

This etext was typed by Judy Boss in Omaha, Nebraska.

PARADISE REGAINED

THE FIRST BOOK

I, WHO erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.
Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence 10
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 summed, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age:
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.
Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried 20
Repentance, and Heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptized. To his great baptism flocked
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed
To the flood Jordan--came as then obscure,
Unmarked, unknown. But him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his heavenly office. Nor was long
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptized 30
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a Dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heaven pronounced him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man to whom
Such high attest was given a while surveyed
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air 40
To council summons all his mighty Peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:--
"O ancient Powers of Air and this wide World

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(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 possessed, and ruled
In manner at our will the affairs of Earth, 50
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived 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 Heaven
Delay, for longest time to Him is short;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound
(At least, if so we can, and by the head 60
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infringed, our freedom and our being
In this fair empire won of Earth and Air)--
For this ill news I bring: The Woman's Seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born.
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim 70
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 baptized--
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 80
Out of the water, Heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors; thence on his head
A perfect Dove descend (whate'er it meant);
And out of Heaven the sovereign voice I heard,
'This is my Son beloved,--in him am pleased.'
His mother, than, is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven;
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; 90
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 opposed
(Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven snares),
Ere in the head of nations he appear,

All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell--
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surprised. 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 aethereal Powers--
They now, and men hereafter--may discern
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men."

160

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:--

170

"Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering 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!"

180

So they in Heaven their odes and vigils tuned.
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptized,
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 godlike office now mature,
One day forth walked 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 entered now the bordering Desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,
His holy meditations thus pursued:--

190

"O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!
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,

200

The Law of God I read, and found it sweet;
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
 To such perfection that, ere yet my age
 Had measured twice six years, at our great Feast 210
 I went into the Temple, there to hear
 The teachers of our Law, and to propose
 What might improve my knowledge or their own,
 And was admired by all. Yet this not all
 To which my spirit aspired. Victorious deeds
 Flamed 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 power,
 Till truth were freed, and equity restored: 220
 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 misdoing, but unaware
 Mised; the stubborn only to subdue.
 These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
 By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
 And said to me apart, 'High are thy thoughts,
 O Son! but nourish them, and let them soar 230
 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 foretold thy birth
 Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold
 Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne, 240
 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, 250
 To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;
 By whose bright course led on they found the place,
 Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,
 By which they knew thee King of Israel born.
 Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
 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 heart, straight I again revolved
 The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ 260

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 promised kingdom can attain,
 Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
 Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
 Yet, neither thus disheartened or dismayed,
 The time prefixed I waited; when behold
 The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard, 270
 Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
 Before Messiah, and his way prepare!
 I, as all others, to his baptism came,
 Which I believed was from above; but he
 Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
 Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heaven)--
 Me him whose harbinger he was; and first
 Refused on me his baptism to confer,
 As much his greater, and was hardly won. 280
 But, as I rose out of the laving stream,
 Heaven opened 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 Heaven, pronounced me his,
 Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
 He was well pleased: 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 derived from Heaven. 290
 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 marked return,
 Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 Accompanied of things past and to come 300
 Lodged in his breast as well might recommend
 Such solitude before choicest society.
 Full forty days he passed--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 harboured in one cave, is not revealed;
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt,
 Till those days ended; hungered then at last
 Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild, 310
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed; his walk
 The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm;
 The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.
 But now an aged man in rural weeds,

Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray eye,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at eve,
He saw approach; who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake:-- 320

"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 returned, and dropt not here
His carcass, pined with hunger and with droughth.
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 honoured so, and called thee Son
Of God. I saw and heard, for we sometimes 330
Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens 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 inured
More than the camel, and to drink go far-- 340
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 350
Our fathers here with manna? In the Mount
Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank;
And forty days Eliah without food
Wandered 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 answered the Arch-Fiend, now undisguised:--
"'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven 360
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep--
Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigour unconniving but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,
Or range in the Air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
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; 370
 And, when to all his Angels he proposed
 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 glibbed 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 beloved of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contemplate and admire, 380
 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
 Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind. Why should I? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence. By them
 I lost not what I lost; rather by them 390
 I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
 Copartner in these regions of the World,
 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 400
 That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
 Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load;
 Small consolation, then, were Man adjoined.
 This wounds me most (what can it less?) that Man,
 Man fallen, shall be restored, I never more."
 To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:--
 "Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies
 From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,
 Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
 Into the Heaven of Heavens. Thou com'st, indeed, 410
 As a poor miserable captive thrall
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,
 Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
 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. 420
 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 moved 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 430
 By thee are given, and what confessed more true
 Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
 But what have been thy answers? what but dark,
 Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who asked have seldom understood,
 And, not well understood, as good not known?
 Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
 Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
 To fly or follow what concerned him most, 440
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
 For God hath justly given 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 450
 To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,
 Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st;
 Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched;
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be enquired at Delphos or elsewhere--
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent his living Oracle 460
 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,
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:--
 "Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urged me hard with doings which not will,
 But misery, hath wrested from me. Where 470
 Easily canst thou find one miserable,
 And not inforced 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 placed above me; thou art Lord;
 From thee I can, and must, submit, endure

Cheek or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
 Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
 Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
 And tunable as sylvan pipe or song; 480
 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 voutsafed his voice 490
 To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
 Inspired: disdain not such access to me."
 To whom our Saviour, with unaltered 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, bowling low
 His gray dissimulation, disappeared,
 Into thin air diffused: for now began
 Night with her sullen wing to double-shade 500
 The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couched;
 And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

THE SECOND BOOK

MEANWHILE the new-baptized, who yet remained
 At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
 Him whom they heard so late expressly called
 Jesus Messiah, Son of God, declared,
 And on that high authority had believed,
 And with him talked, and with him lodged--I mean
 Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
 With others, though in Holy Writ not named--
 Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
 So lately found and so abruptly gone, 10
 Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
 And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
 Sometimes they thought he might be only shewn,
 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 20
 The city of palms, AEnon, and Salem old,
 Machaerus, and each town or city walled
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
 Or in Peraea--but returned in vain.

Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
 Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
 Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),
 Close in a cottage low together got,
 Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed:--
 "Alas, from what high hope to what relapse 30
 Unlooked for are we fallen! Our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long
 Expected of our fathers; we have heard
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
 'Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand;
 The kingdom shall to Israel be restored.'
 Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
 Into perplexity and new amaze.
 For whither is he gone? what accident
 Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire 40
 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 their power unjust
 They have exalted, and behind them cast
 All fear of Thee; arise, and vindicate
 Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
 But let us wait; thus far He hath performed--
 Sent his Anointed, and to us revealed him 50
 By his great Prophet pointed at and shown
 In public, and with him we have conversed.
 Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
 Lay on his providence; 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 60
 Others returned from baptism, not her Son,
 Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
 Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
 Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
 Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:--
 "Oh, what avails me now that honour high,
 To have conceived of God, or that salute,
 'Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!'
 While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
 And fears as eminent above the lot 70
 Of other women, by the birth I bore:
 In such a season born, when scarce a shed
 Could be obtained to shelter him or me
 From the bleak air? A stable was our warmth,
 A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly
 Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
 Were dead, who sought his life, and, missing, filled
 With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.

From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
 Hath been our dwelling many years; his life 80
 Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any king. But now,
 Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
 By John the Baptist, and in public shewn,
 Son owned from Heaven by his Father's voice,
 I looked for some great change. To honour? no;
 But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
 That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign
 Spoken against--that through my very soul 90
 A sword shall pierce. This is my favoured 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 mused--
 Since understand; much more his absence now 100
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inured;
 My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
 And sayings laid up, pretending strange events."
 Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
 Recalling what remarkably had passed
 Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling:
 The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
 Sole, but with holiest meditations fed, 110
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set--
 How to begin, how to accomplish best
 His 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 sate.
 There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
 Solicitous and blank, he thus began:-- 120
 "Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, AEthereal Thrones--
 Daemonian Spirits now, from the element
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called
 Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath
 (So may we hold our place and these mild seats
 Without new trouble!)--such an enemy
 Is risen to invade us, who no less
 Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell.
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote
 Consenting in full frequency was impowered, 130
 Have found him, viewed him, tasted him; but find
 Far other labour to be undergone

Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
 Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
 Too long--then lay'st thy scapes on names adored,
 Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan, 190
 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 scorned
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
 Remember that Pellean conqueror,
 A youth, how all the beauties of the East
 He slightly viewed, and slightly overpassed;
 How he surnamed of Africa dismissed,
 In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid. 200
 For Solomon, he lived at ease, and, full
 Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond
 Higher design than to enjoy his state;
 Thence to the bait of women lay exposed.
 But he whom we attempt is wiser far
 Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
 Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
 Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
 Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
 On whom his leisure will voutsafe an eye 210
 Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,
 As sitting queen adored on Beauty's throne,
 Descend with all her winning charms begirt
 To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
 Wrought that effect on Jove (so fables tell),
 How would one look from his majestic brow,
 Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
 Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
 All her array, her female pride deject,
 Or turn to reverent awe! For Beauty stands 220
 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 abashed.
 Therefore with manlier objects we must try
 His constancy--with such as have more shew
 Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise
 (Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked);
 Or that which only seems to satisfy
 Lawful desires of nature, not beyond. 230
 And now I know he hungers, where no food
 Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness:
 The rest commit to me; I shall let pass
 No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."
 He ceased, and heard their 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; 240

Then to the desert takes with these his flight,
 Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,
 After forty days' fasting, had remained,
 Now hungering first, and to himself thus said:--
 "Where will this end? Four times ten days I have passed
 Wandering 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, 250
 Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
 But now I feel I hunger; which declares
 Nature hath need of what she asks. Yet God
 Can satisfy that need some other way,
 Though hunger still remain. 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
 Me hungering more to do my Father's will."
 It was the hour of night, when thus the Son 260
 Communed in silent walk, then laid him down
 Under the hospitable covert nigh
 Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,
 And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,
 Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.
 Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
 And saw the ravens with their 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 270
 Into the desert, and how there he slept
 Under a juniper--then how, awaked,
 He found his supper on the coals prepared,
 And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
 And eat the second time after repose,
 The strength whereof sufficed 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 harald Lark
 Left his ground-nest, high towering to descry 280
 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 waked.
 Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
 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 chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud. 290
 Thither he bent his way, determined there
 To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
 High-roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
 That opened in the midst a woody scene;

Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught Art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs. He viewed it round;
When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city or court or palace bred, 300
And with fair speech these words to him addressed:--

"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 here relief
By a providing Angel; all the race 310
Of Israel here had famished, had not God
Rained from heaven manna; and that Prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wandering here, was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
Of thee those forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed."

To whom thus Jesus:--"What conclud'st thou hence?
They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none."

"How hast thou hunger then?" Satan replied.
"Tell me, if food were now before thee set, 320
Wouldst thou not eat?" "Thereafter as I like
the giver," answered Jesus. "Why should that
Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle Fiend.
"Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures, by just right, to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
To idols--those young Daniel could refuse;
Nor proffered by an enemy--though who 330
Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
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, 340
With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort
And savour--beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Grisamber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas! how simple, to these cates compared,

Was that crude Apple that diverted Eve!
 And at a stately sideboard, by the wine, 350
 That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
 Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
 Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more,
 Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood,
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
 With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
 And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
 Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
 Of faery damsels met in forest wide
 By knights of Logres, or of Lyones, 360
 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 fanned
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
 Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renewed:--
 "What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure; 370
 Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
 All these are Spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
 Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
 Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord.
 What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and eat."
 To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:--
 "Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
 And who withholds my power that right to use? 380
 Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
 When and where likes me best, I can command?
 I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
 Command a table in this wilderness,
 And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
 Arrayed in glory, on my cup 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, 390
 And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles."
 To whom thus answered Satan, male-content:--
 "That I have also power to give thou seest;
 If of that power I bring thee voluntary
 What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
 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, 400
 Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With that
 Both table and provision vanished quite,

With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard;
 Only the importune Tempter still remained,
 And with these words his temptation pursued:--
 "By hunger, that each other creature tames,
 Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved;
 Thy temperance, invincible besides,
 For no allurements yields to appetite;
 And all thy heart is set on high designs, 410
 High actions. But wherewith to be achieved?
 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, 420
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.
 What raised Antipater the Edomite,
 And his son Herod placed on Juda'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, 430
 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 gained--
 Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
 In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolved;
 But men endued with these have oft attained,
 In lowest poverty, to highest deeds--
 Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad
 Whose offspring on the throne of Juda sate 440
 So many ages, and shall yet regain
 That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
 Among the Heathen (for throughout the world
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor,
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches, though offered from the hand of kings.
 And what in me seems wanting but that I 450
 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 shew, is but a wreath of thorns,
 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights, 460
 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 headstrong multitudes, 470
 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. 480
 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 missed."

THE THIRD BOOK

SO spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
 A while as mute, confounded what to say,
 What to reply, confuted and convinced
 Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift;
 At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,
 With soothing words renewed, 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 10
 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 the 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. 20

These godlike 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 tempered pure
 AEthereal, who all pleasures else despise,
 All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
 And dignities and powers, all but the highest? 30
 Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe. The son
 Of Macedonian 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 quelled
 The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
 Yet years, and to ripe years judgment 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 inflamed 40
 With glory, wept that he had lived 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 unmixed?
 And what the people but a herd confused,
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol 50
 Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the praise?
 They praise and they admire they know not what,
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
 And what delight to be by such extolled,
 To live upon their tongues, and be their talk?
 Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise--
 His lot who dares be singularly good.
 The intelligent among them and the wise
 Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
 This is true glory and renown--when God, 60
 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 may'st well remember,
 He asked 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. 70
 They err who count it glorious to subdue
 By conquest far and wide, to overrun
 Large countries, and in field great battles win,
 Great cities by assault. What do these worthies

But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
 Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
 Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
 Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
 Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
 And all the flourishing works of peace destroy; 80
 Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
 Great benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
 Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
 One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
 Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
 Rowling in brutish vices, and deformed,
 Violent or shameful death their due reward.
 But, if there be in glory aught of good;
 It may be means far different be attained,
 Without ambition, war, or violence-- 90
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
 By patience, temperance. I mention still
 Him whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure;
 Who names not now with honour patient Job?
 Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)
 By what he taught and suffered for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
 Yet, if for fame and glory aught be done, 100
 Aught suffered--if young African for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic rage--
 The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory, then, as vain men seek,
 Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but His
 Who sent me, and thereby 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, 110
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs; nor content in Heaven,
 By all his Angels glorified, requires
 Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption.
 Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
 Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
 Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declared;
 From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts." 120
 To whom our Saviour fervently replied:
 "And reason; since his Word all things produced,
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to shew 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 130
 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 received,
 Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,
 And so of all true good himself despoiled;
 Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take 140
 That which to God alone of right belongs?
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
 That who advances his glory, not their 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; 150
 Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
 But to a Kingdom thou art born--ordained
 To sit upon thy father David's throne,
 By mother's side thy father, though thy right
 Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms.
 Judaea now and all the Promised Land,
 Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius, nor is always ruled
 With temperate sway: oft have they violated 160
 The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
 Antiochus. And think'st thou to regain
 Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?
 So did not Machabeus. He indeed
 Retired unto the Desert, but with arms;
 And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed
 That by strong hand his family obtained,
 Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,
 With Modin and her suburbs once content. 170
 If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
 And duty--zeal and duty are not slow,
 But on Occasion'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 fulfil, best verify,
 The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign--
 The happier reign the sooner it begins.
 Rein then; what canst thou better do the while?" 180
 To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:--
 "All things are best fulfilled in their due time;

And time there is for all things, Truth hath said.
 If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
 That it shall never end, so, when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed--
 He in whose hand all times and seasons rowl.
 What if he hath decreed that I shall first
 Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
 By tribulations, injuries, insults, 190
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
 Without distrust or doubt, that He may know
 What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
 Can suffer best can do, best reign who first
 Well hath obeyed--just trial ere I merit
 My exaltation without change or end.
 But what concerns it thee when I begin
 My everlasting Kingdom? Why art thou
 Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition? 200
 Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
 And my promotion will be thy destruction?"
 To whom the Tempter, inly racked, 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, 210
 The end I would attain, my final good.
 My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime; whatever, for itself condemned,
 And will alike be punished, whether thou
 Reign or reign not--though to that gentle brow
 Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
 From that 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) 220
 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 their King!
 Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detained
 Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
 No wonder; for, though in thee be united
 What of perfection can in Man be found, 230
 Or human nature can receive, consider
 Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
 At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
 And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
 Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
 The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,

Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts--
 Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
 In all things that to greatest actions lead.
 The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever 240
 Timorous, and loth, with novice modesty
 (As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)
 Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous.
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
 Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
 The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state--
 Sufficient introduction to inform
 Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
 And regal mysteries; that thou may'st know
 How best their opposition to withstand." 250
 With that (such power was given him then), he took
 The Son of God up to a mountain high.
 It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
 A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide
 Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flowed,
 The one winding, the other straight, and left between
 Fair champaign, with less rivers interveined,
 Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea.
 Fertil of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine;
 With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills; 260
 Huge cities and high-towered, 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, 270
 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, Nineveh, 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, 280
 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 shews,
 And Hecatompylos her hunderd gates;
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
 The drink of none but kings; of later fame,
 Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands, 290

At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presumed,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renewed:--
 "That thou may'st 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 shew 350
 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 used, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possessed 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 360
 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. 370
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee
 In David's royal seat, his true successor--
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
 Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:
 The sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
 Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
 Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver. 380
 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond,
 Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear."
 To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved:--
 "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 390
 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 400
 Luggage of war there shewn 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 numbering Israel--which cost the lives 410
 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 their other worse than heathenish crimes;
 Nor in the land of their captivity 420
 Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
 The God of their forefathers, but so died
 Impenitent, and left a race behind
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
 From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,
 And God with idols in their worship joined.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,
 Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
 Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
 Headlong would follow, and to their gods perhaps 430
 Of Bethel and of Dan? No; let them serve
 Their enemies who serve idols with God.
 Yet He at length, time to himself best known,
 Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
 May bring them back, repentant and sincere,
 And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
 While to their native land with joy they haste,
 As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
 When to the Promised Land their fathers passed.
 To his due time and providence I leave them." 440
 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.

THE FOURTH BOOK

Perplexed and troubled at his bad success
 The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
 So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
 That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,

So little here, nay lost. But Eve was Eve;
 This far his over-match, who, self-deceived
 And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own.

But--as a man who had been matchless held 10
 In cunning, over-reached 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 poured,
 Beat off, returns as off with humming sound;
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,
 Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew,
 (Vain battery!) and in froth or bubbles end-- 20
 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,
 Washed by the southern sea, and on the north
 To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
 That screened the fruits of the earth and seats of men 30
 From cold Septentrion blasts; thence in the midst
 Divided by a river, off whose banks
 On each side an Imperial City stood,
 With towers and temples proudly elevate
 On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
 Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
 Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
 Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes
 Above the highth of mountains interposed--
 By what strange parallax, or optic skill 40
 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 renowned, and with the spoils enriched
 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, 50
 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 disposed
 My aerie microscope--thou may'st behold,
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carved work, the hand of famed artificers

In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold. 60
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:
 Praetors, proconsuls to their provinces
 Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
 Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their 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, 70
 Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
 Meroe, Nilotic isle, and, more to west,
 The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea;
 From the Asian kings (and Parthian among these),
 From India and the Golden Chersoness,
 And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
 Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed;
 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-- 80
 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 may'st prefer
 Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
 The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
 Shared among petty kings too far removed;
 These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all
 The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
 This Emperor hath no son, and now is old, 90
 Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
 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,
 Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
 Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
 Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne, 100
 Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,
 A victor-people free from servile yoke!
 And with my help thou may'st; 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 attained,
 Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
 On David's throne, be prophesied what will."
 To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:--
 "Nor doth this grandeur and majestic shew 110
 Of luxury, though called 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 myrrhine cups, imbossed with gems
 And studs of pearl--to me should'st tell, who thirst 120
 And hunger still. Then embassies thou shew'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 subdued,
 How gloriously. I shall, thou say'st, expel
 A brutish monster: what if I withal
 Expel a Devil who first made him such?
 Let his tormentor, Conscience, find him out; 130
 For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
 That people, victor once, now vile and base,
 Deservedly made vassal--who, once just,
 Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquered well,
 But govern ill the nations under yoke,
 Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
 By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
 Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
 Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
 Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed; 140
 Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
 And from the daily Scene effeminate.
 What wise and valiant man would seek to free
 These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
 Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
 On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
 Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
 Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
 All monarchies besides throughout the world; 150
 And of my Kingdom there shall be no end.
 Means there shall be to this; but what the means
 Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."
 To whom the Tempter, impudent, replied:--
 "I see all offers made by me how slight
 Thou valuest, 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, 160
 Nor what I part with mean to give for naught,
 All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
 The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give
 (For, given 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 answered with disdain:-- 170
 "I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;
 Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
 The abominable terms, impious condition.
 But I endure the time, till which expired
 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, accursed? now more accursed
 For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve, 180
 And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.
 The kingdoms of the world to thee were given!
 Permitted rather, and by thee usurped;
 Other donation none thou canst produce.
 If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
 God over all supreme? If given to thee,
 By thee how fairly is the Giver now
 Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost
 Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
 As offer them to me, the Son of God-- 190
 To me my own, on such 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 damned."
 To whom the Fiend, with fear abashed, replied:--
 "Be not so sore offended, Son of God--
 Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men--
 If I, to try whether in higher sort
 Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed 200
 What both from Men and Angels I receive,
 Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth
 Nations besides from all the quartered winds--
 God of this World invoked, and World beneath.
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
 To me most fatal, me it most concerns.
 The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
 Rather more honour left and more esteem;
 Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory, 210
 The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
 Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not.
 And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
 Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
 To contemplation and profound dispute;
 As by that early action may be judged,
 When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
 Alone into the Temple, there wast found
 Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant
 On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
 Teaching, not taught. The childhood shews the man, 220
 As morning shews the day. Be famous, then,

Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe. 280

These here revolve, or, as thou likest, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined."

To whom our 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; 290
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.

The first and wisest of them all professed
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 placed felicity,

But virtue joined with riches and long life;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride, 300

By him called 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, 310
And how the World began, and how Man fell,
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?

Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry;
And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none;

Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who, therefore, seeks in these
True wisdom finds her not, or, by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, 320

An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)

Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,

As children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330
 Or, if I would delight my private hours
 With music or with poem, where so soon
 As in our native language can I find
 That solace? All our Law and Story strewed
 With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
 Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
 That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
 That rather Greece from us these arts derived--
 Ill imitated while they loudest sing
 The vices of their deities, and their own, 340
 In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
 Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
 Remove their swelling epithetes, 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 praised aright and godlike men,
 The Holiest of Holies and his Saints
 (Such are from God inspired, not such from thee); 350
 Unless where moral virtue is expressed
 By light of Nature, not in all quite lost.
 Their orators thou then extoll'st as those
 The top of eloquence--statists indeed,
 And lovers of their 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 their majestic, unaffected style,
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. 360
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
 These only, with our Law, best form a king."
 So 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 proposed in life contemplative 370
 Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
 What dost thou in this world? The Wilderness
 For thee is fittest place: I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee. Yet remember
 What I foretell thee; soon thou shalt have cause
 To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
 Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, 380
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
 Now, contrary--if I read aught in heaven,
 Or heaven 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; 390
Nor when: eternal sure--as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixed
Directs me in the starry rubric set."

So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the Wilderness
Brought back, the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring Night,
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day. 400

Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind
After hisaerie jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head;
But, sheltered, slept in vain; for at his head
The Tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep. And either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds 410

From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire,
In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st 420

Unshaken! Nor yet staid the terror there:
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.
Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And griesly spectres, which the Fiend had raised 430
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared 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, 440
 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 resolved,
 Desperate of better course, to vent his rage
 And mad despite to be so oft repelled.
 Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
 Backed on the north and west by a thick wood;
 Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
 And in a careless mood thus to him said:-- 450
 "Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
 After a dismal night. I heard the wrack,
 As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
 Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them,
 As dangerous to the pillared 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 460
 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 offered with my aid
 To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong 470
 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 ordained, no doubt;
 For Angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
 The time and means? Each act is rightliest done
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find
 What I foretold thee--many a hard assay
 Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold; 480
 Whereof this ominous night that closed thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
 May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."
 So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
 And staid not, but in brief him answered thus:--
 "Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
 Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none.
 I never feared they could, though noising loud
 And threatening nigh: what they can do as signs
 Betokening or ill-boding I contemn 490
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;

Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious Spirit! and would'st be thought my God;
And storm'st, refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."

To whom the Fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:--

"Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born! 500

For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth, at length
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.

From that time seldom have I ceased 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 510

Flocked to the Baptist, I among the rest
(Though not to be baptized), by voice from Heaven
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.

The Son of God I also am, or was;
And, if I was, I am; relation stands:
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought 520
In some respect far higher so declared.

Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
And followed thee still on to this waste wild,
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.

Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;
By parole or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can. 530

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 contemned, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming the Son of God by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must now begin." 540

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 reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alablaster, topt with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:-- 550

"There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill. I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is best.
Now shew 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 their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'"

To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written, 560
'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 foiled, still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air expired and fell,
So, after many a foil, the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride 570
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall;

And, as that Theban monster that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured,
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,
So, strook with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God. 580

So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans received Him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine

Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
And from the Fount of Life ambrosial drink, 590
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired
What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,
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 throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,

Wandering the wilderness--whatever place, 600
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with Godlike force endued
 Against the attempter of thy Father's throne
 And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
 Thou didst debase, and down from Heaven cast
 With all his army; now thou hast avenged
 Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
 Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
 And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
 He never more henceforth will dare set foot 610
 In paradise to tempt; his snares are broke.
 For, though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
 A fairer Paradise is founded now
 For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
 A Saviour, art come down to reinstall;
 Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
 Of tempter and temptation without fear.
 But thou, Infernal Serpent! shalt not long
 Rule in the clouds. Like an autumnal star,
 Or lightning, thou shalt fall from Heaven, trod down 620
 Under his feet. For proof, ere this thou feel'st
 Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound)
 By this repulse received, and hold'st in Hell
 No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues
 Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
 To dread the Son of God. He, all unarmed,
 Shall chase thee, with the terror of his voice,
 From thy demoniac holds, possession foul--
 Thee and thy legions; yelling they shall fly,
 And beg to hide them in a herd of swine, 630
 Lest he command them down into the Deep,
 Bound, and to torment sent before their 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 refreshed,
 Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserved,
 Home to his mother's house private returned.

END.

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