1608	Clarendon born . . . . . 1608
The Bible translated . . . . . 1611	
Shakespeare dies . . . . . 1616	
Milton goes to Cam- bridge . . . . . 1625	Thirty Years' War begun, 1618
	The <i>Mayflower</i> sails, 1620

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE. — *Continued.*

Bunyan born . . . . .	1628	Laud, Bp. of London,	1628
Dryden born . . . . .	1631		
<b>Milton leaves Cam-</b> <b>bridge and retires to</b> <b>Horton</b> . . . . .	1632		
<i>L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,</i> <i>Lycidas, etc.</i> . . . . .	1633-7		
<b>Milton goes abroad,</b>	1638	The Covenant signed,	1638
<b>Milton settles in Lon-</b> <b>don</b> . . . . .	1639	First Bishops' War . . . . .	1639
Newton born . . . . .	1642	Civil War begun . . . . .	1642
<i>Areopagitica</i> . . . . .	1644		
<i>Eikonoklastes</i> , . . . .	1649	Charles I. executed . . . . .	1649
<i>First Defence</i> . . . . .	1651		
<b>Milton becomes blind,</b>	1652	Cromwell Protector . . . . .	1653
<i>Paradise Lost</i> begun		Cromwell dies . . . . .	1658
about . . . . .	1658	The Restoration . . . . .	1660
		The Plague . . . . .	1665
		Clarendon's fall . . . . .	1667
<i>Paradise Lost</i> published,	1667	France and England	
<i>Paradise Regained</i> . . . . .	1671	attack Holland . . . . .	1672
<i>Sams'n Agonistes</i> . . . . .	1671		
<b>Milton dies</b> . . . . .	1674	Clarendon dies . . . . .	1674

## INTRODUCTION.

The subject of *Paradise Lost* as given in Book I. is the temptation and fall of man, that is, his deterioration from the state of perfect goodness and happiness, in which he was supposed to have been created, to one made up of good and evil, of happiness and unhappiness; this "fall" being symbolized by the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise or Eden. This is the central fact of the story; to it all the rest (Books I.—VIII.) is preparatory, and with it the story ends. But the preparatory events are so stupendous in their magnitude, so striking in their character, and described in such impressive language—forming, as they do, the best part of the poem—that they tend to overshadow the doings in the Garden; and so we come to look upon *Paradise Lost* as dealing rather with a series of connected events, of which the "fall" is the first in importance but not in interest. We may, therefore, regard *Paradise Lost* as dealing with the whole universe, in its widest possible aspect; with the origin of its various parts, and their significance for man.

### ANALYSIS OF THE POEM.

- (A) The Fall: why and how it was brought about. I.—VIII.
- (B) Its results. IX.—XII.
- (C) Man's relation to the Universe and to God. Part of V.

(The third point, though not prominent, is very important in the scheme of the poem.)

(A) *The Fall: why and how it was brought about:*

## (1) Heaven; the War:

(a) Its Cause, the refusal of Satan and his followers to acknowledge the Son as their head. V.

(b) The War, the expulsion of the rebels. VI.

## (2) The Creation of the World and of Man.

## (3) Hell: [VII., VIII.]

(a) The rebels closed in and stunned by their fall; Satan rallies his followers. I.

(b) The leaders in Council; Satan undertakes to try to ruin Man. } II.

(c) Hell and Chaos described.

(d) Satan's journey through Chaos.

## (4) The World; Eden:

(a) Satan explores the World. III.

(b) Adam and Eve in Eden; Satan's plottings; Raphael's warnings. IV. and V.

(c) The Fall effected. IX.

(B) *The Results of the Fall:*

(1) Punishment pronounced on Tempter and Tempted by the Son. X.

(2) Sin and Death take possession of the World, but their overthrow by the Son (*i. e.* the Redemption) is foretold. X.

(3) Michael reveals the future to Adam, reassures him of Redemption, and leads him and Eve out of Paradise. XI. and XII.

(C) *Man's Relations to the Universe and to God*, as set forth by Raphael in Book V. 469-543, may be summed up briefly thus:—

“One Almighty is”; all things are created by Him, from “one first matter all”; all things are perfect in their various degrees, but are more refined and spiritual in proportion as they are near

Him. In nature "the grosser feeds the purer," the soil is transformed, through the plant, into flower and fruit; the latter, used as man's nourishment, is "sublimed" into the living force which sustains the mind and the soul: thus there is complete continuity from the lowest forms (*i. e.* mere matter) to the highest (*i. e.* pure spirit); and "all things . . . up to Him return, if not deprived from good." Raphael concludes:

"Time may come when men  
With Angels may participate, and find  
No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare;  
And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,  
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend  
Ethereal, as we; or may at choice  
Here or in heavenly Paradise dwell,  
If ye be found obedient."

With this compare VII. 155, where the Almighty states His purpose in creating Man, viz. to replenish Heaven, lest Satan should boast of the damage inflicted: He will, He says, create

"Of one man a race  
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,  
Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,  
They open to themselves at length the way,  
Up hither, under long obedience tried," etc.

In this analysis the topics are arranged in chronological order. The order in the poem, as the references show, is very different, and it may be helpful to indicate it.

(1) Milton plunges into the very midst of the whole subject by depicting the rebels lying stunned on the lake after their fall: they are roused by Satan, a council is held, Man's ruin resolved on, and intrusted to Satan. Hell and Chaos are described. I., II.

(2) Satan traverses Chaos, and explores the World, finds Eden, and plots the Fall. II.—IV.

(3) Raphael now visits Adam and Eve. He describes their position in the universe, and warns them of their danger. In order to explain Satan's attitude, and to gratify Adam's curiosity, Raphael begins to narrate the course of events from the beginning — V.

viz. : — the War in Heaven and the Expul-  
sion ; VI.  
and the Creation of the World. VII.

Adam tells Raphael of his finding himself in Eden, and of the prohibition to touch the tree of knowledge. Raphael repeats the warning, and leaves him. VIII.

(4) They sin and are expelled. IX.—XII.

#### THE COSMOLOGY OF *PARADISE LOST*.

Much of *Paradise Lost* is occupied with events that take place outside the universe as known to man—in Heaven, Hell and Chaos; much, too, with matters connected with that universe; while the relations of the various realms to one another, and the nature of man's World as described or assumed in the poem, are so peculiar and so fundamental, that clear ideas on the subject are of the highest importance.

On reading the poem we find that Book I. does not begin the story, for there the War in Heaven is over and the rebels are undergoing punishment elsewhere; it is not till Books V.—VI. that the Angel Raphael is introduced, giving Adam a "full narration" of things from the beginning—and it is chiefly by means of these later books that we construct the key to the earlier ones.



I. At the earliest period referred to by Raphael, Space consists of two parts, Heaven or the Empyrean, and Chaos :<sup>1</sup> “as yet this World was not,” nor Man, nor Hell. Heaven alone is created, or formed : the rest of space is a blank. This stage we may symbolize<sup>2</sup> by figure 1. Heaven, we gather, is the region of light and life, the abode of God and the Angels—“the Sons of God.” Of its size and shape nothing definite is said. It is totally cut

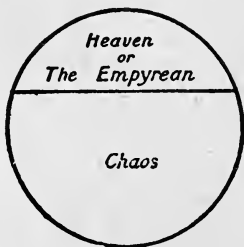


Fig. 1.

off by means of a crystal floor from Chaos ; various ornamental features are mentioned — as gates, battlements and walls ; and its beauty is suggested by descriptions of ideal earthly scenery, “heavenly paradises.” The Angels are of two kinds — Cherubim and Seraphim, arranged in three ranks — Archangels or Chiefs, Princes, and individual Powers or Intelligence,<sup>3</sup> each kind having its special duties : the peculiar nature and mode of existence of these immaterial beings are described — their immortality, their might, their power of assuming any shape, and so forth. In all this Milton follows hints from the Scriptures, especially the vision of St. John (in the Book of *Revelation*), Jewish writings, Dante, and the traditions of the early and middle ages.

1. Heaven, perhaps that which is “heaved” up: *Empyrean* (Gk.), “made of fire” (the purest of the four elements ; *Chaos*, the chasm, cleft or abyss.

2. The diagrams are merely symbolic: the form of Space, the relative magnitude of Heaven, Chaos and Hell, and the exact position of the World are not indicated in the poem.

3. Masson.

He cautions us that his language is merely symbolical.

The Almighty, Himself invisible, has His throne on a central mount, clouded in dazzling brightness, where He receives the adoration of His sons, and makes known His commands.

Chaos,<sup>1</sup> "the Deep" or "the Abyss," is the name which Milton gives to that portion of space which lies outside Heaven. Its nature is inconceivable and indescribable, for it consists of that which has not yet been organized into matter,—neither earth, air, fire nor water. The whole region is utterly devoid of life and light: it is left by the Almighty in utter confusion and darkness—"to the sway of Anarchy and Night."

"a dark

Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
Without dimension: where length, breadth, and highth,  
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night  
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold  
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise  
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.  
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,  
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring  
Their embryon atoms" (II. 891-900).

II. This division of space continues until the revolt of the Angels, which leads to their expulsion: the floor of Heaven opens, they are driven out through the gap, and fall through "the Abyss" for nine days. Then they come to the place which the Almighty has prepared for them out of a portion of Chaos. It lies open to receive them, closes above them, and imprisons them. This new abode of theirs is called Hell: it is situated in the part of

1. The fullest description of Chaos and its presiding deity is given in Book II. 890-1033.

Space remotest from Heaven, in "the bottomless pit," and is partitioned off from Chaos by walls and roof of fire. Its shape is not described, but the roof is said to be vaulted (fig. 2). Within it was indeed a place of torment, "created evil, for evil only good," "a place of fierce extremes," "with many a frozen, many a fiery Alp," "a universe of death;" so that Satan exclaims, on surveying it,

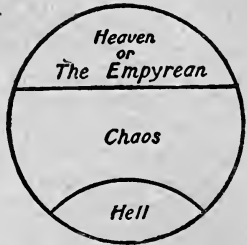


Fig. 2.

" Here at least  
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built  
Here for His envy, will not drive us hence."

A means of exit into Chaos is afterwards discovered, through a gateway, guarded by two beings named Sin and Death. These open the gate for Satan, but cannot close it again: so that the Infernals can henceforth pass out and in at will.

III. After their fall the Angels lie stunned and bewildered on a burning lake for nine days, and it is during this period that the next change is brought about. For some time the Almighty had purposed creating a new World, and placing in it a new and favored race. At His command the Messiah now issues forth "far into Chaos," and with "the golden compass" "circumscribes this Universe" of Earth, and Planets, and all that is cognizable by man. This new World hangs from the floor of Heaven by a golden chain attached to its topmost point, or zenith: but whether it is suspended from the centre of the Empyrean, and poised about the centre of

Space (as suggested in diagram 3), and what its relative size, cannot be determined.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 3.

Man is thus in a middle position, the Good above, the Evil below, and he is to be connected with both. For the use of the good angels a golden stairway is let down from Heaven, and for the use of the evil ones a broad path, or bridge, is made by Sin and Death through the Deep in the track taken by Satan on his journey of exploration (II. 1024, etc.) The golden stair can be drawn up as if to secure Heaven against unwished-for visitants, but the lower bridge is never closed. The two roads meet at the same point, where there is an opening affording access to the interior of the World.

IV. Let us now look at this new World. It was created primarily<sup>2</sup> for a new race of beings, Man, and his abode, the Earth, is appropriately made its centre. It is a complicated system of ten hollow spheres or shells fitted one within another, and around the solid Earth. Each sphere has a motion of its own, imparted, in the first place, by the outside shell, called the *Primum Mobile*, or First Moved—how it is moved we are not told. Of

1. Professor Masson makes the radius of the World one-third of  $a$  to  $d$ , and consequently the World stretches from  $a$  to  $e$ . This seems to agree with I. 73, 74, but not with II. 1052-3, in which the World appears to Satan in the distance "as a star of smallest magnitude," nor with III. 427-8, where the World "from the wall of Heaven, though distant far, some small reflection gains." The force of the passage I. 73-4 depends on the meaning of the term "pole," which is rather vague, and in VII. 23, seems applicable to the point  $a$ .

2. Cp. VIII. 98-9.

these spheres only two are material—the Primum Mobile or hard, external casing, and the next within it, the Crystalline Sphere, which consists of a clear, watery fluid. The first is designed as a protection to the whole system, the latter to moderate the extremes of heat and cold which may permeate the outer framework. The remaining eight are, or may be regarded as, mere divisions of space, in which the several planets or orbs have

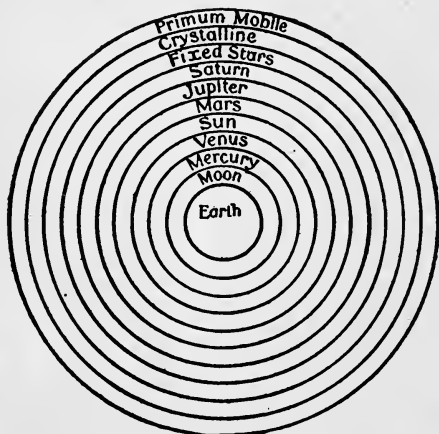


Fig. 4.

their respective orbits. It was in all probability to account for the different motions of the several planets that the separate revolutions of the spheres were assumed. The seven planetary spheres, beginning with that nearest the Earth, are: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The eighth sphere contains those stars

which occupy a fixed position with regard to one another, and it is therefore called the Fixed or the Firmament: it revolves once daily, carrying all its stars round with it. The Earth is supposed to be stationary.

This theory of the World was gradually given up in favor of the simpler one of Copernicus (1473-1543), which was advocated by Galileo and others, and finally established by Kepler and Newton. According to this the Sun is the centre<sup>1</sup> of our universe, and is almost stationary; the Earth and the other planets revolve about it, whilst some of these planets, *e. g.* the Earth, have satellites of their own; and finally the "fixed stars" are outside the solar universe altogether.

Milton was well acquainted with the Copernican system, and may quite possibly have accepted it; but in a poem concerned with topics so far beyond the pale of experience and knowledge, and so full of ancient and mediæval ideas, beliefs, and fancies, the old theory, however erroneous, was not only fitting, but necessary; for it is involved in very many of the thoughts borrowed by Milton, as it is in some of our phrases at this day;<sup>2</sup> in Milton's time it was generally still accepted, and it was undoubtedly more poetical than the new system.<sup>3</sup>

1. More correctly, the sun is not at the centre, but at the common focus of the ellipses of the paths described by the planets.

2. Professor Masson instances such phrases as "out of one's sphere."

3. Consider *e g.* the quaint fancy of the music of the spheres as expressed by Shakespeare (*Merchant of Venice*, V. 1 60).

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

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PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

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# PARADISE LOST.

## *The Printer to the Reader.*

*Courteous Reader*, there was no Argument at first intended to the book; but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procured it, and withal a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the poem rimes not.

— *S. Simmons.*

### THE VERSE.

The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rime 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 matter and lame metre; 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 otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime 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 true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit 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 learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so, perhaps, to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem, from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

## THE ARGUMENT.

The 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 passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell, described here, not in the centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of 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 Canaan, 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 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 counsel.

# PARADISE LOST.

## BOOK I.

*The subject of the poem, Man's fall. Invocation of the Holy Spirit's aid.*

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat, 5  
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed

2 mortal, rendering liable to death.

6. **Sing**, etc. All preceding epic poets — Homer, Virgil, Dante, etc., use a similar form of invocation: in Milton's case it is a devout prayer for "that impulse or voice of God by which the prophets were inspired."

**secret**. This term probably refers to the manner in which Moses received God's communications: see *Exodus* xix. 3, 12, 20; xxiv. 2 ("and Moses alone shall come near,") etc

7. **Oreb (Horeb), or of Sinai**. Milton refers either to *two* events — the appearance in the burning bush (*Exodus* iii) and the giving of the Law — or, more probably, to the latter event alone, Sinai being a part of Horeb, a mountain group north of the Red Sea.

8. **that shepherd**, etc. Moses, whose account of the creation is in *Genesis* i. Cp. Psalm lxxvii. 20.

**the chosen seed**: the Jews considered themselves to be God's favored people.

In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth  
 Rose out of Chaos : or, if Sion hill 10  
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd  
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
 That with no middle flight intends to soar  
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues 15  
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
 And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
 Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
 Instruct me, for thou know'st ; thou from the first  
 Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, 20  
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,  
 And mad'st it pregnant :! what in me is dark  
 Illumine, what is low raise and support ; !  
 That to the highth of this great argument  
 I may assert Eternal Providence, 25  
 And justify the ways of God to men.

9. the **Heavens and Earth**, *i.e.* this Universe: see *Cosmology*.

10. **Sion hill**, where the Temple stood.

11. **Siloa's brook**, a stream flowing from the pool of Siloam into the Kidron, just beneath the city walls and very near the Temple ("the oracle," *1 Kings* vi.).

15. **Aonia** (or Mt. Helicon) in Bœotia was the supposed abode of the nine Muses from whom the ancient poets sought inspiration. Cp. vii. 12-14, and ix. 1-47.

Milton means, therefore, either that he intends to surpass the ancient poets, Homer and Virgil, or that he intends to write on subjects higher than any they ever treated of.

19-22. Cp. *Genesis* i. ; and for "dove-like," *Matthew* iii 16.

21. **Abyss**, lit. the bottomless depth (of the sea, etc.): here, *Chaos*.

22. **pregnant**, filled with life Cp. vii. 234-242.

24. **highth**, the correct form of the word: cp. depth, etc.

25. **assert**, defend in argument.

*Man's fall caused by Satan in revenge for his expulsion  
from Heaven.*

Say first — for Heaven hides nothing from thy  
view,

Nor the deep tract of hell — say first what cause  
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,  
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30  
From their Creator, and transgress his will  
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.  
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?  
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived 35  
The mother of mankind, what time his pride  
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host  
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring  
To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equalled the Most High, 40  
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim  
Against the throne and monarchy of God  
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,  
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky, 45

29. grand parents, first parents, ancestors.

32. For one restraint, etc., "because of one restraint, being, in all else, lords," etc.

34. infernal, lit. belonging to the lower regions (or "hell"): hence, wicked, fiendish. But the word is also used without the notion of "wicked": cp. "infernal court," 792.

36. what time, when: cp. *Lycidas*, 28, "what time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn."

39. peers, equals. Satan's "peers" were his fellow-archangels.

45. flaming Cp. *Luke* x. 18, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"

With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
 In adamantine chains and penal fire,  
 Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

*Satan, recovering from his stupor, "views the situation":  
 Hell described.*

Nine times the space that measures day and night <sup>50</sup>  
 To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,  
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,  
 Confounded, though immortal. But his doom  
 Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought  
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain <sup>55</sup>  
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,  
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,  
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.  
 At once, as far as Angel's ken, he views  
 The dismal situation, waste and wild. <sup>60</sup>  
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,

46. ruin, in its Latin sense, downfall.  
 combustion, confusion, uproar, tumult.

48. adamantine, lit. made of adamant; that is, indestructible, unbreakable: cp. ii. 646, "adamantine rock . . . impenetrable . . . unconsumed" by fire: and ii. 168, "we lay chained on the burning lake." The name "adamant" was applied to steel and the diamond.

penal fire, fire used as a means of inflicting punishment. Cp. "penal laws," "penalty," etc.

50. nine was a sort of sacred number with the ancients, as being a multiple of three. Cp. the use of the number seven in the Old Testament.

51. crew, any company of men, as a ship's crew.

57. witnessed, bore witness to.

59. ken may be taken either as a verb or as a noun; if the latter, *angels* will be in the possessive case, either singular or plural, as the mark of the possessive was in Milton's time often omitted. (M. E. *kennen*, to know.)

As one great furnace flamed ; yet from those flames  
 No light ; but rather darkness visible  
 Served only to discover sights of woe,  
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace 65  
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
 That comes to all, but torture without end  
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.  
 Such place Eternal Justice has prepared 70  
 For those rebellious ; here their prison ordained  
 In utter darkness, and their portion set,  
 As far removed from God and light of Heaven,  
 As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.  
 Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell ! 75  
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed

63. darkness visible, etc. Cp. 181-183:

“ The seat of desolation, void of light,  
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
 Casts pale and dreadful.”

The language used in the text is contradictory only if taken literally — “the dungeon flamed,” *i.e.* the flames were visible, but the dull “glimmering” was only sufficient to reveal the prevailing horror and gloom. Mr Beeching says, “The flame of a spirit-lamp in a dark room will suggest what is meant.” Cp. also *Job* x. 22.

63. darkness visible, that is, gloom. Darkness is not itself visible any more than silence is audible. [What figure of speech is “darkness visible,” taken literally?]

66-67 “where) hope, that comes to all (mortals), never comes.” The thought is found in Euripides; and Dante (*Inferno* iii.) has the famous inscription over the gates of hell, “All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

68. urges, torments, harasses. A Latinism. Cp. ii. 88-89, “pain . . . must exercise us.”

72. utter, outer, further from Heaven, hence belonging to Hell; the intervening betw. the “middle” darkness.

74. That is, three times the distance from the centre of this Universe (the Earth) to the outside sphere the *Primum Mobile*, or else to its point of suspension from the Empyrean. For this use of “centre,” cp. 686-687. On the position of the Universe in space, see *Cosmology*.

With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
 He soon discerns ; and, weltering by his side,  
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,  
 Long after known in Palestine, and named 80  
 Beëlzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,  
 And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold  
 words  
 Breaking the horrid silence, thus began : —

*Satan's speech to his comrade Beelzebub: he avows undying hate, and urges "eternal war."*

“ If thou beest he — but Oh, how fallen ! how  
 changed  
 From him ! — who, in the happy realms of light, 85  
 Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine  
 Myriads, though bright—if he whom mutual league,  
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope  
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,  
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90  
 In equal ruin ; into what pit thou seest  
 From what highth fallen : so much the stronger  
 proved  
 He with his thunder : and till then who knew  
 The force of those dire arms ? Yet not for those,

78. **weltering**, rolling about. In the Bible of 1549 we read, “ He that weltereth a stone ”; in the version of 1610, “ He that rolleth a stone.” (*Proverbs* xxvi. 27.)

79-81. **Beelzebub**, or **Baalzebub**, lit. “ lord of flies,” was a god of the Philistines. His chief temple was at Ekron; his wishes were probably interpreted by the humming and motions of flies.

82 **Satan** (Hebrew) enemy: his former name was Lucifer (“ light-bearer ”).



Nor what the potent Victor in his rage 95  
 Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,  
 Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,  
 And high disdain from sense of injured merit,  
 That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,  
 And to the fierce contention brought along 100  
 Innumerable force of spirits armed,  
 That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,  
 His utmost power with adverse power opposed  
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,  
 And shook his throne. What though the field be  
 lost? 105

All is not lost — the unconquerable will,  
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
 And courage never to submit or yield :  
 And what is else not to be overcome.  
 That glory never shall his wrath or might 110  
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace  
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power  
 Who, from the terror of this arm, so late  
 Doubted his empire — that were low indeed ;

102. *dislike*, disapprove: not to "dislike" in our sense of the word: the latter does not depend upon our "daring," the former may.

104. *dubious*, for a time uncertain as to the result: the battle lasted three days. See Book vi.

109 "And in what else *ie* besides these qualities) does not being overcome consist?" The line is, properly, parenthetical, or explanatory: and in some editions was printed in brackets. "That glory," then, refers directly to "submit or yield."

Some editors, however, put a semicolon after "overcome," so that the line means "and whatever other qualities are invincible," or "in whatever besides invincibility consists."

114. *doubted his empire*, felt insecure in regard to his supremacy.

That were an ignominy and shame beneath 115  
 This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods,  
 And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;  
 Since, through experience of this great event,  
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,  
 We may with more successful hope resolve 120  
 To wage by force or guile eternal war,  
 Irreconcilable to our grand foe;  
 Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy  
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain, 125  
 Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;  
 And him thus answered soon his bold compeer: —

*Beelzebub's reply: he is less hopeful: — "What avails it  
 if we live only to suffer?"*

"O Prince, O Chief of many throned powers  
 That led the embattled Seraphim to war

116. **by fate**, etc. Satan regards the angels as equal to God in all but power (hence "gods") and equally free; not created by the Almighty, but, like Him, self-formed and immortal.

**fate**, necessity, the nature of things, regarded as unalterable and beyond the power of God.

117. **this empyreal substance**. The four elements, according to the ancients, were earth, air, fire and water. Of these "fire" was considered the noblest, and of it the angels, the heavens, etc., were supposed to be formed, whereas man was formed of "earth." Cp. 137-139.

124. **tyranny**. In ancient Greece a tyrant was a man who usurped the supreme authority, and governed at will. He was not necessarily a bad ruler. It is probably in a neutral sense that *tyranny* is used here.

125. **apostate**, as adj., false, traitorous: lit. one who deserts (his religion, party, etc.).

127. **compeer**, an associate or companion of equal rank.

128. **throned powers**, *i.e.* powers of high rank: cp. line 360.

129. **embattled**, arranged in order of battle.

Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds 130  
 Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,  
 And put to proof his high supremacy,  
 Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate !  
 Too well I see and rue the dire event  
 That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat, 135  
 Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host  
 In horrible destruction laid thus low,  
 As far as gods and Heavenly essences  
 Can perish : for the mind and spirit remains  
 Invincible, and vigor soon returns, 140  
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy state  
 Here swallowed up in endless misery.  
 But what if he our conqueror (whom I now  
 Of force believe almighty, since no less  
 Than such could have o'erpowered such force as  
     ours) 145  
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,  
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
 That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,  
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls  
 By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150  
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,  
 Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?  
 What can it then avail though yet we feel

130. conduct, leadership.

138. essences, beings.

144. of force, either perforce, of necessity; or depending on  
 "almighty."

152. the gloomy deep, Chaos.

Strength undiminished, or eternal being  
 To undergo eternal punishment? ” 155  
 Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied :

*Satan's rejoinder : “ Revenge is sweet ; we can live to  
 thwart our enemy.”*

“ Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
 Doing or suffering : but of this be sure —  
 - To do aught good never will be our task,  
 But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160  
 As being the contrary to his high will  
 Whom we resist. If then his providence  
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,  
 Our labor must be to pervert that end,  
 And out of good still to find means of evil : 165  
 Which oftentimes may succeed so as perhaps  
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.

*“ The storm is over ; let us muster our forces and consult  
 together.”*

But see ! the angry victor hath recalled  
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 170  
 Back to the gates of Heaven : the sulphurous hail,  
 Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid  
 The fiery surge that from the precipice  
 Of Heaven received us falling ; and the thunder,

156. fiend, lit. hater, enemy.

172. laid, stilled, calmed. “ The storm of hail having blown over, the fiery waves become calm.”

Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage, 175  
 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now  
 To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.  
 Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn  
 Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.  
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild, 180  
 The seat of desolation, void of light,  
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
 Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves ;  
 There rest, if any rest can harbor there ; 185  
 And, reassembling our afflicted powers,  
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend  
 Our enemy, our own loss how repair,  
 How overcome this dire calamity,  
 What re-inforcement we may gain from hope, 190  
 If not, what resolution from despair."

*Satan's vastness suggested by comparisons.*

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,  
 With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
 That sparkling blazed ; his other parts besides  
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large, 195

176. **his**, masculine, as "Thunder" is personified. At this time (c. 1660) "its" was just coming into use as the neuter of "his." In the Bible of 1610 "its" occurs only once (*Leviticus* xxv. 5), in Milton's poems only four or five times.)

178. **slip**, let slip (transitive). Cp. *Macbeth*, "I . . . slipt the hour," and such current phrases as "slip a cable," etc.

186. **afflicted**, in its Latin sense, flung or dashed down, crushed.  
**powers**, forces, armies.

187. **offend**, harm.

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge  
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
 Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
 Briareos or Typhon, whom the den  
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast 200  
 Leviathan, which God of all his works  
 Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.  
 Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,  
 The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
 Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell, 205  
 With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,  
 Moors by his side under the lee, while night  
 Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.

*He is allowed to rise.*

So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,  
 Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence 210

198-200. (whether) **Titanian or Earth born.** The *Titans* were the twelve sons of Uranus and Ge (*i.e.* Heaven and Earth; the *Earth-born*, offspring of the same parents, were the Giants. According to the legends the Giants made war on Jove, and were destroyed for their insolence. *Briareos* was one of the Titans, Typhon one of the Giants. The latter was supposed to dwell in a cave in Cilicia (in Asia Minor which Milton denotes by Tarsus, its capital.

201. **Leviathan**, etc. The description fits the whale — except the “scaly rind” (206: the name (Hebrew) is found in *Job* xli, and seems to be applied to the crocodile: but in other passages of Scripture, as in *Psalms* civ. 26, to any sea monster.

203-207. Olaus Magnus, a Swede in his *History of the Northern Nations*, 1658) and other writers of Milton’s time, tell of the whale’s being taken for an island by sailors, who anchor to his back, drive stakes into him, etc. Milton speaks of him as “like a promontory” (vii. 414; “four acres in extent,” says another writer!

204. **night-foundered**, lost in the darkness, stopped by the night coming on. Strictly, *founder* means to *sink*.)

skiff, ship. (Now the word denotes a small boat.)

208. **Invests**, enshrouds, wraps (like a garment .

Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will  
 And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,  
 That with reiterated crimes he might  
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought 215  
 Evil to others, and enraged might see  
 How all his malice served but to bring forth  
 Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown  
 On Man by him seduced, but on himself  
 Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured. 220

*Satan and Beelzebub fly to land : the land descr bed.*

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool  
 His mighty stature ; on each hand the flames  
 Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and,  
 rolled  
 In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale.  
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight 225  
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,  
 That felt unusual weight ; till on dry land  
 He lights — if it were land that ever burned  
 With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,  
 And such appeared in hue as when the force 230  
 Of subterranean wind transports a hill  
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side  
 Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible

<sup>232</sup> Pelorus, now Cape Faro, N. E. of Sicily. It is near Etna. Probably "from" governs "shattered side."

And fueled entrails, thence conceiving fire,  
 Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds, 235  
 And leave a singed bottom all involved  
 With stench and smoke. Such resting found the  
 sole

Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate ;  
 Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood  
 As gods, and by their own recovered strength, 240  
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

*Satan's soliloquy on viewing their new abode.*

“ Is this the region, this the soil, the clime, ”  
 Said then the lost Archangel, “ this the seat  
 That we must change for Heaven? this mournful  
 gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since he 245  
 Who now is sovran can dispose and bid  
 What shall be right : farthest from him is best,  
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made  
 supreme  
 Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,

234-237. *thence*, etc. “ The contents of the mountain catching fire from this wind are changed into vapor by a heat like that of molten metals, and, in their turn, increase the force of the wind. ” Properly, *subliming* is a chemical operation in which volatile solids are separated from impurities, by heating, just as liquids are purified by distillation.)

*involved*, enveloped.

239. *Stygian*, hateful, horrible. Cp. 195. The Styx (“ hateful ”), of the classical mythology, was the chief river in the lower world.

246. *sovran*, O. F. *soverain*. A more correct form than *sovereign* — confused with *reign*.

247-249 “ Furthest from him is best for us; for though we are his equals in reason, we are inferior to him in strength. ” Cp. 92-94, and 144-145.



Where joy forever dwells ! Hail, horrors ! hail, <sup>250</sup>  
 Infernal world ! and thou, profoundest Hell,  
 Receive thy new possessor — one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven, <sup>255</sup>  
 What matter where, if I be still the same,  
 And what I should be, all but less than he  
 Whom thunder hath made greater ? Here at least  
 We shall be free ; the Almighty hath not built  
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence : <sup>260</sup>  
 Here we may reign secure ; and, in my choice,  
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell :  
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

*They agree to rouse and rally their followers.*

But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,  
 The associates and co-partners of our loss, <sup>265</sup>  
 Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,  
 And call them not to share with us their part  
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more  
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet  
 Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell ?" <sup>270</sup>  
 So Satan spake ; and him Beelzebub

<sup>266.</sup> **astonished**, stunned, "astounded" (281, "confounded" (53), "entranced" (301). Lit, struck senseless.

**oblivious**, causing forgetfulness. Cp. *Macbeth*, "oblivious antidote"; and "forgetful lake," ii. 74. Milton is thinking of the river Lethe of the classical mythology, which caused all who drank of it to forget the past.

<sup>268.</sup> **mansion**, place of abode.

Thus answered : — “ Leader of those armies bright  
Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have  
foiled !

If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge  
Of hope in fears and dangers — heard so oft 275  
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge  
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults  
Their surest signal — they will soon resume  
New courage, and revive, though now they lie  
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280  
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed ;  
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth ! ”

*The appearance of Satan as he makes for the shore, and  
of his legions as they lie on the lake.*

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend  
Was moving toward the shore ; his ponderous  
shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, 285  
Behind him cast. The broad circumference

274. **pledge**, surety.

276-277. **perilous edge of battle**, either the front line of battle, or at the critical moment

281. **astounded**, same as astonished See 266.

**amazed**, in a stronger sense than that in which it is now used: bewildered, dazed. (From *maze*.)

282. **pernicious**, destructive, ruinous.

285 **Ethereal temper** (a thing), wrought in Heaven, of heavenly workmanship. Cp iv. 812:

“ No falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper ” (*i.e.* Ithuriel's spear), etc.

(*Temper*, to bring to the proper degree of hardness, to mix metals in due proportion.)

Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
 At evening, from the top of Fesolé,  
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290  
 Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.  
 His spear — to equal which the tallest pine  
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
 Of some great ammiral, were but a wand —  
 He walked with, to support uneasy steps 295  
 Over the burning marle, not like those steps  
 On Heaven's azure ; and the torrid clime  
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.  
 Nathless he so endured, till on the beach  
 Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called 300  
 His legions — Angel forms, who lay entranced,  
 Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks  
 In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades

288. **artist**, a professor of an art; it also denoted a skilled worker, our "artisan." The "Tuscan artist" is Galileo (1564-1642), a teacher of mathematics and astronomy at Pisa. His improvements in the telescope — for he did not invent it — enabled him to make discoveries which convinced him of the truth of the Copernican theory of astronomy.

289-290 **Fesole**, now Fiesolé, is a hill near Florence. **Valdarno**, *i.e.* Val d'Arno, the valley in which Florence is situated.

294. **ammiral**, the chief ship of a fleet, so called from its carrying the superior officer.

296. **marle**, ground; properly a soft, rich soil. Cp. 562.

297. **Heaven's azure**, the crystal floor of Heaven.

299. **Nathless**, none the less; now displaced by *nevertheless*. The word is common in Chaucer.

303. **Vallombrosa** ("shady valley"), a beautiful and thickly wooded valley and hilly slope about eighteen miles from Florence. It is said that Milton spent several days at a monastery that stood here.

**Etruria**, Tuscany.

High over-arched imbower ; or scattered sedge  
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed 305  
 Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'er-  
 threw

Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,  
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued  
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld  
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310  
 And broken chariot-wheels. So thick bestrewn,  
 Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,  
 Under amazement of their hideous change.

*Satan taunts them for their inactivity, and calls them to  
 arms.*

He called so loud, that all the hollow deep  
 Of Hell resounded : " Princes, Potentates, 315

304. *sedge*, in Hebrew the Red Sea is called "the sedgy sea," on account of the large quantity of sea-weed found in it.

305. *Orion* (Orion, a constellation so named from a companion of Artemis or Diana, the goddess of hunting. The time of year at which this constellation sets—November or early December—was generally associated by the poets with bad weather.

*armed*, some of the stars of Orion appear to be arranged in the form of a sword and belt

307. *Busiris*, here identified with the Pharaoh of *Exodus*.

*Memphian*. Egyptian, from the ancient capital Memphis, on the west bank of the Nile.

*chivalry*, army—horse and foot, though in this case mainly horse. (*Exodus*, xiv 28) Doublet "cavalry." See 575 *n.* on *infantry* and *cavalry*.

308. *perfidious*. Pharaoh had given the Israelites permission to leave Egypt.

309. *sojourners*, temporary dwellers in a place.

*Goshen*, a district east of the delta of the Nile.

*who beheld*, etc. See *Exodus* xxiv. 30.

311. *abject*, cast down.

Warriors, the flower of Heaven — once yours ; now  
lost,

If such astonishment as this can seize  
Eternal Spirits ! Or have ye chosen this place  
After the toil of battle to repose  
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find 320  
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?  
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
To adore the conqueror, who now beholds  
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood  
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon 325  
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern  
The advantage, and, descending, tread us down  
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts  
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf? —  
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen !” 330

*Their appearance: their multitude suggested by comparisons.*

They heard, and were abashed, and up they  
sprung  
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,  
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,  
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.  
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight 335  
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel ;  
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed

318-322. Or . . . or, whether . . . or  
virtue, valor, bravery: lit. manliness.

337. obey, in M E. took a dative case.

Innumerable. As when the potent rod  
 Of Amran's son, in Egypt's evil day,  
 Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud 340  
 Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,  
 That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
 Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile ;  
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen  
 Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell, 345  
 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires ;  
 Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear  
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct  
 Their course, in even balance, down they light  
 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain : 350  
 A multitude like which the populous North  
 Poured never from her frozen loins to pass  
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons  
 Came like a deluge on the South, and spread  
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. 355

*The leaders come forward — for the time being nameless.*

Forthwith from every squadron and each band,

338, etc. Alluding to Moses and the plagues. See *Exodus* x 12, etc.

341. **warping**, "floating about" at the mercy of the wind.

345. **cope**, roof, vault.

348. **sultan** (or *soldan*, 764, victor, prince: in 378 "emperor."

351-355. The Goths, from the province of Dacia, north of the Danube (*Danaw*), pressed forward by the Huns, settled in "the Empire" in 376; soon afterwards they defeated the Romans in battle. Forty years later the west Goths sacked Rome, and some passed into Gaul and Spain. German tribes, too, were at this time crossing the Rhine (*Rhene*), and pressing on into Gaul and Spain. Hordes of Huns now attacked Romans, Goths, and Germans alike, but were defeated in 451 at Châlons — one of the world's critical battles. Some Germans called Vandals, who had at first settled in Spain, crossed into Africa *Libya* in 429, and founded a kingdom, with Carthage as capital. Even in Italy some east Goths settled. From these various settlements the *Romance* nations sprung.

The heads and leaders thither haste where stood  
 Their great Commander — godlike shapes, and  
 forms

Excelling human ; princely dignities :  
 And powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones, <sup>360</sup>  
 Though of their names in Heavenly records now  
 Be no memorial, blotted out and rased  
 By their rebellion from the Books of Life.  
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve  
 Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the  
 Earth, <sup>365</sup>

Through God's high sufferance for the trial of Man,  
 By falsities and lies the greatest part  
 Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake  
 God their Creator, and the invisible  
 Glory of him that made them to transform <sup>370</sup>  
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned  
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,  
 And devils to adore for deities :  
 Then were they known to men by various names,  
 And various idols through the heathen world. <sup>375</sup>

360. *erst*, superl. of *ere*; once, at first.

For *thrones*, cp. 128 and 737 *n.*

362. *rased*, for "erased." What is the difference?

363. *Books of Life*. *Revelation* iii. 5.

372. *religions*, decor. tions. So, in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, the statues of Cæsar are "decked with ceremonies."

358-375. Milton assumes the belief of the early Christian Church that the Pagan gods were fallen angels in disguise. In *Par. Reg.* *l. e. g.* 11. 121-126 he identifies the fallen angels with the "demon" of the four elements.

*The leaders enumerated and described under the names  
they afterwards acquired as heathen deities.*

Say, Muse, their names then known, who first,  
who last,  
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,  
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth  
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,  
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof. 380  
The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell  
Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix  
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,  
Their altars by his altar, gods adored  
Among the nations round, and durst abide 385  
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned  
Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed  
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,  
Abominations; and with cursed things  
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390  
And with their darkness durst affront his light.

380. promiscuous, mixed, confused.

382 Cp. *1 Peter* v. 8, "Your adversary the devil . . . walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

383. seat of God, the Temple at Jerusalem.

385-386. durst abide, stood their ground in spite of. Cp. 470.

thundering out of Sion, referring perhaps to what was thundered (the ten commandments, one of which forbade idolatry).

387. Cherubim, two figures in the sanctuary of the Temple. *1 Kings* vi. 23.

388. shrines, altars. See *2 Kings* xxi. 4, "And he (*i.e.* King Manasseh) built altars in the house of the Lord."

389. abominations: referring to the idolatrous character of the shrines.



First, Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood  
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears ;  
 Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,  
 Their children's cries unheard that passed through  
                   fire

395

To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite  
 Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,  
 In Argob and in Bashan, to the stream  
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such  
 Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart     400  
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build  
 His temple right against the temple of God,  
 On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove  
 The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence  
 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.     405  
 Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,  
 From Aroer to Nebo and the wild  
 Of southmost Abarim ; in Hesebon  
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond  
 The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,     410

392-521. See the Table of Heathen Deities, p. 48

394. **Timbrel**, a kind of tambourine.

403. **that opprobrious hill, that hill of scandal 416', the offensive mountain (443 , all refer to the Mt of Olives, near Jerusalem.**

404-405 **Hinnom** was a deep narrow ravine bounding Jerusalem on the south-west. To put an end to the idol worship carried on there — with its human sacrifices — Josiah rendered it “ceremonially unclean” by spreading human bones, etc., in it. Henceforward the refuse of the city was deposited there. By reason of its evil associations the later Jews used its name *Ge Hinnom* or *Gehenna*, to denote the place of torment *Tophet* was the south-eastern part of the valley. Here, facing the city on the “hill of scandal,” Solomon erected his high places to Moloch. (*Smith's Bible Dict.*)

406. **obscene**, foul, repulsive.

409. **Seon**, King of the Ammonites.

And Eleale to the Asphaltic pool :  
 Peor his other name, when he enticed  
 Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,  
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged 415  
 Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove  
 Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate ;  
 Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.  
 With these came they who, from the bordering flood  
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts 420  
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names  
 Of Baalim and Ashtaroth — those male,  
 These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,  
 Can either sex assume, or both ; so soft  
 And uncompounded is their essence pure, 425  
 Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,  
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,  
 Like cumbrous flesh ; but in what shape they choose,  
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,  
 Can execute their aery purposes, 430  
 And works of love or enmity fulfil.  
 For those the race of Israel oft forsook  
 Their living Strength, and unfrequented left  
 His righteous altar, bowing lowly down  
 To bestial gods ; for which their heads, as low 435

411. Asphaltic pool, Dead Sea.

419. bordering flood, because forming the south or south-west boundary of Canaan. *Genesis* xv. 18.

435 bestial, refers either to the grossness of their worship, or to 476-489 below. In Egypt the sacred bulls "maintained . . . in the great temples of their respective cities were perpetually adored and prayed to by thousands during their lives, and at their deaths were entombed with the utmost care in huge sarcophagi, while all Egypt went into mourning for them" (Rawlinson).

Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear  
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop  
 Came Ashtoreth, whom the Phœnicians called  
 Astarte, Queen of Heaven, with crescent horns ;  
 To whose bright image nightly by the moon 440  
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs ;  
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood  
 Her temple on the offensive mountain, built  
 By that uxorious king whose heart, though large,  
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell 445  
 To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,  
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate.  
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day,  
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock 450  
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood  
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded : the love-tale  
 Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,  
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch  
 Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led, 455  
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries  
 Of alienated Judah. Next came one  
 Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark  
 Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopt off,

438. *Astoreth* or *Ashtoreth* (singular form of *Ashtaroth*), representing the moon, which might be considered the fainter reflection or wife of the sun, and was, as the moon, addressed as "queen of heaven." *Jeremiah* vii. 18 Sayce.)

455. See *Ezekiel* viii. 14, "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house, . . . and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."

In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge, 460  
 Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers :  
 Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man  
 And downward fish ; yet had his temple high  
 Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast  
 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon, 465  
 And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.  
 Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat  
 Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks  
 Of Abana and Pharphar, lucid streams.  
 He also against the house of God was bold : 470  
 A leper once he lost, and gained a king —  
 Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew  
 God's altar to disparage and displace  
 For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn  
 His odious offerings, and adore the gods 475  
 Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared  
 A crew who, under names of old renown —  
 Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train —  
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused  
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek 480  
 Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms  
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape  
 The infection, when their borrowed gold composed  
 The calf in Oreb ; and the rebel king  
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan, 485  
 Likening his Maker to the grazed ox —

460. grunsel, *i.e.* ground sill or threshold.

485. Jeroboam, King of Israel, who rebelled against Rehoboam, set up two golden calves.

Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed  
 From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke  
 Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.  
 Belial came last ; than whom a Spirit more lewd 490  
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love  
 Vice for itself. To him no temple stood  
 Or altar smoked ; yet who more oft than he  
 In temples and at altars, when the priest  
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled 495  
 With lust and violence the house of God?  
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,  
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise  
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
 And injury and outrage ; and, when night 500  
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.  
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night  
 In Gibeah, when the hospitable door  
 Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape. 505  
 These were the prime in order and in might :  
 The rest were long to tell ; though far renowned,  
 The Ionian gods of Javan's issue held  
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,  
 Their boasted parents ; — Titan, Heaven's first-  
 born, 510

487-489 As the Israelites were on the point of leaving Egypt, a plague fell equally on the first-born of the Egyptians and on the animals which they worshipped.

495. See *1 Samuel* ii. 12 and 22.

508. *Javan's issue*, i.e. the Greeks, regarded as descended from *Javan* or *Ion*, son of Japhet. (*Genesis* x. 2. *Isaiah* lxvi. 19.)

510. Titan, see 198 n.

With his enormous brood, and birthright seized  
 By younger Saturn : he from mightier Jove,  
 His own and Rhea's son, like measure found ;  
 So Jove usurping reigned. These, first in Crete  
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top 515  
 Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,  
 Their highest Heaven ; or on the Delphian cliff,  
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds  
 Of Doric land ; or who with Saturn old  
 Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields, 520  
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.

*The leaders having assembled, Satan cheers them and  
 bids Azazel raise the standard.*

All these and more came flocking ; but with looks  
 Downcast and damp ; yet such wherein appeared  
 Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their  
 Chief

Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost 525  
 In loss itself ; which on his countenance cast  
 Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride

514-515. **Ida**, a mountain in Crete, and the birthplace of Zeus.

515-516. **Olympus**, the fabled abode of the Greek gods, is a mountain in Thessaly ; its highest point is covered with snow most of the year.

517-518 **Delphi**, at the foot of the steep southern slope of Mount Parnassus ; **Dodona**, in Epirus. These were the seats of the two most famous oracles of ancient Greece — of Apollo and Zeus respectively.

520-521. Virgil and Ovid both speak of Saturn as fleeing alone (over the Hadriatic Sea) before his son Zeus, to Italy, called by the Greeks the Hesperian (or western) fields.

521. **the Celtic (fields)**, the western or Celtic parts of the Continent, especially France

(to) **the utmost isles**, probably Britain, etc.

523. **damp**, depressed. Cp. "to damp a fire," "to damp one's spirits."

Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised  
 Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears : 530  
 Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound  
 Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared  
 His mighty standard. That proud honor claimed  
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall :  
 Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled 535  
 The imperial ensign ; which, full high advanced,  
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,  
 With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,  
 Seraphic arms and trophies ; all the while  
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds : 540  
 At which the universal host upsent  
 A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond  
 Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.

*Thereupon their followers form in battle array and  
 march to Dorian music.*

All in a moment through the gloom was seen

532. clarions, clear-sounding horns.

534. Azazel, probably the name of some evil spirit. The word means "the solitary one," or "scape-goat." See *Leviticus* xvi. 8: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other for the scape-goat." ("Azazel," R.V.

538. emblazed, richly adorned, like a shield. To *blazon* is to portray armorial bearings on a shield. (M. E. *blason*, a shield.) Cp. v. 588: "Ensigns high advanced . . . in their glittering tissue, bear emblazed holy memorials." The word is an heraldic term.

539. arms, probably the ensign itself; trophies, gems and gold, regarded as symbols of victory

542. concave, hollow roof, or vault.

543. Chaos, etc., see ii. 890-967, where Night is spoken of as "eldest of things," and "eldest Night and Chaos" as ancestors of Nature, because they preside over that out of which "things" are formed.

Ten thousand banners rise into the air, 545  
 With orient colors waving with them rose  
 A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms  
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array  
 Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move  
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood 550  
 Of flutes and soft recorders — such as raised  
 To highth of noblest temper heroes old  
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage  
 Deliberate valor breathed, firm, and unmoved  
 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat; 555  
 Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage  
 With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase  
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain  
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,  
 Breathing united force with fixèd thought, 560  
 Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed

546. **orient**, constantly used as an epithet of gems. It is frequently used by Milton in the sense of "bright," "clear," "shining."

550. **phalanx**. "A body of troops in close array with a long spear as their principal weapon. It was among the Dorians, and especially among the Spartans that this arrangement was most rigidly adhered to." (Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities*.)

to the Dorian mood, *i.e.* to music of a grave, severe character, supposed to inspire courage and endurance, as distinguished from the Lydian or soothing, tender music (cp. *L'Allegro*, 139), and trumpet music (540-541).

551. **flutes and soft recorders**. The modern flute is of recent German origin: the flute of Milton's day—the English flute—was called a recorder. As he is speaking of Greek music, the expression probably refers in general terms to the so-called flutes of the Greeks, which included reed instruments. They were of various sizes, and the different parts of the harmony—bass, tenor, etc.—could be played on them.

554. **breathed**, infused, inspired, instilled.

556. **mitigate**, make soft, mild, less severe.

561. **charmed**, in its old sense, denoting the effect of some mysterious power or influence—as here, fascinated by means of music.



Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now

*Satan views his army, compared with which the greatest forces of ancient or mediæval times are insignificant.*

Advanced in view they stand — a horrid front  
 Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise  
 Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield, 565  
 Awaiting what command their mighty Chief  
 Had to impose. He through the armèd files  
 Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse  
 The whole battalion views — their order due,  
 Their visages and stature as of gods, 570  
 Their number last he sums. And now his heart  
 Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,  
 Glories: for never, since created Man,  
 Met such embodied force as, named with these,  
 Could merit more than that small infantry 575  
 Warred on by cranes — though all the giant brood  
 Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined  
 That fought at Thebes and Illium, on each side

563. horrid, in its Latin sense, bristling (with spears). Cp. "Horrid hair," ii. 710.

575. in antry. In the middle ages, the cavalry were considered as forming the main body of the army; and the two terms "cavalry" and "army" were convertible. Cp. chivalry, 307. The foot-men or infantry were deemed little better than rabble (Trench); and probably the word is used in this contemptuous sense here. (Span. and It. *infanta*, a child, a servant, a foot-soldier.)

The reference here is to the pygmies (cp. 780) a fabulous race whose stature was a "*pugmè*" (about 13 1-2 in.) They are said by Homer to have been attacked by cranes every spring, and according to the legends they fought on the backs of rams and partridges.

576-579. Phlegra, the westernmost of the three small peninsulas lying to the east of the Gulf of Salonica; the scene of the war between the gods and the giants. See 198.

Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds  
 In fable or romance of Uther's son, 580  
 Begirt with British and Armoric knights;  
 And all who since, baptized or infidel,  
 Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,  
 Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,  
 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore, 585

**Thebes and Ilium.** "The heroic race that fought at Thebes and Ilium" symbolizes the great heroes of Greek literature and legendary history.

The story of the exploits of The Seven Greeks) against Thebes is told by Aeschylus, the story of the Trojan war by Homer.

**Troy** in N. W. Asia Minor.

**Thebes** in Bœotia.

**auxiliar gods** refers to the part taken by the deities in the siege of Troy

579-581. **Uther's** (or Uther Pendragon's) son, *i. e.* King Arthur, assisted by knights of Britain and of Brittany. For some time about 1638-39) Milton had thought of taking the Arthurian legends as the subject of his great poem.

582-587. **Jousted**, tilted; joust, literally, is the *jostling* together of two knights on horseback at a tournament.

583-584. The names in these lines are said by some critics to have been taken by Milton at random; but Mr Verity holds that each one was carefully selected for its associations with the mediæval romances of chivalry, by which Milton in his youth had been greatly attracted.

The names are in any case symbolical, like Thebes and Ilium above; at the same time some of them may be connected with particular events.

<p><b>Aspramont</b>, a castle near Nice.  <b>Damasco</b>,  <b>Trebisond</b>, a town of great note          and splendor in the middle ages.</p>	}	<p>All familiar names in the old romances, and specially associated with tournaments and jousts.</p>
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**Damasco** was also the scene of several battles in the Crusades.

**Montalban**, a castle in Languedoc, of note in the wars of Charlemagne.

**Marocco**, **Biserta**, associated with the wars between the Christians (Spaniards) and the Moors. From Biserta (the ancient Utica, near Carthage) a Moorish army started to attack the Christians under Charlemagne in Spain; the defeat, however, was inflicted, not by the Moors, but by the Gascons at Roncesvalles, "by Fontarabbia," near Biarritz. (Charlemagne was not killed in the battle of 778: he lived till 814.)

When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond  
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed

*The appearance of Satan and his host suggested by  
various similes.*

Their dread Commander. He above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590  
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost  
All her original brightness, nor appeared  
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess  
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen  
Looks through the horizontal misty air 595  
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations, and with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone 600  
Above them all the Archangel; but his face  
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows  
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast  
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold 605

586. all his peerage, *i.e.* the brave Roland, the wise Oliver, and all the rest of the twelve peers or paladins of France — except perhaps one.

592-593. "Nor did it appear less (noble and commanding) than that of an archangel who was now fallen and his excessive brightness dimmed."

597-599. disastrous, unfavorable, of bad omen.

601. intrenched, marked, furrowed, cut into.

603. considerate, meditating (revenge) planning, scheming.

604. "His eye was cruel, but showed," etc.

605. Passion, suffering, sorrow: not, as now, *strong* feeling only.

The fellows of his crime, the followers rather  
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned  
 For ever now to have their lot in pain —  
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced  
 Of Heaven, and from eternal splendors flung <sup>610</sup>  
 For his revolt — yet faithful how they stood,  
 Their glory withered ; as, when Heaven's fire  
 Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,  
 With singed top their stately growth, though bare,  
 Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared <sup>615</sup>  
 To speak ; whereat their doubled ranks they bend  
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round  
 With all his peers : attention held them mute.  
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,  
 Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth ; at last <sup>620</sup>  
 Words interwove with sighs found out their way :—

*Satan harangues his host: "their defeat was due to ignorance  
 of the enemy's strength."*

“O myriads of immortal Spirits ! O Powers  
 Matchless, but with the Almighty !—and that strife  
 Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,  
 As this place testifies, and this dire change <sup>625</sup>  
 Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,  
 Foreseeing or presaging from the depth  
 Of knowledge past or present, could have feared,  
 How such united force of gods, how such  
 As stood like these, could ever know repulse ? <sup>630</sup>

609. amerced, deprived (by way of fine or punishment).

619. in spite of scorn, though scorning to weep.

For who can yet believe, though after loss,  
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile  
 Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend,  
 Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?  
 For me, be witness all the host of Heaven, 635  
 If counsels different, or dangers shunned  
 By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns  
 Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure  
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,  
 Consent or custom, and his regal state 640  
 Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed —  
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.

*Henceforth they must oppose him by guile; a visit to the  
 new-formed world suggested; war resolved on.*

Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,  
 So as not either to provoke, or dread  
 New war provoked: our better part remains 645  
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile,  
 What force effected not; that he no less  
 At length from us may find, who overcomes  
 By force hath overcome but half his foe.  
 Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife 650  
 There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long  
 Intended to create, and therein plant  
 A generation whom his choice regard  
 Should favor equal to the sons of Heaven.

636. counsels different: (from those of the rest), "divided counsels."

643-645. our better part: "henceforth our safest course is," etc.

650-651. so rife . . . fame. so general a rumor.

Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps 655  
 Our first eruption — thither, or elsewhere ;  
 For this infernal pit shall never hold  
 Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss  
 Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts  
 Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired ; 660  
 For who can think submission? War, then, war  
 Open or understood, must be resolved.”

He spake ; and, to confirm his words, out-flew  
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
 Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze 665  
 Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged  
 Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms  
 Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war  
 Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

*Led by Mammon they quarry gold and cast it, ready for  
 use in building their palace.*

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top 670  
 Belched fire and rolling smoke ; the rest entire  
 Shone with a glossy scurf — undoubted sign

656. eruption, sortie, expedition: lit. “outbreak.”

660-662. despaired, resolved: cp. 208 and note.

662. understood — among ourselves.

668 This was the custom of Roman soldiers when applauding a general's speech. Note the expressiveness of this line through the repetition of the notion of sound in the words *clashed*, *sounding* and *din*. Cp 768

670. grisly, horrible, hideous. Cp. ii. 704.

671. the rest entire, “all the rest.”

672-674. the work of sulphur. According to the alchemists, sulphur (understood as a vague “principal of fixation,” not the substance we call sulphur) was the chief agent in the formation of metals by its action on “earth,” on the “seeds of metals,” etc. The phrase, work of sulphur, refers to the metal either in the earth as metallic ore) or cropping out (as a sulphide) in flakes on the surface (glossy scurf).

That in his womb was hid metallic ore,  
 The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,  
 A numerous brigad hastened : as when bands 675  
 Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,  
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,  
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on —  
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell  
 From Heaven ; for even in Heaven his looks and  
 thoughts 680  
 Were always downward bent, admiring more  
 The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,  
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed  
 In vision beatific. By him first  
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught, 685  
 Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands  
 Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth  
 For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew  
 Opened into the hill a spacious wound,  
 And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire 690  
 That riches grow in Hell ; that soil may best

675. **brigad**, brigade.

676 **pioneers**. Pioneers clear the way for an army by making roads, etc.

678. **Mammon** (Syriac , riches, here used as a proper noun (like Belial, 499).

679. **erected**, high-minded, upright, noble.

682. *Revelation* xxi 21.

684. **vision beatific**, a phrase used by early Christian writers to denote the "sight of God," for which they hoped, and which was to give them perfect happiness. Cp. *Matthew* v. 8.

688. **For treasures better hid**, *i.e.* for gold, better left undisturbed.

690. **admire**, wonder. Cp. ii. 677-678.

Deserve the precious bane. And here let those  
 Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell  
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,  
 Learn how their greatest monuments of fame, 695  
 And strength, and art, are easily outdone  
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour  
 What in an age they, with incessant toil  
 And hands innumerable, scarce perform.  
 Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, 700  
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire  
 Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude  
 With wondrous art founded the massy ore,  
 Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.  
 A third as soon had formed within the ground 705  
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells  
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook ;

694. **Babel**, probably Babylon, noted for its vast walls, its hanging gardens, and the Temple of Belus (720 .

**Memphian**, Egyptian, as in 307, from *Memphis*, the ancient capital. Egypt was famous for its pyramids and for its temples of Serapis (720 . In l. 718 the new city of Memphis is mentioned under the name *Alcairo*, the modern Cairo. Probably in the latter passage there is a repetition of line 694 under different names. Note that in the second passage Milton uses the more modern names, perhaps to suggest different aspects of the cities. But possibly *Babel* denotes the tower of Babel, and *Memphian* may be used in a much wider sense than *Alcairo*.

698-669. Herodotus tells us that there were 366,000 men employed for twenty years in the building of the Great Pyramid.

702. **Sluiced** A sluice is a sliding gate for regulating the flow of a liquid.

703 **tounded**, melted. The process of purifying is now called smelting; whereas *founding* (705-707) denotes a later and final melting and moulding of the metal

704. **bullion** refers to the unpurified metal ore.

**dross**, the impurities in the ore which float on the surface of the molten metal, forming a scum; so that the *bullion-dross* is the scum that comes from the bullion.



As in an organ, from one blast of wind,  
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.

*Pandemonium described: its architect, Mulciber.*

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710  
Rose, like an exhalation, with the sound  
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet —  
Built like a temple, where pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
With golden architrave; nor did there want 715  
Cornice or frieze with bossy sculptures graven:  
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon  
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence  
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine  
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat 720  
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove.

706. various, elaborate, intricate; e.g. the frieze and the roof (706-707) would require such mouldings.

708-709. All the pipes in an organ are supplied with wind from a wind-chest, of which the *sound-board* forms the upper part.

712. dulcet symphonies, sweet accompanying chords or strains (on instruments).

713-717 like a temple. In Greece and in Asia Minor there were many temples, mostly Doric, and their rows of pillars formed a conspicuous feature.

713. pilasters, square pillars partly sunk in a wall.

714. Doric Pillars, round pillars of a massive, simple style, with plain capital. Cp. note on "Dorian mood," 550. (The other two orders of pillars are Ionic — fluted, with voluted capitals; and Corinthian — lighter columns, with highly ornamented capitals.)

715. Architrave The beam or stone-work which rests immediately on the top of a row of pillars; above it is an ornament called the *frieze*, and above that a projecting part, called the *cornice*. Architrave means chief beam.

716. bossy, standing out prominently.

717-720. See 694 n.

In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile  
 Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight the  
 doors,

Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide  
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth 725

And level pavement: from the arched roof,  
 Pendant by subtle magic, many a row  
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed  
 With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light  
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude 730

Admiring entered; and the work some praise,  
 And some the architect. His hand was known  
 In Heaven by many a towered structure high,  
 Where sceptered Angels held their residence,  
 And sat as princes, whom the supreme King 735  
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,  
 Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright.

Nor was his name unheard or unadored  
 In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land  
 Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell 740  
 From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove

728. A **cresset** was a lamp consisting of a small, open, iron cage or vessel, in which was placed rope or tow steeped in pitch, etc. It was usually carried hanging from the top of a pole.

737. In the middle ages it was supposed that the angels were of two kinds, Cherubim and Seraphim, or angels of light and angels of love, divided into three groups or **Hierarchies**, each consisting of three Orders

739 **Ausonian land**, Italy; from Ausonia, an ancient name for central Italy.

740. **Mulciber**, the softener, the metal-founder. Another name for Vulcan, the Roman god of fire. In Greece he was called Hephæstus. He was smith and armorer to the gods of Olympus, and was represented as lame.

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn  
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,  
 A summer's day, and with the setting sun  
 Dropped from the zenith, like a falling star, 745  
 On Lemnos, the Ægean isle. Thus they relate,  
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout  
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now  
 To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he  
 scape  
 By all his engines, but was headlong sent, 750  
 With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

*"The worthiest" summoned to a council, they and their attendants swarm in, and fill the hall "both on the ground and in the air."*

Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command  
 Of sovran power, with awful ceremony  
 And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim  
 A solemn council forthwith to be held 755  
 At Pandemonium, the high capital  
 Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called  
 From every band and squared regiment  
 By place or choice the worthiest: they anon  
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came 760

746. Hence this island was sacred to Hephæstus, and here he had his forge!

750. engines. contrivances, ingenuity. Cp. Ben Jonson: "Sejanus worketh with all his ingine."

753. sovran. See 246 *n.*

aweful, awe-inspiring.

756. Pandemonium, the palace (or temple) "of all the demons." Cp. Pantheon, a Roman temple to all the gods.

Attended. All access was thronged ; the gates  
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall  
 (Though like a covered field, where champions bold  
 Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair  
 Defied the best of Panim chivalry 765  
 To mortal combat, or career with lance),  
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,  
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees  
 In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides,  
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 770  
 In clusters ; they among fresh dews and flowers  
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,  
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,  
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer  
 Their state affairs : so thick the aery crowd 775  
 Swarmed and were straitened ; till, the signal given,

*The followers, at a signal, all contract : the leaders hold a council.*

Behold a wonder ! They, but now who seemed  
 In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,

764. **soldan's**, sultan's.

765. **Panim**, belonging to a Pagan or heathen country.

766. **career**, the galloping of the combatants towards one another along the course. Note the two kinds of combat referred to; in the second the points of the lances were blunted.

769. In April the sun traverses that part of the sky in which the constellation Taurus is situated.

773. **citadel**, a little city — not a fort here.

774. **balm**, balsam; used by Milton for any fragrant resin or gum.  
**expatiate**, spread out.  
**confer**, discuss.

776. **straitened**, crowded close together for want of space.

Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room  
 Throng numberless — like that pygmean race 780  
 Beyond the Indian mount ; or faery elves,  
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest side,  
 Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,  
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon  
 Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth 785  
 Wheels her pale course : they, on their mirth and  
 dance

Intent, with jocund music charm his ear ;  
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.  
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms  
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large, 790  
 Though without number still, amidst the hall  
 Of that infernal court. But far within,  
 And in their own dimensions like themselves,  
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim  
 In close recess and secret conclave sat, 795  
 A thousand demigods on golden seats,  
 Frequent and full. After short silence then,  
 And summons read, the great consult began.

780. *pygmean race.* See 575 *n.*

781. *Indian mount,* the Himalayas.

785 *arbitress,* witness, spectator.

*nearer to the earth.* Fairies, witches, etc., were supposed to be able to draw the moon down towards the earth by their enchantments.

795. *recess,* retirement, or, a retired place.

*conclave,* assembly. This is the name specially applied to the secret meeting of cardinals at Rome when a pope is to be elected.

797. *frequent,* numerous, crowded; qualifying *conclave.*

798. *consult,* consultation.



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PARADISE LOST.

BOOK II.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

The consultation begun, Satan debates, whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and an other 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 entertain 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 gulf 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.



## BOOK II.

*The council opened by Satan: "We are united, and confident of our power; how can we best regain Heaven?"*

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

2. **Ormus**, on an island in the Persian Gulf, was at this time famous as a great and wealthy trading centre, being specially renowned for jewels.

**Ind**, India.

4. **Showers**, etc. It was an Eastern custom to powder a monarch, at his coronation, with gold-dust and seed-pearl, and to strew pearls and jewels at his feet.

9. **success**, the result, namely — failure, defeat.

11. **Powers**, etc. In the middle ages it was supposed that the angels were of two kinds, Cherubim and Seraphim or angels of light and angels of love, divided into three grades: Archangels or Chiefs, e.g. Michael, Raphael, and Lucifer — afterward Satan; Princes of various degrees, e.g. Beelzebub, Mammon, Belial; and individual Powers and Intelligences. According to another scheme, however, there were three Hierarchies, each consisting of three Orders: 1) Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; (2) Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; 3) Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. The matter is of little importance as regards this poem, for Milton seems to use the titles at random.

For, since no deep within her gulf can hold  
 Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,  
 I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent  
 Celestial Virtues rising will appear 15  
 More glorious and more dread than from no fall,  
 And trust themselves to fear no second fate! —  
 Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,  
 Did first create your leader, next, free choice,  
 With what besides, in council or in fight, 20  
 Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,  
 Thus far at least recovered, hath much more  
 Established in a safe unenvied throne,  
 Yielded with full consent. The happier state  
 In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw 25  
 Envy from each inferior; but who here  
 Will envy whom the highest place exposes  
 Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim  
 Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share  
 Of endless pain? Where there is then no good 30  
 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there

12. deep, Chaos.

gulf, the lowest part of Chaos, called also the "pit," "Hell," etc.  
 See *Introduction*.

19. free choice. He had been accepted, if not chosen (l. 24). His leadership seems to have been taken as a matter of course so far, but to judge by this speech, Satan himself was far from feeling secure. Note how skilfully he makes use of the assumption in l. 11; that granted, the laws of Heaven will have more force, which will strengthen his position as their (natural) head. We shall see in the speeches following indications of an independent spirit amongst the leaders.

11-42. Satan's speech.

- (1) Why will the spirits appear "more glorious," etc., after rising? (l. 16.)
- (2) Note how anxious Satan is to keep his position as chief, whilst he is showing what an unenviable post it is.
- (3) Note how he ignores all possibility of failure or greater punishment.

From faction ; for none sure will claim in Hell  
 Precedence : none whose portion is so small  
 Of present pain that with ambitious mind  
 Will covet more. With this advantage, then, 35  
 To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,  
 More than can be in Heaven, we now return  
 To claim our just inheritance of old ;  
 Surer to prosper than prosperity  
 Could have assured us ; and, by what best way, 40  
 Whether of open war or covert guile,  
 We now debate ; who can advise may speak."

He ceased ; and next him Moloch, sceptered king,  
 Stood up : the strongest and the fiercest spirit  
 That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair. 45  
 His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed  
 Equal in strength, and rather than be less  
 Cared not to be at all. With that care lost  
 Went all his fear ; of God, or Hell, or worse,  
 He recked not, and these words thereafter  
 spake : — 50

*Moloch's speech: "I vote for war forthwith; ev'n if we fail  
 our lot cannot become worse."*

" My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,  
 More unexpert, I boast not ; them let those  
 Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.

43-45. **Moloch** (*i. e.* king or ruler) is specially mentioned in the war in Heaven, where he is called "furious king" (bk. vi), and he was the first of the leaders to come up and greet Satan (and Beelzebub) after the fall (i. 392).

For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest —  
 Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait 55  
 The signal to ascend — sit lingering here,  
 Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place  
 Accept this dark, opprobrious den of shame,  
 The prison of his tyranny who reigns  
 By our delay? No! let us rather choose, 60  
 Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once  
 O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,  
 Turning our tortures into horrid arms  
 Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise  
 Of his almighty engine, he shall hear 65  
 Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see  
 Black fire and horror shot with equal rage  
 Among his Angels, and his throne itself  
 Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,  
 His own invented torments. But perhaps 70  
 The way seems difficult and steep to scale  
 With upright wing against a higher foe.  
 Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench

54-56 **stand in arms**, probably, "are ready armed." **Stand and sit** must not be taken literally, for the numberless spirits who were waiting in the Hall of the Palace swarmed "both on the ground and in the air."

65. **almighty engine**. For description see vi 749-766. The term *engine* is applied to any mechanical contrivance, as to Satan's *cannon*. Cp. also i. 750.

67. **Black fire and horror**, for "black horrid fire."

69. **Tartarean**, from *Tartarus*, part of the classical hell.

72. **wing**, course or flight.

73. **drench**, draught, that which drenches or soaks.

Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,  
 That in our proper motion we ascend 75  
 Up to our native seat ; descent and fall  
 To us is adverse. Who but, felt of late,  
 When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear  
 Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,  
 With what compulsion and laborious flight 80  
 We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then ;  
 The event is feared ! Should we again provoke  
 Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find  
 To our destruction, if there be in Hell  
 Fear to be worse destroyed ! What can be worse 85  
 Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, con-  
 demned

In this abhorrèd Deep to utter woe ;  
 Where pain of unextinguishable fire  
 Must exercise us without hope of end,  
 The vassals of his anger, when the scourge 90  
 Inexorably, and the torturing hour,  
 Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,  
 We should be quite abolished, and expire.

74. *forgetful*. This word must be taken in a limited sense, for we find that after their nine days' stupor on (or in) the "oblivious pool" (i. 266), they could recall the past. Indeed, the memory of the past seems to be intended as part of their punishment (vi. 717, 718). Hence this lake corresponds only slightly to the classical Lethe, though the names applied to it constantly suggest the latter.

82 *event*, result, consequence.

83. *Our stronger* — foe; cp. 406, 409.

89. *exercise*, constantly torment, afflict.  
*without hope*, etc. Cp. Belial's speech, l. 209, etc.

90 *vassals*, slaves.

92. *penance*, punishment.

What fear we then? What doubt we to incense  
 His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged, 95  
 Will either quite consume us, and reduce  
 To nothing this essential — happier far  
 Than miserable to have eternal being! —  
 Or if our substance be indeed divine,  
 And cannot cease to be, we are at worst 100  
 On this side nothing; and by proof we feel  
 Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,  
 And with perpetual inroads to alarm,  
 Though inaccessible, his fatal throne;  
 Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.” 105

He ended frowning, and his look denounced  
 Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous  
 To less than gods. On the other side up rose  
 Belial, in act more graceful and humane;

94. **What doubt we**, “why should we hesitate to provoke?” etc.

97. **essential**, essence, being.

104. **fatal**, secured by fate: cp. i. 116, 133. By *fate* the rebels meant necessity; the nature of things and course of events regarded as unalterable and beyond the power of the Almighty. Cp. 197-199 and 232; and contrast vii. 172, where the Almighty says —

“Necessity and Chance,  
 Approach not me; and what I will is Fate.”

See note on 895-913.

51-105. Moloch's speech.

(1) Note its abruptness; that Moloch speaks first (after Satan; has already made up his mind; sneers at those who differ from him; and does not address the assembly by name. (Cp. Satan's opening, Belial's, and Beëlzebub's)

105. The speech ends forcibly with the strong and characteristic word “revenge,” pronounced, no doubt, in a loud voice, and emphasized with a terrible frown. Milton makes a fine contrast between the undisguised ferocity with which Moloch ends his speech, and the graceful uprising of the next speaker.

106. **denounced**, signified in a threatening manner.

109. **Belial**. Cp. i. 490-505. Note the contrast between him and Moloch.

**humane**, of polished manners (Now it means *pitiful, kind*.)

A fairer person lost not Heaven ; he seemed 110  
 For dignity composed and high exploit.  
 But all was false and hollow ; though his tongue  
 Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear  
 The better reason, to perplex and dash  
 Maturest counsels : for his thoughts were low— 115  
 To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds  
 Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the ear,  
 And with persuasive accent thus began : —

*Belial's speech: " Better bear our present ills than risk  
 worse."*

“ I should be much for open war, O Peers,  
 As not behind in hate, if what was urged 120  
 Main reason to persuade immediate war  
 Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast  
 Ominous conjecture on the whole success ;  
 When he who most excels in fact of arms,  
 In what he counsels and in what excels 125  
 Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair  
 And utter dissolution, as the scope  
 Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.  
 First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are  
 filled

113. Dropt manna Cp. Homer's phrase, " Speech softer than honey." Manna tasted " like wafers made with honey "; *Exodus*, xvi. 31.

113-114. made the worse . . . reason. This is called sophistry.

124. fact, same as *feat*

127. scope. This difficult word seems to refer to the *range* of Moloch's hopes — from present misery, relieved by revenge, to " utter dissolution " as the worst that can befall them.

With armèd watch, that render all access 130  
 Impregnable ; oft on the bordering Deep  
 Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing  
 Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,  
 Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way  
 By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise 135  
 With blackest insurrection, to confound  
 Heaven's purest light, yet our great enemy,  
 All incorruptible, would on his throne  
 Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,  
 Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140  
 Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,  
 Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope  
 Is flat despair : we must exasperate  
 The almighty victor to spend all his rage ;  
 And that must end us ; that must be our cure — 145  
 To be no more. Sad cure ! for who would lose,  
 Though full of pain, this intellectual being,  
 Those thoughts that wander through eternity,  
 To perish rather, swallowed up and lost  
 In the wide womb of uncreated Night, 150  
 Devoid of sense and motion ? And who knows,

130. access, approach.

139. ethereal mould, the *heavenly substance* of which the angelic beings were formed, namely, *fire*, as the purest of the four elements. It is also called *empyrean substance* (i. 117), and Heaven is the *Empyrean*.

134-142. It should be noticed how closely Belial's reply follows the arguments of the preceding speech. Lines 134-142, 145-151, 159-185 respectively answer ll 60-70, 97-98, 85-93. The only important part of Moloch's speech which remains unanswered is the argument to show that the fallen angels could easily rise upwards (see ll. 70-81). But Belial is not bound to answer this, as he shows that even though they rose to heaven they could not surprise its impregnable towers, and would be inevitably defeated.



Let this be good, whether our angry foe  
 Can give it, or will ever? How he can,  
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.  
 Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire, 155  
 Belike through impotence or unaware,  
 To give his enemies their wish, and end  
 Them in his anger, whom his anger saves  
 To punish endless! 'Wherefore cease we then?'  
 Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed, 160  
 Reserved, and destined to eternal woe:  
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,  
 What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worst—  
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?  
 What when we fled amain, pursued, and strook 165  
 With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought  
 The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed  
 A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay  
 Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.  
 What if the breath that kindled those grim fires, 170  
 Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,  
 And plunge us in the flames? or from above  
 Should intermitted vengeance arm again  
 His red right hand to plague us? What if all  
 Her stores were opened, and this firmament 175  
 Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,  
 Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall

156. **Belike**, indeed, forsooth. Ironical.  
**impotence**, inability to restrain his anger.)

165. **amain**, in large numbers and with haste. (Lit., "with force.")  
**strook**, struck.

177. **Impendent**, overhanging.

One day upon our heads ; while we perhaps,  
 Designing or exhorting glorious war,  
 Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled, 180  
 Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey  
 Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk  
 Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,  
 There to converse with everlasting groans,  
 Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved, 185  
 Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.  
 War therefore, open or concealed, alike  
 My voice dissuades ; for what can force or guile  
 With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye  
 Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's  
                   highth 190  
 All these our motions vain sees and derides,—  
 Not more almighty to resist our might  
 Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.  
 Shall we then live thus vile,— the race of Heaven  
 Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here 195  
 Chains and these torments? Better these than  
                   worse,  
 By my advice ; since fate inevitable  
 Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,

182. racking, harassing, distressing.

187. So far Belial has been answering Moloch's arguments. He now treats the more general question of debate introduced by Satan. Cf. ll. 187, 188 with l. 41.

196 Better these than worse, it is better to endure these than worse torments. Belial acts upon the principle expressed in Hamlet's soliloquy, where it is said that the dread of something after death  
 " Makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of."

The victor's will. To suffer, as to do,  
 Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust 200  
 That so ordains : this was at first resolved,  
 If we were wise, against so great a foe  
 Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.  
 I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold  
 And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear 205  
 What yet they know must follow — to endure  
 Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,  
 The sentence of their conqueror. This is now  
 Our doom ; which if we can sustain and bear,  
 Our supreme foe in time may much remit 210  
 His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,  
 Not mind us not offending, satisfied  
 With what is punished ; whence these raging fires  
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.  
 Our purer essence then will overcome 215  
 Their noxious vapor ; or, inured, not feel ;  
 Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed  
 In temper and in nature, will receive  
 Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain ;  
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light ; 220  
 Besides what hope the never-ending flight  
 Of future days may bring, what chance, what change  
 Worth waiting, since our present lot appears

201. **This was at first resolved.** Belial means that, when they entered upon their perilous attempt, they surely foresaw the possibility of terrible punishment, and deliberately with their eyes open resolved to run the risk. By the words "if we were wise" he implies that, if they did not see all this clearly, they were very stupid.

213. **what is punished,** the amount of punishment inflicted.

For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,  
If we procure not to ourselves more woe." 225

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

*Mammon's speech: "Let us give up all thought of returning  
to Heaven, and make the best of our present lot, which  
may become easier in time."*

"Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven  
We war, if war be best, or to regain 230  
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then  
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield  
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.  
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain  
The latter : for what place can be for us 235  
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord  
supreme  
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,  
And publish grace to all, on promise made  
Of new subjection ; with what eyes could we  
Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240  
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne  
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing

228. **Not peace.** This seems strange at first sight, seeing that Belial was entirely opposed to war, admitted the justice of their doom (200, 201), and urged patient submission thereto. He made no acknowledgment, however, of sinful, but only of unwise action? (ll. 201-203 ; suggested that they should merely offend no further, not that they should confess their wrong, ask forgiveness, and so become reconciled. He assumed that they would maintain their hostile attitude until the Almighty chose to relent. His counsel then was to continue in their present antagonism.

**Mammon**, the least noble of the "spirits that fell." See i 678-688.

Forced Halleluiahs ; while he lordly sits  
 Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes  
 Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers, 245  
 Our servile offerings? This must be our task  
 In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome  
 Eternity so spent in worship paid  
 To whom we hate ! Let us not then pursue,  
 By force impossible, by leave obtained 250  
 Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state  
 Of splendid vassalage ; but rather seek  
 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own  
 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,  
 Free and to none accountable, preferring 255  
 Hard liberty before the easy yoke  
 Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear  
 Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,  
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,  
 We can create, and in what place so'er 260  
 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain  
 Through labor and endurance. This deep world  
 Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst  
 Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire  
 Choose to reside, his glory unobscured, 265  
 And with the majesty of darkness round  
 Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar

243 Halleluiahs, from *halelu*, praise ye, and *Yah*, Jehovah.

245. Ambrosial, fragrant; *lit.* divine, from Gk. *ambrosia*, the food of the gods. A favorite word with Milton.

253. from our own — resources, labor, skill, etc., as explained below.

263-267. *Psalm* xviii. 11, 13, and xcvi. 2.

Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell !  
 As he our darkness, cannot we his light  
 Imitate when we please? This desert soil 270  
 Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold ;  
 Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise  
 Magnificence ; and what can Heaven show more ?  
 Our torments also may in length of time  
 Become our elements, these piercing fires 275  
 As soft as now severe, our temper changed  
 Into their temper ; which must needs remove  
 The sensible of pain. All things invite  
 To peaceful counsels, and the settled state  
 Of order, how in safety best we may 280  
 Compose our present evils, with regard  
 Of what we are and where, dismissing quite  
 All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled  
 The assembly, as when hollow rocks retain 285  
 The sound of blustering winds, which all night long  
 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull

270-273. It was Mammon who "led them on" to find gold for their palace.

275. **our elements.** Perhaps in allusion to the common belief in the middle ages that each of the four "elements" was inhabited by its own peculiar demons, and that these demons were fallen spirits. See *Par. Reg.*, ii. 121, etc. Cp the phrase, "He is in his element."

278 **sensible**, sense. Cp. 97.

281. **compose**, settle, arrange.

229-283. Mammon's speech.

(1) Does reconciliation with the Almighty seem possible in Mammon's case?

(2) Note how the Almighty is assumed to be indifferent to what goes on outside Heaven—at least is supposed not to interfere. But cp. 317, etc

(3) What new arguments does Mammon introduce?

Seafaring men o'er-watched, whose bark by chance,  
 Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay  
 After the tempest : such applause was heard 290  
 As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,  
 Advising peace ; for such another field  
 They dreaded worse than Hell : so much the fear  
 Of thunder and the sword of Michael  
 Wrought still within them ; and no less desire 295  
 To found this nether empire, which might rise,  
 By policy and long process of time,  
 In emulation opposite to Heaven.  
 Which when Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,  
 Satan except, none higher sat, with grave 300  
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed  
 A pillar of state ; deep on his front engraven  
 Deliberation sat, and public care ;  
 And princely counsel in his face yet shone,  
 Majestic though in ruin. Sage he stood, 305  
 With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear  
 The weight of mightiest monarchies : his look  
 Drew audience and attention still as night

288. o'er-watched, worn out through being awake or on watch so long

289. pinnace, a *smaller* vessel than a bark, having oars and sails, or merely oars.

291. sentence, opinion.

296. nether, lower. Cp. *Netherlands*. (The comparative of *neath*.)

298. "In aims and aspirations a rival power to Heaven."

299. Beelzebub, Satan's "mate" and "compeer:" see Book i.

306. Atlantean Atlas was one of the Titans. He made war upon the Gods, and as a punishment had to bear the heavens on his shoulders.

308. audience, hearing.

Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake : —

*Beelzebub's speeches : " Peace, war, and the building up of an empire are all out of the question ; Heaven is shut against us ; let us be revenged by spoiling his new creation."*

"Thrones and imperial Powers, Offspring of  
Heaven, 310

Ethereal Virtues? or these titles now  
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called  
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote  
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here  
A growing empire ; doubtless, while we dream, 315  
And know not that the King of Heaven hath  
doomed

This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat  
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt  
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league  
Banded against his throne, but to remain 320  
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,  
Under the inevitable curb, reserved  
His captive multitude. For he, be sure,  
In highth or depth, still first and last will reign,  
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part 325  
By our revolt, but over Hell extend  
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule  
Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.

324 Cp. *Rev.*, i 11, " I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last "

327-328. **iron sceptre . . . golden.** For similar symbolism, cp. v. 886, 887, " golden sceptre," " iron rod "; and *Lycidas*, 110-111, where the golden key admits to heaven, the iron excludes. Cp. *Psalms* ii. 9.



What sit we then projecting peace and war?  
 War hath determined us, and foiled with loss 330  
 Irreparable; terms of peace yet none  
 Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given  
 To us enslaved, but custody severe,  
 And stripes, and arbitrary punishment  
 Inflicted? and what peace can we return, 335  
 But to our power, hostility and hate,  
 Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,  
 Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least  
 May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice  
 In doing what we most in suffering feel? 340  
 Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need  
 With dangerous expedition to invade  
 Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,  
 Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find  
 Some easier enterprise? There is a place 345  
 (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven  
 Err not), another world, the happy seat  
 Of some new race called Man, about this time  
 To be created like to us, though less  
 In power and excellence, but favored more 350  
 Of him who rules above; so was his will  
 Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,

330. **determined**, made an end of us as a power, been our ruin.

336. **to our power**, to the extent of our power.

337. **Untamed reluctance**, untamable resistance.

341. **want**, opportunity be wanting.

346. **fame**, report, rumor.

That shook Heaven's whole circumference, confirmed.

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn  
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould, 355  
 Or substance, how endued, and what their power,  
 And where their weakness, how attempted best,  
 By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,  
 And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure  
 In his own strength, this place may lie exposed, 360  
 The utmost border of his kingdom, left  
 To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,  
 Some advantageous act may be achieved  
 By sudden onset — either with Hell-fire  
 To waste his whole creation, or possess 365  
 All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,  
 The puny inhabitants; or, if not drive,  
 Seduce them to our party, that their God  
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand  
 Abolish his own works. This would surpass 370  
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy  
 In our confusion, and our joy upraise  
 In his disturbance; when his darling sons,  
 Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse  
 Their frail original, and faded bliss, 375

357. attempted, tempted, tried.

367. puny, probably "less in power and excellence" (349); possibly, in literal sense, "later born"; (Fr *puis né*).

369-370. Cp. *Genesis*, vi. 7, "I will destroy man . . . ; it repenteth me that I have made them"

375. original, origin or originator, au hor Adam).

Faded so soon ! Advise if this be worth  
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here  
 Hatching vain empires." Thus Beelzebub  
 Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised  
 By Satan, and in part proposed ; for whence, 380  
 But from the author of all ill, could spring  
 So deep a malice, to confound the race  
 Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell  
 To mingle and involve, done all to spite  
 The great Creator? But their spite still serves 385  
 His glory to augment. The bold design  
 Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy  
 Sparkled in all their eyes. With full assent  
 They vote : whereat his speech he thus renews : —

*" This plan will raise us out of Hell, procure us a pleasanter  
 abode, and perhaps enable us to attack Heaven; but w om  
 shall we send to explore this new World?"*

" Well have ye judged, well ended long debate, 390  
 Synod of gods, and, like to what ye are,  
 Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep  
 Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,  
 Nearer our ancient seat ; perhaps in view  
 Of those bright confines, whence, with neighboring  
 arms 395

376. Advise, consider.

379-380. See i. 650-654.

382. confound, ruin.

387. States, as in " three estates of the realm of Great Britain." Often so used by Shakespeare.

391. Synod, an assembly, a council.

And opportune excursion, we may chance  
Re-enter Heaven ; or else in some mild zone  
Dwell not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,  
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam  
Purge off this gloom ; the soft delicious air, 400  
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,  
Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we  
send

In search of this new world? whom shall we find  
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering feet  
The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss. 405

And through the palpable obscure find out  
His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight,  
Upborne with indefatigable wings  
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive  
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can  
then 410

Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe  
Through the strict senteries, and stations thick  
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need  
All circumspection, and we now no less  
Choice in our suffrage ; for on whom we send, 415

396. **excursion**, sally.

404. **tempt**, try, investigate, venture into.

406. **palpable obscure**, thick darkness. Cp. *Exodus*, x. 21, "darkness which may be felt"

407. **uncouth**, unknown and strange. Cp. Scotch *unco*.

409. **the vast abrupt**, the vast and steep gulf.

412. **senteries**, perhaps a corruption of *sentinel*. Origin of word uncertain.

"The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat ; and expectation held  
 His look suspense, awaiting who appeared  
 To second, or oppose, or undertake  
 The perilous attempt ; but all sat mute, 420  
 Pondering the danger with deep thoughts, and each  
 In other's countenance read his own dismay,  
 Astonished. None among the choice and prime  
 Of those Heaven-warring champions, could be  
 found

So hardy as to proffer or accept, 425  
 Alone, the dreadful voyage ; till, at last,  
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised  
 Above his fellows, with monarchal pride

310-378 and 390-416. Beëlzebub's speeches.

315. Notice the rhetorical artifice by which Beelzebub using the first person appears to include himself among the vain dreamers, whose delusions he is exposing. He does this to avoid giving offence to Belial and Mammon.

(1) He considers Hell to be their dungeon (317) ; hence, perhaps, his dislike of the title "Princes of Hell."

(2) Why is peace out of the question?

It will be noticed that Satan takes no part in the debate ; he resembles the chairman of a meeting, rather than a general presiding over a council of war. After stating his proposition in the briefest terms (ll. 37, 38), he leaves it to the Council to decide what shall be done. With respect to the other four speakers and their speeches, it may be helpful to the student to make a comparison, in tabular form, of the chief points ; *e. g.* (*a*) the character of the speaker ; (*b*) the style and tone of his speech ; (*c*) his motive and aims ; (*d*) his plan ; (*e*) any striking merit or defect in it ; etc. Thus if we take the first, Moloch, very briefly, we find that (*a*) he is strong, fierce and reckless (ll. 43-50 ; *b* he is blunt, lacking in courtesy, and disparaging in referring to opponents (ll. 51-54, and 73) ; (*c*) his motive is ambition to be equal to the Almighty and desire for revenge at any cost (ll. 46, 47, and 105 ; (*d*) he has no plan — urges mere brute force ; (*e*) he assumes that punishment for the failure is out of the question, because (1) their lot is already as bad as possible (ll. 92, 93), and (2) it will not improve (l. 89).

418. suspense, in suspense.

423. Astonished, filled with dismay, appalled at the daring suggestion.

Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake :—

*Satan's second speech : " We may well pause; the undertaking is a perilous one, but I accept as great a share of hazard as of honor, and will make the attempt alone."*

“ O Progeny of Heaven, empyreal Thrones ! 430  
 With reason hath deep silence and demur  
 Siezed us, though undismayed. Long is the way  
 And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light ;  
 Our prison strong ; this huge convex of fire,  
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round 435  
 Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant,  
 Barred over us, prohibit all egress.  
 These passed, if any pass, the void profound  
 Of unessential Night receives him next,  
 Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being 440  
 Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.  
 If thence he 'scape into whatever world  
 Or unknown region, what remains him less  
 Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape ?  
 But I should ill become this throne, O Peers, 445  
 And this imperial sovranity, adorned  
 With splendor, armed with power, if aught proposed  
 And judged of public moment, in the shape  
 Of difficulty or danger, could deter  
 Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume 450

434. **convex**, vaulted roof; or perhaps the whole of Hell (See *Intro.* fig. 2.)

439. **unessential**, having no essence or being.

441. **abortive**, producing nothing Cp. 149, 150.

These royalties, and not refuse to reign,  
 Refusing to accept as great a share  
 Of hazard as of honor, due alike  
 To him who reigns, and so much to him due  
 Of hazard more, as he above the rest 455  
 High honored sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,  
 Terror of Heaven, though fallen ! intend at home,  
 While here shall be our home, what best may ease  
 The present misery, and render Hell  
 More tolerable ; if there be cure or charm 460  
 To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain  
 Of this ill mansion : intermit no watch  
 Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad  
 Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek  
 Deliverance for us all. This enterprise 465  
 None shall partake with me."

*The council over, the leaders issue forth with Satan: their  
 con-ord suggests to the poet the discord of men.*

Thus saying, rose  
 The monarch, and prevented all reply ,  
 Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised,  
 Others among the chief might offer now  
 (Certain to be refused) what erst they feared ; 470  
 And, so refused, might in opinion stand  
 His rivals, winning cheap the high repute,

452. Refusing, if I refuse.

457. intend, attend to this, consider.

470. erst, at first, or before.

Which he, through hazard huge, must earn. But  
they

Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice  
Forbidding ; and at once with him they rose. 475

Their rising all at once was as the sound  
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend  
With awful reverence prone ; and as a god  
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven :

Nor failed they to express how much they praised  
That for the general safety he despised 48r

His own ; for neither do the spirits damned  
Lose all their virtue ; lest bad men should boast  
Their specious deeds on Earth, which glory excites,  
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal. 485

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief.  
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds  
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread  
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element 490

Scowls o'er the darkened landskip snow, or shower ;  
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet  
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,  
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings. 495

O shame to men ! Devil with devil damned  
Firm concord holds ; men only disagree  
Of creatures rational, though under hope  
Of heavenly grace ; and, God proclaiming peace,  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife 500



Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,  
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy :  
 As if (which might induce us to accord)  
 Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
 That day and night for his destruction wait! 505

The Stygian council thus dissolved ; and forth  
 In order came the grand infernal Peers :  
 Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seemed  
 Aloné the antagonist of Heaven, nor less  
 Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme, 510  
 And God-like imitated state. Him round  
 A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed,  
 With bright emblazonry, and horrent arms.  
 Then of their session ended they bid cry  
 With trumpet's regal sound the great result. 515  
 Towards the four winds four speedy Cherubim  
 Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,  
 By herald's voice exclaimed ; the hollow Abyss  
 Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell  
 With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim 520

*During Satan's absence the spirits pass the time in games, wild  
 freaks, music, discussion, or exploration.*

Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat  
 raised

504. enow, enough.

513. horrent, bristling.

517. alchymy, the art of mixing and transmuting metals, then the mixture so formed, especially a particular alloy much used in the trumpet: hence the trumpet itself.

By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd powers  
 Disband ; and, wandering, each his several way  
 Pursues, as inclination or sad choice  
 Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find <sup>525</sup>  
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain  
 The irksome hours, till his great chief return.  
 Part on the plain or in the air sublime  
 Upon the wing or in swift race contend,  
 As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields ; <sup>530</sup>  
 Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal  
 With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form :  
 As when to warn proud cities, war appears  
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush  
 To battle in the clouds ; before each van <sup>535</sup>  
 Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,  
 Till thickest legions close ; with feats of arms  
 From either end of heaven the welkin burns.

526. entertain, pass, while away.

528. sublime, ('raised) aloft.

530. The Olympian and Pythian games were national Greek festivals, the former held at Olympia every fifth year and lasting for five days; the latter at Delphi, in honor of Apollo. At Olympia foot-races were more numerous than horse races (note ll. 531, 532). The only prize given was a garland of wild olive. The name and country state) of each competitor were announced by a herald. (The Olympian games have lately been revived 1896', after a lapse of fifteen centuries.)

531. shun the goal, — in turning.

532. fronted, opposed.

536. Prick, spur.

couch, poise, bala ce ready for throwing.

533-538. Probably Milton is describing the appearance presented by masses of black cloud in a red sky, as often seen towards sunset. Some suggest the *Aurora Borealis*. In either case note the appropriateness of *burns*. Striking phenomena of this kind, meteors, etc., were formerly regarded as omens: hence *warn* l. 533). Cp. l. 597-599 *n*. Note the peculiar use of "heaven" here — "the heavens," the sky, the upheaved part

Others, with vast Typhœan rage, more fell,  
 Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air 540  
 In whirlwind ; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar :  
 As when Alcides, from Cœchalia crowned  
 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore  
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,  
 And Lichas from the top of Cœta threw 545  
 Into the Euboic sea. Others more mild,  
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
 With notes angelical to many a harp  
 Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall  
 By doom of battle : and complain that Fate 550  
 Free virtue should enthral to Force or Chance.  
 Their song was partial ; but the harmony  
 (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)  
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment

539. **vas: Typhœan rage.** Typhon or Typhœus was a giant with a hundred heads. From his mouths and eyes he darted fire, and he uttered horrid yells like the discordant shrieks of different animals. He made war upon the gods and frightened them away, but at last Zeus put him to flight with his thunderbolts and burned him under Mount Etna.

542. **Alcides, i.e.** Hercules,— so called because he was the grandson of Alcæus,— on returning home from Cœchalia a town in Thessaly) where he had slain Eurytus, received (at the hands of his companion Lichas) a robe sent by his own wife, Deianira, who had previously dipped it in a potion of some kind, hoping thereby to regain his affection. The potion proved poisonous. Hercules in his rage hurled Lichas into the sea, then ascended Mount Cœta (in Thessaly), built a large funeral pile and lay down upon it to be burnt. Jupiter, in admiration, took him up to heaven in a chariot.

546. **Euboic sea,** east of Mount Cœta, by the Island Eubœa.

547. **Retreated:** not the past tense, but the participle — remote, secluded.

552 **partial, i.e.** in praise of their *own* deeds only, therefore contrasted with their music, which pleased everybody.

554. **Suspended,** etc., held in suspense, made everyone pause from what he was doing.

The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet <sup>555</sup>  
 (For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense),  
 Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
 In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate—  
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute— <sup>560</sup>  
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.  
 Of good and evil much they argued then,  
 Of happiness and final misery,  
 Passion and apathy, and glory and shame—  
 Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy! <sup>565</sup>  
 Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm  
 Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite  
 Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured breast  
 With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.  
 Another part, in squadrons and gross bands, <sup>570</sup>  
 On bold adventure to discover wide  
 That dismal world, if any clime perhaps  
 Might yield them easier habitation, bend  
 Four ways their flying march, along the banks  
 Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge <sup>575</sup>  
 Into the burning lake their baleful streams—  
 Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate;  
 Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep

564 **Passion and apathy.** In the Stoic philosophy, *passion* (*pathos*) was any affection of the mind causing joy or grief; *apathy*, the mastery of such feelings

568. **obdured**, hardened

576, etc. The names of the five rivers are from the classics; the meaning of each name is explained. It is Milton's own device to drain four of them into the lake. Note the contrast between Phlegeton and Lethe.

Cocytus, named of lamentation loud  
 Heard on the rueful stream ; fierce Phlegeton, 580  
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.  
 Far off from these a slow and silent stream,  
 Lethe, the river of oblivion rolls  
 Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks  
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets, 585  
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.  
 Beyond this flood a frozen continent  
 Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
 Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land  
 Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems 590  
 Of ancient pile ; all else deep snow and ice,  
 A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog  
 Betwixt Damietta and Mount Cassius old,  
 Where armies whole have sunk : the parching air  
 Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire. 595  
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,  
 At certain revolutions all the damned  
 Are brought ; and feel by turns the bitter change

581. torrent, scorching.

584. watery labyrinth, winding stream.

592-594. The lake or swamp Serbonis was a kind of lagoon east of Damietta (Damietta), at the mouth of the Nile. Cassius was only a large sand-hill. The place was evidently a quicksand and is now dried up. Some Persian troops invading Egypt were lost here: but this is the only known instance of such disaster.

595. frore, froren or frozen.

596. The Furies were goddesses of vengeance: the Harpies, winged monsters having the face of a woman and the body of a vulture, and feet armed with sharp claws.

haled, hauled.

597. revolutions (of time), the ends of certain periods.

Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,  
 From beds of raging fire to starve in ice 600  
 Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine  
 Immovable, infixed, and frozen round  
 Periods of time ; thence hurried back to fire.  
 They ferry over this Lethean sound  
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment, 605  
 And wish and struggle, as they pass to reach  
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose  
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,  
 All in one moment, and so near the brink ;  
 But Fate withstands, and to oppose the attempt, 610  
 Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards  
 The ford, and of itself the water flies  
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled  
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on  
 In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands, 615  
 With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,  
 Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found  
 No rest. Through may a dark and dreary vale  
 They passed, and many a region dolorous,

600. *starve*, cause to perish. Formerly to *starve* or *sterve* was simply to die "Christ sterved upon the cross," Chaucer ; now it means to die of hunger.

611. *Medusa* was one of the Gorgons (628) — monsters having brazen claws and wings; and hissing serpents or snakes for hair — and her head was so terrible that to look at it caused death.

613. *wight*, creature, person.

614. *Tantalus*, a son of Zeus, divulged the secrets of the gods. For punishment he was afflicted with a raging thirst and placed in a lake, the waters of which receded when he tried to drink of them; and above his head there hung a cluster of grapes which always withdrew from his grasp. Hence the word "tantalize."

O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, 620  
 Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of  
 death—

A universe of death, which God by curse  
 Created evil, for evil only good ;  
 Where all life dies, death lives and nature breeds  
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things, 625  
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse  
 Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,  
 Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

*Satan's journey; at Hell-gate, he meets with Sin and Death,  
 its guardians.*

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,  
 Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design, 630  
 Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of Hell  
 Explores his solitary flight : sometimes  
 He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left ;  
 Now shaves with level wing the deep ; then soars  
 Up to the fiery concave, towering high. 635  
 As when far off at sea a fleet descried  
 Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds  
 Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles

620. **Alp**, any high mountain. Gaelic *alp*, a mountain

628. **Hydra**. The Hydra of Lernæ was a monster that ravaged the country about Argos, and was slain by Hercules. It had nine heads, and if one was cut off two others at once grew in its place. Hercules, therefore, obtained the help of Iolas, who, as soon as a head was cut off, applied a burning iron to the wound.

**Chimæra**, a fire-breathing monster, a compound of lion, dragon, and goat.

638. **Close sailing**, probably sailing close together, for protection.  
**Bengala**, Bengal.

Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring  
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood, <sup>640</sup>  
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,  
 Ply stemming nightly toward the pole; so seemed  
 Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear  
 Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,  
 And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were  
                   brass, <sup>645</sup>  
 Three iron, three of adamantine rock,  
 Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,  
 Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat  
 On either side a formidable Shape.  
 The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, <sup>650</sup>  
 But ended foul in many a scaly fold  
 Voluminous and vast — a serpent armed  
 With mortal sting. About her middle round  
 A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked,  
 With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung <sup>655</sup>  
 A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,  
 If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,

639. Ternate and Tidore, two of the Moluccas, famous for spices.

641. Ethiopian, Indian Ocean.

642. nightly: the comparison is between Satan flying through the gloom of Hell towards its gate, and a fleet sailing by night towards the pole. For other similes see i 192-210.

647. impaled, inclosed.

654. cry, pack; a term used in hunting.

655. These hounds are compared to *Cerberus*, Pluto's many-headed dog that guarded the gate of the lower regions, preventing the living from entering and the dead from escaping. Orpheus, when in search of Eurydice, charmed Cerberus with his music.

656. list, please.



And kennel there; yet there still barked and  
howled

Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these  
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts 660  
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;  
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called  
In secret, riding through the air she comes,  
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
With Lapland witches, while the laboring moon 665  
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape —  
If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,  
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night, 670

660. **Scylla** was a beautiful maiden who used to bathe in the strait. Circe, out of jealousy, threw poisonous herbs into the water and so caused her to assume a form something like that here attributed to Sin. According to the legend she was afterwards changed into the rocks which still bear her name.

661. **Calabria**, east of the straits of Messina.

**Trinacria**, Sicily, the north-east coast of which is steep and rocky — hence the epithet **hoarse**.

662. the **night-hag**, probably Hecate, who was regarded in the middle ages as the queen of witches. Cp. *Macbeth*, iii. 5, 20, "I am for the air," etc.

665. **Lapland** is the traditional home of witches.

witches are said to have been specially addicted to killing infants. **laboring**, in Latin sense (*laborare*, to be eclipsed). Witches were supposed to be able to draw down the moon and to eclipse it.

648-673. Notice the skilful way in which Milton suggests rather than describes these two "shapes," Sin and Death—the latter especially. Both are "formidable" and vast, vague, and indistinct, and repulsive in the extreme. Sin is, at first view, "fair" and attractive, but on a nearer view her appearance indicates the cold, pitiless, deadly power of the snake. The Hell-hounds are taken by Addison to symbolize "the terrors of an evil conscience." Death is appropriately depicted as fierce and aggressive, and at the same time more shadowy and intangible and so more difficult to combat. We shall see that Sin is the offspring of Satan's pride, and Death the child of Sin. The allegory is evidently based on *James* i. 15.

Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
 And shook a dreadful dart ; what seemed his head  
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.  
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat  
 The monster moving onward came as fast . 675  
 With horrid strides ; Hell trembled as he strode.  
 The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired—  
 Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,  
 Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),  
 And with disdainful look thus first began : 680

“ Whence, and what art thou, execrable Shape,  
 That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance  
 Thy miscreated front athwart my way  
 To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,  
 That be assured, without leave asked of thee. 685  
 Retire ; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,  
 Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.”

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied : —  
 “ Art thou that Traitor Angel, art thou he,  
 Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till  
 then 690

Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms  
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,  
 Conjured against the Highest, for which both thou  
 And they, outcast from God, are here condemned  
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain? 695  
 And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,

677. admired, wondered, marvelled.

678, 679. Compare Satan with Moloch.

693. Conjured, banded together by oath.

Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,  
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,  
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,  
 False fugitive ; and to thy speed add wings, 700  
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue  
 Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart  
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

*The impending combat is prevented by Sin, who explains  
 the situation.*

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,  
 So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold 705  
 More dreadful and deform. On the other side,  
 Incensed with indignation, Satan stood  
 Unterrified, and like a comet burned,  
 That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge  
 In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair 710  
 Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head  
 Levelled his deadly aim ; their fatal hands  
 No second stroke intend ; and such a frown  
 Each cast at the other, as when two black clouds,  
 With Heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on 715  
 Over the Caspian, then stand front to front  
 Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow  
 To join their dark encounter in mid air :

701. whip, etc. Cp *1 Kings*, xii. 11.

709. Ophiuchus, the Serpent, a very large constellation in the northern hemisphere.

715. fraught, laden, charged.

716. the Caspian was supposed by the classical poets to be specially subject to violent storms.

So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell  
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they  
stood; 720

For never but once more was either like  
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds  
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,  
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat  
Fast by Hell-gate, and kept the fatal key, 725  
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

“O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,  
“Against thy only son? What fury, O son,  
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart  
Against thy father’s head? and know’st for whom; 730  
For him who sits above, and laughs the while  
At thee, ordained his drudge, to execute  
Whate’er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids —  
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!”

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest 735  
Forebore; then these to her Satan returned: —

“So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange  
Thou interposest that my sudden hand,  
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds  
What it intends, till first I know of thee 740  
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,  
In this infernal vale first met, thou callest  
Me father, and that phantasm call’st my son.  
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now  
Sight more detestable than him and thee.” 745

721. See *1 Corinthians*, xv. 26, and *Hebrews*, ii. 14.

*The reply of Sin to Satan.*

To whom thus the portress of Hell-gate replied :—  
 “Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem  
 Now in thine eye so foul?—once deem’d so fair  
 In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight  
 Of all the Seraphim with thee combined 750  
 In bold conspiracy against Heaven’s King,  
 All on a sudden miserable pain  
 Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum  
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast  
 Threw forth; till on the left side opening wide, 755  
 Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,  
 Then shining Heavenly-fair, a goddess armed,  
 Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized  
 All the host of Heaven; back they recoil’d afraid  
 At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign 760  
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,  
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won  
 The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft  
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,  
 Became enamored and such joy thou took’st 765  
 With me in secret, that my womb conceived  
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,  
 And fields were fought in Heaven; wherein  
 remained

(For what could else?) to our almighty foe  
 Clear victory, to our part loss and rout 770  
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,

757, 758. This incident is based on the Greek legend of the birth of Minerva from the head of Jupiter.

Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down  
 Into this Deep, and in the general fall  
 I also ; at which time this powerful key  
 Into my hands was given, with charge to keep 775  
 These gates for ever shut, which none can pass  
 Without my opening. Pensive here I sat  
 Alone ; but long I sat not, till my womb,  
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,  
 Prodigious motion felt, and rueful throes. 780  
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,  
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,  
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain  
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew  
 Transformed ; but he, my inbred enemy, 785  
 Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart  
 Made to destroy. I fled and cried out *Death!*  
 Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed  
 From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*  
 I fled ; but he pursued (though more, it seems, 790  
 Inflamed with lust than rage) and, swifter far,  
 Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,  
 And, in embraces forcible and foul  
 Engendering with me, of that rape begot  
 These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry 795  
 Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceived  
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite  
 To me ; for when they list, into the womb  
 That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw

772. pitch, height. *Pitch* was a technical term for the height to which the falcon soared in order to swoop on the quarry.

My bowels, their repast ; then bursting forth 800  
 Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,  
 That rest or intermission none I find.

Before mine eyes in opposition sits  
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,  
 And me, his parent, would full soon devour 805  
 For want of other prey, but that he knows  
 His end with mine involved, and knows that I  
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,  
 Whenever that shall be ; so fate pronounced.

But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun 810  
 His deadly arrow ; neither vainly hope  
 To be invulnerable in those bright arms,  
 Though tempered heavenly ; for that mortal dint,  
 Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

*Satan appears friendly and explains his errand.*

She finished ; and the subtle Fiend his lore 815  
 Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered  
 smooth :—

“ Dear daughter — since thou claim’st me for thy  
 sire,

And my fair son here show’st me, the dear pledge  
 Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys  
 Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire  
 change 820

Befallen us unforeseen, unthought of — know,  
 I come no enemy, but to set free

813. tempered heavenly, wrought in heaven.  
 dint, blow.

815. lore, lesson.

From out this dark and dismal house of pain  
 Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host  
 Of Spirits, that, in our just pretences armed, <sup>825</sup>  
 Fell with us from on high. From them I go  
 This uncouth errand sole, and one for all  
 Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread  
 The unfounded deep, and through the void immense  
 To search with wandering quest a place foretold <sup>830</sup>  
 Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now  
 Created vast and round, a place of bliss  
 In the purlieus of Heaven, and therein placed  
 A race of upstart creatures, to supply  
 Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed, <sup>835</sup>  
 Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,  
 Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught  
 Than this more secret now designed, I haste  
 To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,  
 And bring ye to the place where thou and Death <sup>840</sup>  
 Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen  
 Wing silently the buxom air, embalmed  
 With odors; there ye shall be fed and filled  
 Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."

*Sin explains her position, and unlocks the gate, but cannot shut it.*

He ceased, for both seemed highly pleased, and  
 Death <sup>845</sup>

Grinned horrible a ghastly smile to hear

825. pretences, claims.

827. uncouth, as in 407, unknown and strange.

829. unfounded, bottomless.

833. purlieus, outskirts, "The utmost border."

842. buxom, elastic, yielding.



His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw  
 Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced

His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire : —

“ The key of this infernal pit, by due 850

And by command of Heaven’s all-powerful King,

I keep, by him forbidden to unlock

These adamantine gates ; against all force

Death ready stands to interpose his dart,  
 Fearless to be o’ermatched by living might. 855

But what owe I to his commands above

Who hates me and has hither thrust me down

Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,

To sit in hateful office here confined,  
 Inhabitant of Heaven, and Heavenly-born, 860

Here in perpetual agony and pain,

With terrors and with clamors compassed round

Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed ?

Thou art my father, thou my author, thou

My being gav’st me ; whom should I obey 865

But thee ? whom follow ? Thou wilt bring me soon

To that new world of light and bliss, among

The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign

At thy right hand votuptuous, as beseems

Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.” 870

Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,

Sad instrument of all our woe, she took ;

And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,

Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,

874. portcullis, a massive, harrow-like, iron gate, working up and down in grooves.

Which, but herself, not all the Stygean powers 875  
 Could once have moved ; then in the key-hole turns  
 The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar  
 Of massy iron or solid rock with ease  
 Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, 880  
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
 Of Erebus. She opened, but to shut  
 Excelled her power : the gates wide open stood,  
 That with extended wings a bannered host, 885  
 Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through  
 With horse and chariots ranked in loose array ;  
 So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth,  
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.

*Satan passes out and travels on through Chaos till he  
 comes to the "pavilion" of its rulers.*

Before their eyes in sudden view appear 890  
 The secrets of the hoary Deep — a dark  
 Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
 Without dimension ; where length, breadth, and  
 highth,  
 And time, and place, are lost ; where eldest Night  
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold 895

833. Erebus, another classical name for Hell.

835 wings. Cp. i. 616, 617.

839 redounding, rolling back, like waves, "surging." (928.)

895. Nature, that part of the Universe which is *formed or created*, as opposed to Chaos.

Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise  
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.  
 For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions  
     fierce,  
 Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring  
 Their embryon atoms; they around the flag 900  
 Of each his faction, in their several clans,  
 Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,  
 Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands  
 Of Barca, or Cyrene's torrid soil,  
 Levied to side with warring winds, and poise 905  
 Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere  
 He rules a moment; Chaos umpire sits,  
 And by decision more embroils the fray  
 By which he reigns; next him, high arbiter,  
 Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss, 910

900. embryon, germ, germ-like.

904. Barca and Cyrene are two cities in N. Africa.

905. Levied, perhaps in double sense of *to levy troops* and Fr. *lever*, to raise; refers, of course, to *sands*.

906. Their, *i e*, the winds.

910. Cp. Shakespeare—

“The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb.”

895-913. This description of Chaos is based upon the philosophy of Heraclitus *c.* 500 B. C. and Demócritus (*c.* 400 B. C.). The latter assumed, as the basis of nature, an infinitude of indivisible particles or atoms, varying in size, shape, and weight, but all of the same quality. These atoms, floating about in empty space, impinged on one another, and, being of various sizes and weights, moved at different rates (902). Amidst this confusion and whirl, this “concourse of atoms,” certain forces or tendencies prevailed, according to which the atoms formed themselves into groups, giving us “things” - nature. But these “things” again break up in course of time into their original atoms (911). The ground, or final cause, of this process (Chaos was Necessity or Fate, or as Demócritus called it, Chance (“high arbiter,” 909, 910). Heraclitus regarded all growth and creation as due to the harmonious action of hostile principles. “Strife is the father of all things,” said he: hence the description under the form of a battle. The tendencies mentioned above to take the forms of earth, air, etc. (898 and 912), were suggested by Empedocles (*c.* 444 B. C.), and accepted till modern times.

The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,  
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,  
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed  
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,  
 Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain 915  
 His dark materials to create more worlds—  
 Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend  
 Stood on the brink of Hell and looked awhile,  
 Pondering his voyage: for no narrow frith  
 He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed 920  
 With noises loud and ruinous (to compare  
 Great things with small), than when Bellona storms,  
 With all her battering engines, bent to rase  
 Some capital city; or less than if this frame  
 Of Heaven were falling, and these elements 925  
 In mutiny had from her axle torn  
 The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans  
 He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke  
 Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league  
 As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930  
 Audacious; but, that seat soon-failing, meets  
 A vast vacuity. All unawares,  
 Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops

912, 913. "Water, earth, air, and fire were not yet *formed*, but their component atoms were there in readiness for creation."

920. *pealed*, stunned, dinned. Cp. "the pealing organ."

921. *ruinous*, crashing 'as of a building falling'.

922. *Bellona*, the goddess of war.

927. *vans*, wings; also used in its other form, *fan*.

933. *pennons*, pinions, wings.

Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour  
 Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance, 935  
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,  
 Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him  
 As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—  
 Quenched in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,  
 Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares, 940  
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,  
 Half-flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.  
 As when a gryphon through the wilderness  
 With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale  
 Pursues the Arimaspien, who by stealth 945  
 Had from his wakeful custody purloined  
 The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend  
 O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or  
     rare,  
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,  
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies. 950  
 At length a universal hubbub wild  
 Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,

936. rebuff, in its literal sense, a sudden beating back.

937. nitre, the chief of the three constituents of gunpowder; here used for gunpowder itself.

939. Syrtis — a quicksand. (Syrtis, a dangerous quicksand gulf on north coast of Africa.)

940. foundered, sent to the bottom, sunk. (Distinguish from *wrecked*.) Cp. i. 204.

942 behoves him, it is necessary for him to use, etc. Cp. "It behoved Christ to suffer," *Luke*, xxiv. 46.

943-947. gryphon, or griffin, a monster, part eagle, part lion, "a kind of wild beasts that fly." According to stories in Herodotus and Pliny, there were gold-mines in the north of Europe which the griffins visited or worked. The Arimaspi were a one-eyed race who tried to steal the griffin's gold.

Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear  
 With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies,  
 Undaunted to meet there whatever Power 955  
 Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss  
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask  
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies  
 Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne  
 Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread 960  
 Wide on the wasteful Deep. With him enthroned  
 Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,  
 The consort of his reign; and by them stood  
 Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name  
 Of Demogorgon; Rumor next and Chance, 965  
 And Tumult and Confusion all embroiled,  
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

*Satan inquires his way, again promising recompense; hears  
 from Chaos of the newly created World, and at last comes  
 within sight of it.*

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: — “Ye  
 Powers

And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,  
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy, 970  
 With purpose to explore or to disturb  
 The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint  
 Wandering this darksome desert, as my way  
 Lies through your spacious empire up to light,

961. wasteful, full of empty wastes.

964. Orcus and Ades (or Hades, other names of Pluto, or of his realm.

965. Demogorgon, a dreaded name of a still more dreaded and mysterious “master of the fates,” “lord of Chaos,” etc.

Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek, 975  
 What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds  
 Confine with Heaven; or if some other place,  
 From your dominion won, the Ethereal King  
 Possesses lately, thither to arrive

I travel this profound. Direct my course: 980

Directed, no mean recompense it brings  
 To your behoof, if I that region lost,  
 All usurpation thence expelled, reduce  
 To her original darkness and your sway  
 (Which is my present journey), and once more 985  
 Erect the standard there of ancient Night.

Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,  
 With faltering speech and visage incomposed,  
 Answered:—"I know thee, stranger, who thou  
 art— 990

That mighty leading Angel, who of late  
 Made head against Heaven's King, though over-  
 thrown.

I saw and heard; for such a numerous host  
 Fled not in silence through the frightened Deep,  
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, 995  
 Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates  
 Poured out by millions her victorious bands  
 Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here

977. Confine with, border on.

985. journey, quest, purpose.

989. incomposed, disordered or disturbed (?). Not elsewhere used by Milton.

Keep residence ; if all I can will serve  
 That little which is left so to defend, 1000  
 Encroached on still through our intestine broils,  
 Weakening the sceptre of old Night : first Hell,  
 Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath ;  
 Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world  
 Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain 1005  
 To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell.  
 If that way be your walk, you have not far ;  
 So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed !  
 Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased : and Satan stayed not to reply, 1010  
 But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,  
 With fresh alacrity and force renewed  
 Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,  
 Into the wild expanse, and through the shock  
 Of fighting elements, on all sides round 1015  
 Environed, wins his way : harder beset  
 And more endangered than when Argo passed  
 Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks ;  
 Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned  
 Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered : 1020

1004. Heaven and Earth (like the heavens and the earth" in *Genesis*, i.) — the World not the Empyrean, which was before Hell).

1017-1020. *Argo*, the ship in which Jason and the fifty Argonauts went in quest of the golden fleece. The justling rocks were in the Straits of Constantinople, and used to clash together when anything attempted to pass between them. Jason was advised to send on a dove, and the rocks closed; but the *Argo* was ready to pass through as they recoiled, and so managed to get clear in time.

*Scylla* and *Charybdis*, two rocks in the Strait of Messina. The passage between them is narrow, and rendered dangerous by currents and whirlpools. Thus in avoiding one peril there is risk of running into another.

1019. larboard, left-hand side; now *port*.



So he with difficulty and labor hard  
 Moved on. With difficulty and labor he ;  
 But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,  
 Strange alteration ! Sin and Death amain,  
 Following his track (such was the will of Heaven) <sup>1025</sup>  
 Paved after him a broad and beaten way  
 Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf  
 Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,  
 From Hell continued, reaching the utmost orb  
 Of this frail World ; by which the Spirits perverse  
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro <sup>1031</sup>  
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom  
 God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence  
 Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven <sup>1035</sup>  
 Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night  
 A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins  
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,  
 As from her outmost works, a broken foe,  
 With tumult less, and with less hostile din ; <sup>1040</sup>  
 That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,  
 Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,  
 And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds  
 Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn ;  
 Or, in the emptier waste, resembling air, <sup>1045</sup>

1028. The bridge is described in Book x. 293-321.

1029. utmost orb, outmost sphere: see *Intro*.

1034. influence, in literal sense, an in flowing, a stream.

1039. works, in the military sense.

1043. holds, makes for.

Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold  
 Far off the Empyrean Heaven, extended wide  
 In circuit, undetermined square or round,  
 With opal towers and battlements adorned  
 Of living sapphire, once his native seat ;  
 And fast by, hanging in a golden chain  
 This pendent world, in bigness as a star  
 Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.  
 Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,  
 Accursed, and in a cursèd hour, he hies.

1050

1055

1046. **Weighs**, poises, balances evenly.

1049, 1050. **Of living sapphire** goes with "battlements."

## TABLE OF DEITIES MENTIONED IN LL. 392-521.

Lines	Deities	By Whom Worshipped.	Character.	Scripture References
392-405	MOLOCH.	1 The Ammonites. 2) The Jews at Jerusalem.	A fire or sun god; supposed to be able to ward off the destructive heat of the sun.	Lev xviii. 21. Ps. cvl. 37, 38. Jer. vii. 31.
406-418	CHEMOS	(1) The Moabites and Seon* their invader. The places mentioned in 407-11 all lie east of the Dead Sea, between Mt. Nebo in the north and R. Arnon in the south 2 The Jews at the hill Peor (hence the plague†) and at Jerusalem.	Like Moloch.	2 Ki iii 27; and xxiii. 13. * Num. xxi. 26. † Num. xxv. 2, 3, 9.
419-446	BAALIM and ASHTEROTH.	(1) The various Phœnician and Canaanitish nations from north <i>Euphrates</i> to south <i>brook Besor</i> . (2) The Jews at Jerusalem.	These were national and other forms of Moloch.	1 Kings xi. 5. Judg. ii 13. Gen. xv. 18.
446-457	THAMMUZ.	The Syrians, Jews, † Egyptians, etc.	A legendary Phœnician prince killed by a boar near the river Adonis in Lebanon. The coloring of the stream in the spring floods gave rise to the legend of his "annual wound."	† Ezek. viii. 14.

TABLE OF DEITIES — *Continued.*

Lines.	Deities.	By Whom Worshipped.	Character.	Scripture References.
457- 466	DAGON.	The Philistines (Azotus = Ashdod; Ac- caron = Ek- ron).	Fish(?) and corn god. Had the face and hands of a man, and the tail of a fish.	For the allusion see 1 Sam. v. 4: "Dagon was fallen to the ground . . . and the head and the palms were cut off upon the threshold."
467- 476	RIMMON.	The Syrians (at Damascus).		Naaman, a Syr- ian leper, when cured by Eli- sha, forsook Rimmon (2 Ki. v. . . Later, Ahaz, king of Judah, set up a Syrian altar (2 Kings xvi.)
476- 489	OSIRIS, ISIS and ORUS.	The Egyp- tians.	<i>Osiris</i> ("the Good"), <i>Isis</i> , his consort, and <i>Orus</i> , their son. Osiris has another son, <i>Typhon</i> ("evil"), with whom he is ever in conflict, but, through the help of Isis and Orus, is never overcome. Osiris was wor- shipped under the form of a bull ( <i>Apis</i> ); Isis, of a woman with cow's horns.	
490- 505	[BELIAL (Hebrew, wickedness, worthless- ness), not a god, but a personifi- cation of evil.]		Whereas the deities are identified with open, acknowledged wickedness, "Be- lial" is used by Mil- ton to symbolize the evil that is secret, or disguised under the cloak of religion, wealth or rank.	

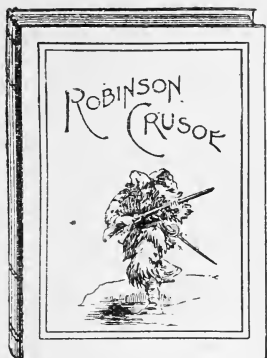
TABLE OF DEITIES — *Continued.*

Lines.	Deities.	By Whom Worshipped.
506- 521	<p style="text-align: center;">The Ionian (or Grecian deities, sprung from Uranus and Ge (108 n. , Heaven and Earth</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Kronos or Saturn and Rhea   Jove.</p> </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">}</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>and ten other Titans</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>The Giants.</p> </div> </div>	<p>The Greeks "Javan's is- sue" — in Crete, on Olympus, at Delphi and Dodona, etc. — Romans, Gauls and Celts.</p>



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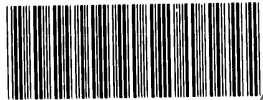
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