

1671
PARADISE REGAINED
John Milton

Milton, John (1608-1674) - English poet and prose writer who is one of the most highly regarded figures in world literature and is widely considered the greatest poet since Shakespeare. Often called the "Puritan Poet," he had many of the good traits of the Puritans as well as many of the bad and spent much of his life immersed in political and religious controversy. Paradise Regained (1671) Deals with Christ's struggle against Satan and the resistance of temptation. It expands upon the New Testament.

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BOOK I**PARADISE REGAINED**

I WHO erewhile the happy Garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
And Eden rais'd in the waste Wilderness.
Thou Spirit who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the Desert, his Victorious Field
Against the Spiritual Foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted Song, else mute,
And bear through highth or depth of nature's bounds
With prosperous wing full summ'd to tell of deeds
Above Heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an Age,
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long unsung.
Now had the great Proclaimer with a voice

More awful than the sound of Trumpet, cried
 Repentance, and Heaven's Kingdom nigh at hand
 To all Baptiz'd: to his great Baptism flock'd
 With awe the Regions round, and with them came
 From Nazareth the Son of Joseph deem'd
 To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,
 Unmarkt, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
 Descried, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
 As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
 To him his Heavenly Office, nor was long
 His witness unconfirm'd; on him baptiz'd
 Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a Dove
 The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
 From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
 That heard the Adversary, who roving still
 About the world, at that assembly fam'd
 Would not be last, and with the voice divine
 Nigh Thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
 Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
 With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage
 Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
 To Council summons all his mighty Peers,

Within thick Clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy Consistory; and them amidst
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.
O ancient Powers of Air and this wide world
For much more willingly I mention Air,
This our old Conquest, than remember Hell
Our hated habitation- well ye know
How many Ages, as the years of men,
This Universe we have possest, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of Earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compast, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threat'n'd wound,
At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being

In this fair Empire won of Earth and Air;
For this ill news I bring, the Woman's seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born:
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent Harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the Consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King; all come,
And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the Nations may not doubt; I saw
The Prophet do him reverence; on him rising
Out of the water, Heav'n above the Clouds
Unfold her Crystal Doors, thence on his head
A perfect Dove descend, whate'er it meant,
And out of Heav'n the Sovran voice I heard,

This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
His Mother then is mortal, but his Sire,
He who obtains the Monarchy of Heav'n,
And what will he not do to advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well couch't fraud, well woven snares,
Ere in the head of Nations he appear
Their King, their Leader, and Supreme on Earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and the exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now
Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once
Induces best to hope of like success.
He ended, and his words impression left

Of much amazement to th' infernal Crew,
Distracted and surpris'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him their great Dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led thir march
From Hell's deep-vaulted Den to dwell in light,
Regents and Potentates, and Kings, yea gods
Of many a pleasant Realm and Province wide.
So to the Coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try,
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
To end his Reign on Earth so long enjoy'd:
But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd Counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt
Of the most High, who, in full frequence bright

Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.
Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a Son
Great in Renown, and call'd the Son of God;
Then told'st her doubting how these things could be
To her a Virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the highest
O'er-shadow her: this man born and now up-grown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his Apostasy; he might have learnt
Less over-weening, since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man

Of female Seed, far abler to resist
 All his solicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
 Winning by Conquest what the first man lost
 By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the Wilderness;
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes,
 By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:
 His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
 That all the Angels and Ethereal Powers,
 They now, and men hereafter, may discern
 From what consummate virtue I have chose
 This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
 To earn Salvation for the Sons of men.
 So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
 Admiring stood a space, then into Hymns
 Burst forth, and in Celestial measures mov'd,
 Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
 Now ent'ring his great duel, not of arms,
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
 The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
 Ventures his filial Virtue, though untried,
 Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
 Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
 Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
 And devilish machinations come to nought.
 So they in Heav'n their Odes and Vigils tun'd.
 Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
 Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
 Musing and much revolving in his breast,
 How best the mighty work he might begin
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
 Publish his God-like office now mature,
 One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He enter'd now the bordering Desert wild,
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,

His holy Meditations thus pursu'd.
O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awak'n'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.
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: therefore above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great Feast
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The Teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admir'd by all: yet this not all
To which my Spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts; one while

To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
 Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
 Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r,
 Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
 Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear;
 At least to try, and teach the erring Soul
 Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware
 Mised: the stubborn only to subdue.
 These growing thoughts my Mother soon perceiving
 By words at times cast forth, inly rejoic'd,
 And said to me apart, high are thy thoughts
 O Son, but nourish them and let them soar
 To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
 Can raise them, though above example high;
 By matchless Deeds express thy matchless Sire.
 For know, thou art no Son of mortal man;
 Though men esteem thee low of Parentage,
 Thy Father is the Eternal King, who rules
 All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men.
 A messenger from God fore-told thy birth

Conceiv'd in me a Virgin; he fore-told
Thou shouldst be great and sit on David's Throne,
And of thy Kingdom there should be no end.
At thy Nativity a glorious Quire
Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
Directed to the Manger where thou lay'st,
For in the Inn was left no better room.
A Star, not seen before, in Heaven appearing
Guided the Wise Men thither from the East,
To honour thee with Incense, Myrrh, and Gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy Star new grav'n in Heaven,
By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and Prophetic Anna, warn'd
By Vision, found thee in the Temple, and spake,
Before the Altar and the vested Priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.
This having heard, straight I again revolv'd
The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ

Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay even to the death,
Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefixt I waited, when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah and his way prepare.
I as all others to his Baptism came,
Which I believ'd was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)
Me him whose Harbinger he was; and first
Refus'd on me his Baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won.
But as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a Dove;

And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
The Authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this Wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet; perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.
So spake our Morning Star then in his rise,
And looking round on every side beheld
A pathless Desert, dusk with horrid shades;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such Solitude before choicest Society.
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night

Under the covert of some ancient Oak,
 Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew,
 Or harbour'd in one Cave, is not reveal'd;
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
 Among wild Beasts: they at his sight grew mild,
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
 The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,
 The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof.
 But now an aged man in Rural weeds,
 Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,
 Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
 Against a Winter's day when winds blow keen,
 To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve,
 He saw approach; who first with curious eye
 Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.
 Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
 So far from path or road of men, who pass
 In Troop or Caravan, for single none
 Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
 His Carcase, pin'd with hunger and with drought?
 I ask the rather, and the more admire,

For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late
 Our new baptizing Prophet at the Ford
 Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
 Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
 Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
 To Town or Village nigh (nighest is far)
 Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
 What happ'ns new; Fame also finds us out.
 To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither
 Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek.
 By Miracle he may, replied the Swain,
 What other way I see not, for we here
 Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
 More than the Camel, and to drink go far,
 Men to much misery and hardship born;
 But if thou be the Son of God, Command
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
 So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
 With Food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.
 He ended, and the Son of God replied.
 Think'st thou such force in Bread? is it not written
 (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)

Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word
 Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
 Our Fathers here with Manna? In the Mount
 Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank,
 And forty days Eliah without food
 Wander'd this barren waste, the same I now:
 Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
 Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?
 Whom thus answer'd th' Arch Fiend now undisguis'd.
 'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
 Who, leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt,
 Kept not my happy Station, but was driv'n
 With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
 Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
 By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
 Leaving my dolorous Prison, I enjoy
 Large liberty to round this Globe of Earth,
 Or range in th' Air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
 Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
 I came among the Sons of God, when he
 Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
 To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;

And when to all his Angels he propos'd
 To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud
 That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
 I undertook that office, and the tongues
 Of all his flattering Prophets glibb'd with lies
 To his destruction, as I had in charge;
 For what he bids I do. Though I have lost
 Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
 To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contemplate and admire
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,
 Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense.
 What can be then less in me than desire
 To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind: why should I? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence; by them
 I lost not what I lost, rather by them
 I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
 Copartner in these Regions of the World,

If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load:
Small consolation then, were Man adjoin'd.
This wounds me most (what can it less) that Man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.
To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied.
Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heav'n of Heavens; thou com'st indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the Prime in Splendor, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,

A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
To all the Host of Heaven; the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King.
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? But his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all Oracles
By thee are giv'n, and what confest more true
Among the Nations? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,

And not well understood as good not known?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up
To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous; but when his purpose is
Among them to declare his Providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him or his Angels President
In every Province, who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy Temples, give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say
To thy Adorers? thou with trembling fear,
Or like a Fawning Parasite obey'st;
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth fore-told.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles; henceforth Oracles are ceast,
And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,

At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent his living Oracle
 Into the World, to teach his final will,
 And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
 In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.
 So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
 Dissembl'd, and this answer smooth return'd.
 Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
 But misery hath wrested from me; where
 Easily canst thou find one miserable,
 And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth;
 If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
 Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
 But thou art plac't above me, thou art Lord;
 From thee I can and must submit endure
 Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
 Smooth on the tongue discourst, pleasing to th' ear,
 And tuneable as Silvan Pipe or Song;

What wonder then if I delight to hear
 Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
 Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
 To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
 And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
 Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Priest
 To tread his Sacred Courts, and minister
 About his Altar, handling holy things,
 Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
 To Balaam Reprobate, a Prophet yet
 Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.
 To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
 Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
 I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
 Permission from above; thou canst not more.
 He added not; and Satan, bowing low
 His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
 Into thin Air diffus'd: for now began
 Night with her sullen wing to double-shade
 The Desert; Fowls in thir clay nests were couch't;
 And now wild Beasts came forth the woods to roam.

BOOK II

MEANWHILE the new baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
 At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
 Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
 Jesus Messiah, Son of God declar'd,
 And on that high Authority had believ'd,
 And with him talkt, and with him lodg'd, I mean
 Andrew and Simon, famous after known
 With others though in Holy Writ not nam'd,
 Now missing him thir joy so lately found,
 So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
 Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
 And as the days increas'd, increas'd thir doubt:
 Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
 And for a time caught up to God, as once
 Moses was in the Mount, and missing long;
 And the great Thisbite who on fiery wheels
 Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
 Therefore as those young Prophets then with care
 Sought lost Eliah, so in each place these
 Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho

The City of Palms, Aenon, and Salem Old,
 Machaerus and each Town or City wall'd
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
 Or in Peraea, but return'd in vain.
 Then on the bank of Jordan, by a Creek,
 Where winds with Reeds and Osiers whisp'ring play,
 Plain Fishermen, (no greater men them call)
 Close in a Cottage low together got,
 Thir unexpected loss and plaints out breath'd.
 Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
 Unlook'd for are we fall'n! Our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long
 Expected of our Fathers; we have heard
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,
 Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
 The Kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
 Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
 Into perplexity and new amaze:
 For whither is he gone, what accident
 Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
 After appearance, and again prolong
 Our expectation? God of Israel,

Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what highth thir pow'r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee; arise and vindicate
Thy Glory, free thy people from thir yoke!
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown,
In public, and with him we have convers'd;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his Providence; he will not fail
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence,
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.
Thus they out of their plaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But to his Mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from Baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none;
Within her breast, though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd

Some troubl'd thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.
 O what avails me now that honour high
 To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
 Hail highly favour'd, among women blest!
 While I to sorrows am no less advanc't,
 And fears as eminent, above the lot
 Of other women, by the birth I bore,
 In such a season born when scarce a Shed
 Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
 From the bleak air; a Stable was our warmth,
 A Manger his; yet soon enforc't to fly
 Thence into Egypt, till the Murd'rous King
 Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
 With Infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.
 From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
 Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
 Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any King; but now
 Full grown to Man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
 By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
 Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice;
 I look't for some great change; to Honour? no,

But trouble, as old Simon plain fore-told,
 That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign
 Spoken against, that through my very Soul
 A sword shall pierce, this is my favour'd lot,
 My Exaltation to Afflictions high;
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.
 But where delays he now? some great intent
 Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
 I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
 He could not lose himself; but went about
 His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
 Since understand; much more his absence now
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things
 And sayings laid up, portending strange events.
 Thus Mary pondering oft, and oft to mind
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
 Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:

The while her Son tracing the Desert wild,
 Sole, but with holiest Meditations fed,
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set;
 How to begin, how to accomplish best
 His end of being on Earth, and mission high:
 For Satan with sly preface to return
 Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
 Up to the middle Region of thick Air,
 Where all his Potentates in Council sat;
 There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
 Solicitous and blank he thus began.
 Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones,
 Demonian Spirits now, from the Element
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd,
 Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
 So may we hold our place and these mild seats
 Without new trouble; such an Enemy
 Is ris'n to invade us, who no less
 Threat'ns than our expulsion down to Hell.
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote
 Consenting in full frequence was impow'r'd,

Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
 Far other labour to be undergone
 Than when I dealt with Adam first of Men,
 Though Adam by his Wife's allurements fell,
 However to this Man inferior far,
 If he be Man by Mother's side, at least
 With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorn'd,
 Perfections absolute, Graces divine,
 And amplitude of mind to greatest Deeds.
 Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
 Of my success with Eve in Paradise
 Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
 Of like succeeding here; I summon all
 Rather to be in readiness with hand
 Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst
 Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.
 So spake the old Serpent doubting, and from all
 With clamor was assur'd thir utmost aid
 At his command; when from amidst them rose
 Belial the dissolutes Spirit that fell,
 The sensuallest, and after Asmodai
 The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye and in his walk,
 Among daughters of men the fairest found;
 Many are in each Region passing fair
 As the noon Sky; more like to Goddesses
 Than Mortal Creatures, graceful and discreet,
 Expert in amorous Arts, enchanting tongues
 Persuasive, Virgin majesty with mild
 And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach,
 Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
 Hearts after them tangl'd in Amorous Nets.
 Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame
 Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
 Eneer, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
 Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
 At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
 As the Magnetic hardest Iron draws.
 Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
 Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
 And made him bow to the Gods of his Wives.
 To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
 Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
 All others by thyself; because of old

Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
 Thir shape, thir colour, and attractive grace,
 None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
 Before the Flood thou with thy lusty Crew,
 False titl'd Sons of God, roaming the Earth,
 Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
 And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.
 Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
 In Courts and Regal Chambers how thou lurk'st,
 In Wood or Grove by mossy Fountain side,
 In Valley or Green Meadow, to way-lay
 Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
 Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
 Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
 Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
 Satyr, or Faun, or Silvan? But these haunts
 Delight not all; among the Sons of Men,
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
 Remember that Pellean Conqueror,

A youth, how all the Beauties of the East
He slightly view'd, and slightly over-pass'd;
How hee surnam'd of Africa dismiss'd
In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his State;
Thence to the bait of Women lay expos'd.
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
Though of this Age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? or should she confident,
As sitting Queen ador'd on Beauty's Throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the Zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on love, so Fables tell;
How would one look from his Majestic brow,
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout

All her array; her female pride deject,
 Or turn to reverent awe! for Beauty stands
 In the admiration only of weak minds
 Led captive; cease to admire, and all her Plumes
 Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
 At every sudden slighting quite abasht:
 Therefore with manlier objects we must try
 His constancy, with such as have more show
 Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
 Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;
 Or that which only seems to satisfy
 Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond;
 And now I know he hungers where no food
 Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness;
 The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
 No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.
 He ceas'd, and heard thir grant in loud acclaim;
 Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
 Of Spirits likest to himself in guile
 To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
 If cause were to unfold some active Scene
 Of various persons, each to know his part;

Then to the Desert takes with these his flight;
 Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
 After forty days fasting had remain'd,
 Now hung'ring first, and to himself thus said.
 Where will this end? four times ten days I have pass'd,
 Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
 Nor tasted, nor had appetite: that Fast
 To Virtue I impute not, or count part
 Of what I suffer here; if Nature need not,
 Or God support Nature without repast
 Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
 But now I feel I hunger, which declares,
 Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
 Can satisfy that need some other way,
 Though hunger still remain: so it remain
 Without this body's wasting, I content me,
 And from the sting of Famine fear no harm,
 Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
 Mee hung'ring more to do my Father's will.
 It was the hour of night, when thus the
 Son Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
 Under the hospitable covert nigh

Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreshment sweet.
Him thought, he by the Brook of Cherith stood
And saw the Ravens with thir horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing Even and Morn,
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought:
He saw the Prophet also how he fled
Into the Desert, and how there he slept
Under a Juniper; then how awakt,
He found his Supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark
Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his Song.
As lightly from his grassy Couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.

Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
 From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
 If Cottage were in view, Sheep-cote or Herd;
 But Cottage, Herd or Sheep-cote none he saw,
 Only in a bottom saw a pleasant Grove,
 With chant of tuneful Birds resounding loud.
 Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
 To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
 High rooft and walks beneath, and alleys brown
 That open'd in the midst of woody Scene;
 Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
 And to a Superstitious eye the haunt
 Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs; he view'd it round,
 When suddenly a man before him stood,
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
 As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred,
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd.
 With granted leave officious I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide
 Of all things destitute, and well I know,
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,

As story tells, have trod this Wilderness:
 The Fugitive Bond-woman with her Son
 Outcast Nebaioth, yet found he relief
 By a providing Angel; all the race
 Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
 Rain'd from Heaven Manna; and that Prophet bold
 Native of Thebez wand'ring here was fed
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
 Forty and more deserted here indeed.
 To whom thus Jesus; what conclud'st thou hence?
 They all had need, I as thou seest have none.
 How hast thou hunger then? Satan replied.
 Tell me, if Food were now before thee set,
 Would'st thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
 The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
 Cause thy refusal, said the subtle Fiend,
 Hast thou not right to all Created things,
 Owe not all Creatures by just right to thee
 Duty and Service, nor to stay till bid,
 But tender all their power? nor mention I
 Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first

To Idols, those young Daniel could refuse;
 Nor proffer'd by an Enemy, though who
 Would scruple that, with want opprest? behold
 Nature asham'd, or better to express,
 Troubl'd that thou shouldst hunger, hath purvey'd
 From all the Elements her choicest store
 To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
 With honour; only deign to sit and eat.
 He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
 Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
 In ample space under the broadest shade
 A Table richly spread, in regal mode,
 With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
 And savour, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game,
 In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
 Gris-amber-steam'd; all Fish from Sea or Shore,
 Freshet, or purling Brook, of shell or fin,
 And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
 Pontus and Lucrine Bay, and Afric Coast.
 Alas how simple, to these Cates compar'd,
 Was that crude Apple that diverted Eve!
 And at a stately side-board by the wine

That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
 Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
 Than Ganymede or Hylas; distant more
 Under the Trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
 With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
 And Ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
 Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide
 By Knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
 Lancelot or Pelleas, or Pellenore;
 And all the while Harmonious Airs were heard
 Of chiming strings, or charming pipes, and winds
 Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
 Such was the Splendor, and the Tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renew'd.
 What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not Fruits forbidden; no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure;
 Thir taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,

Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of Air, and Woods, and Springs,
Thy gentle Ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee thir Lord:
What doubt'st thou Son of God? sit down and eat.
To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:
Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my pow'r that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a Table in this Wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant
Array'd in Glory on my cup to attend;
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find,
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous Delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.
To whom thus answer'd Satan malcontent:
That I have also power to give thou seest;
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary

What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose
Whose pains have earn'd the far-fet spoil. With that
Both Table and Provision vanish'd quite
With sound of Harpies' wings and Talons heard;
Only the importune Tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.
By hunger, that each other Creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurements yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
Great acts require great means of enterprise,
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A Carpenter thy Father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home;
Lost in a Desert here and hunger-bit:

Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
 To greatness? whence Authority deriv'st,
 What Followers, what Retinue canst thou gain,
 Or at thy heels the dizzy Multitude,
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings Honour, Friends, Conquest, and Realms;
 What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
 And his Son Herod plac'd on Judah's Throne
 (Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant friends?
 Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
 Get Riches first, get Wealth, and Treasure heap,
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me,
 Riches are mine, Fortune is in my hand;
 They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
 While Virtue, Valour, Wisdom sit in want.
 To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:
 Yet Wealth without these three is impotent,
 To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd.
 Witness those ancient Empires of the Earth,
 In highth of all thir flowing wealth dissolv'd;
 But men endu'd with these have oft attain'd
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds:

Gideon and Jephtha, and the Shepherd lad,
 Whose off-spring on the Throne of Judah sat
 So many Ages, and shall yet regain
 That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
 Among the Heathen, (for throughout the World
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of Memorial) canst thou not remember
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings.
 And what in me seems wanting, but that I
 May also in this poverty as soon
 Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
 Extol not Riches then, the toil of Fools,
 The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more apt
 To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
 Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
 What if with like aversion I reject
 Riches and Realms; yet not for that a Crown,
 Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights

To him who wears the Regal Diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies:
For therein stands the office of a King,
His Honour, Virtue, Merit and chief Praise,
That for the Public all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or head-strong Multitudes,
Subject himself to Anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
But to guide Nations in the way of truth
By saving Doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more Kingly; this attracts the Soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.
Besides to give a Kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down

Far more magnanimous than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a Sceptre, ofttest better miss't.

BOOK III

SO SPAKE the Son of God, and Satan stood
 A while as mute confounded what to say,
 What to reply, confuted and convinc't
 Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
 At length collecting all his Serpent wiles,
 With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.
 I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
 What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
 Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
 To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
 Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
 Should Kings and Nations from thy mouth consult,
 Thy Counsel would be as the Oracle
 Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
 On Aaron's breast; or tongue of Seers old
 Infallible; or wert thou sought to deeds
 That might require th' array of war, thy skill
 Of conduct would be such, that all the world
 Could not sustain thy Prowess, or subsist
 In battle, though against thy few in arms.

These God-like Virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage Wilderness, wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected Spirits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe, the Son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia and the Throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride, young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic King and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgement mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied.
 Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
 For Empire's sake, nor Empire to affect
 For glory's sake by all thy argument.
 For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
 The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
 And what the people but a herd confus'd,
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
 Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
 They praise and they admire they know not what;
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
 And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
 To live upon thir tongues and be thir talk,
 Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
 His lot who dares be singularly good.
 Th' intelligent among them and the wise
 Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
 This is true glory and renown, when God
 Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
 The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
 To all his Angels, who with true applause
 Recount his praises; thus he did to Job,

When to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
 As thou to thy reproach mayst well remember,
 He ask'd thee, hast thou seen my servant Job?
 Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known;
 Where glory is false glory, attributed
 To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
 They err who count it glorious to subdue
 By Conquest far and wide, to over-run
 Large Countries, and in field great Battles win,
 Great Cities by assault: what do these Worthies,
 But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
 Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,
 Made Captive, yet deserving freedom more
 Than those thir Conquerors, who leave behind
 Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
 And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
 Then swell with pride, and must be titl'd Gods,
 Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
 Worship't with Temple, Priest and Sacrifice?
 One is the Son of Jove, of Mars the other,
 Till Conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
 Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,

Violent or shameful death thir due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance; I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with Saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a Land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest Conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffer'd; if young African for fame
His wasted Country freed from Punic rage,
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek
Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.
To whom the Tempter murmuring thus replied.

Think not so slight of glory: therein least
Resembling thy great Father; he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs, nor content in Heaven
By all his Angels glorifi'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
Above all Sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all Nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;
From us his foes pronounc't glory he exacts.
To whom our Saviour fervently replied.
And reason; since his word all things produc'd,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And not returning that would likeliest render

Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
 Hard recompense, unsuitable return
 For so much good, so much beneficence.
 But why should man seek glory? who of his own
 Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
 But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
 Who for so many benefits receiv'd
 Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
 And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
 Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
 That which to God alone of right belongs;
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
 That who advance his glory, not thir own,
 Them he himself to glory will advance.
 So spake the Son of God; and here again
 Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
 With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
 Insatiable of glory had lost all,
 Yet of another Plea bethought him soon.
 Of glory as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
 Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:
 But to a Kingdom thou art born, ordain'd

To sit upon thy Father David's Throne;
 By Mother's side thy Father, though thy right
 Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms;
 Judaea now and all the promis'd land
 Reduc't a Province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius; nor is always rul'd
 With temperate sway; oft have they violated
 The Temple, oft the Law with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
 Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain
 Thy right by sitting still or thus retiring?
 So did not Maccabaeus: he indeed
 Retir'd unto the Desert, but with arms;
 And o'er a mighty King so oft prevail'd,
 That by strong hand his Family obtain'd,
 Though Priests, the Crown, and David's Throne usurp'd,
 With Modin and her Suburbs once content.
 If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee Zeal,
 And Duty; Zeal and Duty are not slow;
 But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,

Zeal of thy Father's house, Duty to free
 Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;
 So shalt thou best fullfil, best verify
 The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
 The happier reign the sooner it begins.
 Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?
 To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
 All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
 And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:
 If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
 That it shall never end, so when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
 He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
 What if he hath decreed that I shall first
 Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
 By tribulations, injuries, insults,
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
 Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
 What I can suffer, how obey? who best
 Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
 Well hath obey'd; just trial e'er I merit

My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting Kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?
To whom the Tempter inly rakt replied.
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear;
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my Port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever for itself condemn'd,
And will alike be punish'd; whether thou
Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,

Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)
A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest both to thyself and all the world,
That thou who worthiest art shouldst be thir King?
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high;
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean Towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and Monarchs, and thir radiant Courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc't, will be ever

Timorous and loth, with novice modesty,
 (As he who seeking Asses found a Kingdom)
 Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous:
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
 Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
 The Monarchies of the Earth, thir pomp and state,
 Sufficient introduction to inform
 Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal Arts,
 And regal Mysteries; that thou mayst know
 How best their opposition to withstand.
 With that (such power was giv'n him then) he took
 The Son of God up to a Mountain high.
 It was a Mountain at whose verdant feet
 A spacious plain outstretcht in circuit wide
 Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
 Th' one winding, the other straight, and left between
 Fair Champain with less rivers intervein'd,
 Then meeting join'd thir tribute to the Sea:
 Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine,
 With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills,
 Huge Cities and high tow'r'd, that well might seem
 The seats of mightiest Monarchs; and so large

The Prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.
Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field, and flood, Temples and Towers
Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st
Assyria and her Empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus East, Euphrates West,
And oft beyond; to South the Persian Bay,
And inaccessible the Arabian drouth;
Here Ninevee, of length within her wall
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden Monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy Father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis

His city there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates,
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but Kings; of later fame
Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye thou mayst behold.
All these the Parthian, now some Ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That Empire, under his dominion holds
From the luxurious Kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian King
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his Host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, Steel Bows and Shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;

All Horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
 See how in warlike muster they appear,
 In Rhombs and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.
 He look't and saw what numbers numberless
 The City gates out pour'd, light armed Troops
 In coats of Mail and military pride;
 In Mail thir horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
 Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
 Of many Provinces from bound to bound;
 From Arachosia, from Candaor East,
 And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
 Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;
 From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
 Of Adiabene, Media, and the South
 Of Susiana to Balsara's hav'n.
 He saw them in thir forms of battle rang'd,
 How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
 Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
 Of thir pursuers, and overcame by flight;
 The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,
 Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn,
 Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight;

Chariots or Elephants indorst with Towers
 Of Archers, nor of labouring Pioners
 A multitude with Spades and Axes arm'd
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
 Or where plain was raise hill, or over-lay
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
 Mules after these, Camels and Dromedaries,
 And Waggons fraught with Utensils of war.
 Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his Northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as Romances tell,
 The City of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her Sex, Angelica,
 His daughter, sought by many Prowest Knights,
 Both Paynim, and the Peers of Charlemagne.
 Such and so numerous was thir Chivalry;
 At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.
 That thou mayst know I seek not to engage
 Thy Virtue, and not every way secure
 On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark
 To what end I have brought thee hither and shown

All this fair sight: thy Kingdom though foretold
 By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
 Endeavour, as thy Father David did,
 Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means,
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possess'd of David's Throne
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
 Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
 Between two such enclosing enemies
 Roman and Parthian? therefore one of these
 Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first
 By my advice, as nearer and of late
 Found able by invasion to annoy
 Thy country, and captive lead away her Kings,
 Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,
 Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose;
 Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league.
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee

In David's royal seat, his true Successor,
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten Tribes
 Whose off-spring in his Territory yet serve
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispers't,
 Ten Sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost
 Thus long from Israel; serving as of old
 Thir Fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.
 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To thir inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the Throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond
 Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear.
 To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
 Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war
 Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
 Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
 Vented much policy, and projects deep
 Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
 Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
 Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else

Will unpredict and fail me of the Throne:
My time I told thee, (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
When that comes think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full Sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's Sons;
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his Throne,
When thou stood'st up his Tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' Pestilence? such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive Tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship Calves, the Deities

Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
And all the Idolatries of Heathen round,
Besides thir other worse than heathenish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their fore-fathers; but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by Circumcision vain,
And God with Idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who freed, as to their ancient Patrimony,
Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow; and to thir Gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve
Thir enemies, who serve Idols with God.
Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
Rememb'ring Abraham, by some wond'rous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,

When to the promis'd land thir Fathers pass'd;
To his due time and providence I leave them.
So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

BOOK IV

PERPLEX'D and troubl'd at his bad success
 The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope,
 So oft, and the persuasive Rhetoric
 That sleek't his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
 So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
 This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
 And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
 But as a man who had been matchless held
 In cunning, over-reach't where least he thought,
 To salve his credit, and for very spite
 Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
 And never cease, though to his shame the more;
 Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
 About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
 Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,
 Though all to shivers dash't, the assault renew,
 Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;

So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long but in breadth not wide;
Wash'd by the Southern Sea, and on the North
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills
That screen'd the fruits of the earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an Imperial City stood,
With Towers and Temples proudly elevate
On seven small Hills, with Palaces adorn'd,
Porches and Theatres, Baths, Aqueducts,
Statues and Trophies, and Triumphal Arcs,
Gardens and Groves presented to his eyes,
Above the highth of Mountains interpos'd:
By what strange Parallax or Optic skill
Of vision multiplied through air, or glass
Of Telescope, were curious to enquire:

And now the Tempter thus his silence broke.
 The City which thou seest no other deem
 Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
 So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich
 Of Nations; there the Capitol thou seest,
 Above the rest lifting his stately head
 On the Tarpeian rock, her Citadel
 Impregnable, and there Mount Palatine
 The Imperial Palace, compass huge, and high
 The Structure, skill of noblest Architects,
 With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
 Turrets and Terraces, and glittering Spires.
 Many a fair Edifice besides, more like
 Houses of Gods (so well I have dispos'd
 My Aery Microscope) thou mayst behold
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd Artificers
 In Cedar, Marble, Ivory or Gold.
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux issuing forth, or ent'ring in,
 Praetors, Proconsuls to thir Provinces
 Hasting or on return, in robes of State;

Lictors and rods, the ensigns of thir power,
Legions and Cohorts, turms of horse and wings:
Or Embassies from Regions far remote
In various habits on the Appian road,
Or on the Aemilian, some from farthest South,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotic Isle, and more to West,
The Realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor Sea;
From the Asian Kings and Parthian among these,
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian Isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken Turbants wreath'd:
From Gallia, Gades, and the British West,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians North
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric Pool.
All Nations now to Rome obedience pay,
To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain
In ample Territory, wealth and power,
Civility of Manners, Arts, and Arms,
And long Renown thou justly mayst prefer
Before the Parthian; these two Thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,

Shar'd among petty Kings too far remov'd;
 These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
 The Kingdoms of the world, and all thir glory.
 This Emperor hath no Son, and now is old,
 Old, and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
 To Capreae, an Island small but strong
 On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
 His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
 Committing to a wicked Favourite
 All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
 Hated of all, and hating; with what ease
 Indu'd with Regal Virtues as thou art,
 Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
 Might'st thou expel this monster from his Throne
 Now made a sty, and in his place ascending
 A victor people free from servile yoke?
 And with my help thou mayst; to me the power
 Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
 Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
 Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd
 Will be for thee no sitting, or not long
 On David's Throne, be prophesi'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd replied.
 Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
 Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
 More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
 Much less my mind; though thou should'st add to tell
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
 On Citron tables or Atlantic stone,
 (For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
 Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in Gold,
 Crystal and Murrhine cups imboss'd with Gems
 And studs of Pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst
 And hunger still: then Embassies thou show'st
 From Nations far and nigh; what honour that,
 But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
 So many hollow compliments and lies,
 Outlandish flatteries? then proceed'st to talk
 Of the Emperor, how easily subdu'd,
 How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
 A brutish monster: what if I withal
 Expel a Devil who first made him such?
 Let his tormentor Conscience find him out,

For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern in the Nations under yoke,
Peeling thir Provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by thir sports to blood inur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,
Luxurious by thir wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily Scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's Throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and over-shadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All Monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,

Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.
To whom the Tempter impudent replied.
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st:
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict:
On the other side know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st,
The Kingdoms of the world to thee I give;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior Lord,
Easily done, and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?
Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,

Thou hast permission on me. It is written
The first of all Commandments, Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurst, now more accurst
For this attempt bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous? which expect to rue.
The Kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp't,
Other donation none thou canst produce:
If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,
God over all supreme? if giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me the Son of God,
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?
Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.
To whom the Fiend with fear abasht replied.
Be not so sore offended, Son of God,

Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men;
 If I to try whether in higher sort
 Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
 What both from Men and Angels I receive,
 Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
 Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
 God of this world invok't and world beneath;
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
 To me so fatal, me it most concerns.
 The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,
 Rather more honour left and more esteem;
 Me naught advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
 The Kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
 Advise thee, gain them as thou canst, or not.
 And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
 Than to a worldly Crown, addicted more
 To contemplation and profound dispute,
 As by that early action may be judg'd,
 When slipping from thy Mother's eye thou went'st
 Alone into the Temple; there wast found
 Among the gravest Rabbies disputant

On points and questions fitting Moses' Chair,
 Teaching not taught; the childhood shows the man,
 As morning shows the day. Be famous then
 By wisdom; as thy Empire must extend, So let extend
 thy mind o'er all the world,
 In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.
 All knowledge is not couch't in Moses' Law,
 The Pentateuch or what the Prophets wrote,
 The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
 To admiration, led by Nature's light;
 And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
 Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st,
 Without thir learning how wilt thou with them,
 Or they with thee hold conversation meet?
 How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
 Thir Idolisms, Traditions, Paradoxes?
 Error by his own arms is best evinc't.
 Look once more ere we leave this specular Mount
 Westward, much nearer by Southwest, behold
 Where on the Aegean shore a City stands
 Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
 Athens, the eye of Greece, Mother of Arts

And Eloquence, native to famous wits
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
 City or Suburban, studious walks and shades;
 See there the Olive Grove of Academe,
 Plato's retirement, where the Attic Bird
 Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the summer long;
 There flow'ry hill Hymettus with the sound
 Of Bees' industrious murmur oft invites
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
 His whispering stream; within the walls then view
 The schools of ancient Sages; his who bred
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next;
 There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
 Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
 Aeolian charms and Dorian Lyric Odes,
 And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
 Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,
 Whose Poem Phoebus challeng'd for his own.
 Thence what the lofty grave Tragoedians taught
 In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best

Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
 In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
 High actions, and high passions best describing:
 Thence to the famous Orators repair,
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
 Wielded at will that fierce Democracy,
 Shook the Arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece,
 To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' Throne;
 To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
 From Heaven descended to the low-rooft house
 Of Socrates, see there his Tenement,
 Whom well inspir'd the Oracle pronounc'd
 Wisest of men; from whose mouth issu'd forth
 Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
 Of Academics old and new, with those
 Surnam'd Peripatetics, and the Sect
 Epicurean, and the Stoic severe;
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
 Till time mature thee to a Kingdom's weight;
 These rules will render thee a King complete
 Within thyself, much more with Empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied.
Think not but that I know these things;
or think I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;
Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;
The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,
By him call'd virtue; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,

For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead;
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However, many books
Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs be elsewhere seek)
Uncertain and unsettl'd still remains,
Deep verst in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,

And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
 As Children gathering pebbles on the shore.
 Or if I would delight my private hours
 With Music or with Poem, where so soon
 As in our native Language can I find
 That solace? All our Law and Story strew'd
 With Hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
 Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in Babylon,
 That pleas'd so well our Victors' ear, declare
 That rather Greece from us these Arts deriv'd;
 Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
 The vices of their Deities, and thir own
 In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating
 Thir Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
 Remove thir swelling Epithets thick laid
 As varnish on a Harlot's cheek, the rest,
 Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
 Will far be found unworthy to compare
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
 Where God is prais'd aright, and Godlike men,
 The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints;
 Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee;

Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of Nature not in all quite lost.
Thir Orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of Eloquence, Statists indeed,
And lovers of thir Country, as may seem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of Civil Government
In thir majestic unaffected style
Than all the Oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a Nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins Kingdoms, and lays Cities flat;
These only, with our Law, best form a King.
So spake the Son of God; but Satan now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied.
Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor Empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
What dost thou in this World? the Wilderness

For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee; yet remember
 What I foretell thee, soon thou shalt have cause
 To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
 Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's Throne; or Throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
 When Prophecies of thee are best fullfill'd.
 Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
 Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
 Voluminous, or single characters,
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
 Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate,
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death.
 A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
 Real or Allegoric I discern not,
 Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
 Without beginning; for no date prefixt
 Directs me in the Starry Rubric set.
 So saying he took (for still he knew his power

Not yet expir'd) and to the Wilderness
 Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
 Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
 As day-light sunk, and brought in louring night,
 Her shadowy off-spring, unsubstantial both,
 Privation mere of light and absent day.
 Our Saviour meek and with untroubl'd mind
 After his aery jaunt, though hurried sore,
 Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
 Wherever, under some concourse of shades
 Whose branching arms thick interwin'd might shield
 From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
 But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head
 The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
 Disturb'd his sleep; and either Tropic now
 'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n; the Clouds
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
 Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
 In ruin reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
 Within thir stony caves, but rush'd abroad
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell
 On the vext Wilderness, whose tallest Pines,

Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest Oaks
 Bow'd thir Stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
 Or torn up sheer: ill wast thou shrouded then,
 O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
 Unshaken; nor yet stay'd the terror there.
 Infernal Ghosts, and Hellish Furies, round
 Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
 Some bent at thee thir fiery darts, while thou
 Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.
 Thus pass'd the night so foul till morning fair
 Came forth with Pilgrim steps in amice gray;
 Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
 Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
 And grisly Spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd
 To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
 And now the Sun with more effectual beams
 Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dried the wet
 From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
 After a night of storm so ruinous,
 Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn.

Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of darkness; glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
Yet with no new device, they all were spent;
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage,
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a Sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the North and West by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said.
Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the rack
As Earth and Sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of Heaven,
Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light

On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
 Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
 Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
 They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
 This Tempest at this Desert most was bent;
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
 The perfect season offer'd with my aid
 To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
 All to the push of Fate, pursue thy way
 Of gaining David's Throne no man knows when,
 For both the when and how is nowhere told,
 Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
 For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
 The time and means: each act is rightliest done,
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
 Of dangers, and adversities and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's Scepter get fast hold;
 Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies

May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.
 So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
 And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus.
 Mee worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
 Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me none;
 I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
 And threat'ning nigh; what they can do as signs
 Betok'ning, or ill-boding, I contemn
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
 Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
 Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
 At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
 Ambitious spirit, and wouldst be thought my God,
 And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
 Mee to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
 And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.
 To whom the Fiend now swoln with rage replied:
 Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born;
 For Son of God to me is yet in doubt:
 Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
 By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length
 Announc't by Gabriel with the first I knew,

And of the Angelic Song in Bethlehem field,
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
 From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
 Till at the Ford of Jordan whither all
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest,
 Though not to be Baptiz'd, by voice from Heav'n
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
 And narrower Scrutiny, that I might learn
 In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
 The Son of God I also am, or was,
 And if I was, I am; relation stands;
 All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
 In some respect far higher so declar'd.
 Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
 Where by all best conjectures I collect
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
 Good reason then, if I before-hand seek

To understand my Adversary, who
 And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent,
 By parle, or composition, truce, or league
 To win him, or win from him what I can.
 And opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation as a rock
 Of Adamant, and as a Centre, firm;
 To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
 Not more; for Honours, Riches, Kingdoms, Glory
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again:
 Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
 Another method I must now begin.
 So saying he caught him up, and without wing
 Of Hippogrif bore through the Air sublime
 Over the Wilderness and o'er the Plain;
 Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
 The holy City, lifted high her Towers,
 And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
 Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
 Of Alabaster, top't with golden Spires:

There on the highest Pinnacle he set
 The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:
 There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill; I to thy Father's house
 Have brought thee, and highest plac't, highest is best,
 Now show thy Progeny; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God:
 For it is written, He will give command
 Concerning thee to his Angels, in thir hands
 They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.
 To whom thus Jesus: also it is written,
 Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood.
 But Satan smitten with amazement fell
 As when Earth's Son Antaeus (to compare
 Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
 With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
 Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
 Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
 Thrott'l'd at length in the Air, expir'd and fell;
 So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
 Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride

Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.
 And as that Theban Monster that propos'd
 Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd;
 That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
 Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep,
 So strook with dread and anguish fell the Fiend,
 And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
 Joyless triumphals of his hop't success,
 Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
 Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
 So Satan fell and straight a fiery Globe
 Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
 Who on their plummy Vans receiv'd him soft
 From his uneasy station, and upbore
 As on a floating couch through the blithe Air,
 Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
 On a green bank, and set before him spread
 A table of Celestial Food, Divine,
 Ambrosial, Fruits fetcht from the tree of life,
 And from the fount of life Ambrosial drink,
 That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
 What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,

Or thirst; and as he fed, Angelic Quires
 Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory
 Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.
 True Image of the Father whether thron'd
 In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
 Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
 In fleshly Tabernacle, and human form,
 Wand'ring the Wilderness, whatever place,
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with Godlike force indu'd
 Against th' Attempter of thy Father's Throne,
 And Thief of Paradise; him long of old
 Thou didst debel, and down from Heav'n cast
 With all his Army; now thou hast aveng'd
 Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
 Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
 And frustrated the conquest fraudulent:
 He never more henceforth will dare set foot
 In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
 For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
 A fairer Paradise is founded now
 For Adam and his chosen Sons, whom thou

A Saviour art come down to re-install,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be
Of Tempter and Temptation without fear.
But thou, Infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the Clouds; like an Autumnal Star
Or Lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n trod down
Under his feet: for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
From thy Demoniack holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy Legions; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of Swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment sent before thir time.
Hail Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.
Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek

Sung Victor, and from Heavenly Feast refresht
Brought on his way with joy; hee unobserv'd
Home to his Mother's house private return'd.

THE END