

BOOK I

The Argument

This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell, described here, not in the centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos: here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall, Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; they rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols named afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were long before this visible Creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandaemonium the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heav'ns and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit; that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favoured of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,

40 He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
 If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God
 Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
 45 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamant chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
 50 Nine times the space that measures day and night
 To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
 Confounded though immortal: but his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
 55 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
 At once as far as angels' ken he views
 60 The dismal situation waste and wild,
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
 As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
 No light, but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe,
 65 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all; but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
 70 Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
 For those rebellious, here their prison ordain'd
 In utter darkness, and their portion set
 As far removed from God and light of Heav'n
 As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole.
 75 O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
 With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 He soon discerns, and well'ring by his side

One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and named
 80 Beëzebut. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
 And thence in Heav'n called Satan, with bold words
 Breaking the horrid silence thus began.
 If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how changed
 85 From him, who in the happy realms of light
 Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
 Myriads though bright: if he whom mutual league,
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 90 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
 In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
 From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved
 He with his thunder: and till then who knew
 The force of those dire arms? yet not for those,
 95 Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
 Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
 Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind
 And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
 That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
 100 And to the fierce contention brought along
 Innumerable force of Spirits armed
 That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
 His utmost power with adverse power opposed
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heav'n,
 105 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
 All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome?
 110 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who from the terror of this arm so late
 Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,
 115 That were an ignominy and shame beneath
 This downfall; since by Fate the strength of gods
 And this empyreal substance cannot fail,

Since through experience of this great event
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
 We may with more successful hope resolve
 To wage by force or guile eternal war

120

Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n.

125

So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,
 Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:
 And him thus answered soon his bold compeer.

O Prince, O chief of many thronèd Powers
 That led th' embattled Seraphim to war
 Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
 Fearless, endangered Heav'n's perpetual King;
 And put to proof his high supremacy,

130

Whether upheld by strength, or Chance, or Fate;
 Too well I see and rue the dire event,
 That with sad overthrow and foul defeat

135

Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host
 In horrible destruction laid thus low,
 As far as gods and Heav'nly essences

140

Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
 Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
 Here swallowed up in endless misery.

But what if he our Conqueror, (whom I now
 Of force believe Almighty, since no less

145

Than such could have o'erpow'rd such force as ours)
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,

That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,

Or do him mightier service as his thralls

By right of war, whate'er his business be,

Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,

Or do his errands in the gloomy deep;

What can it then avail though yet we feel

Strength undiminished, or eternal being

To undergo eternal punishment?

Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied.

155

Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
 Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
 To do aught good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight,

160

As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his Providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labour must be to pervert that end,

165

And out of good still to find means of evil,
 Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
 But see the angry Victor hath recalled

170

His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
 Back to the gates of Heav'n: the sulphurous hail
 Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
 The fiery surge, that from the precipice

Of Heav'n received us falling, and the thunder

Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,

Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now

To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.

175

Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
 Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.

Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,

The seat of desolation, void of light,

Save what the glimmering of these livid flames

Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend

From off the tossing of these fiery waves,

There rest, if any rest can harbour there,

And reassembling our afflicted powers,

Consult how we may henceforth most offend

Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,

How overcome this dire calamity,

What reinforcement we may gain from hope,

If not what resolution from despair.

Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate

With head uplift above the wave, and eyes

That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides

Prone on the flood, extended long and large

195

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
 Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
 Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
 Leviathan, which God of all his works
 Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream:
 Him haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam
 The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
 Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
 With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind
 Moors by his side under the lee, while night
 Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays:
 So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay
 Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence
 Had ris'n or heaved his head, but that the will
 And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,
 That with reiterated crimes he might
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
 Evil to others, and enraged might see
 How all his malice served but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
 On man by him seduced, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured.
 Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
 His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
 Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and rolled
 In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
 That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
 He lights, if it were land that ever burned
 With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
 And such appeared in hue; as when the force
 Of subterranean wind transports a hill
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
 Of thund'ring Etna, whose combustible
 And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire,

Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
 And leave a singèd bottom all involved
 With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
 Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
 Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood
 As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power.
 Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
 Said then the lost Archangel, this the seat
 That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
 For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
 Who now is sov'reign can dispose and bid
 What shall be right: farthest from him is best
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell happy fields
 Where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors, hail
 Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
 Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
 To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
 Th' associates and copartners of our loss
 Lie thus astonished on th' oblivious pool,
 And call them not to share with us their part
 In this unhappy mansion; or once more
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet
 Regained in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?
 So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
 Thus answered. Leader of those armies bright,
 Which but th' Omnipotent none could have foiled,

If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
 Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
 In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
 Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
 Their surest signal, they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,
 No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious heighth.
 He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
 Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield
 Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
 At evening from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
 Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.
 His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
 Of some great admiral, were but a wand,
 He walked with to support uneasy steps
 Over the burning marl, not like those steps
 On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire;
 Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
 Of that inflamed sea, he stood and called
 His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced
 Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
 In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
 High overarched embow'r; or scattered sedge
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
 Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses
 And broken chariot wheels. So thick bestrown
 Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,

Under amazement of their hideous change.
 He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
 Of Hell resounded. Princes, Potentates,
 Warriors, the flow'r of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
 If such astonishment as this can seize
 Eternal Spirits: or have ye chos'n this place
 After the toil of battle to repose
 Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
 To slumber here, as in the vales of Heav'n?
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
 To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
 Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
 His swift pursuers from Heav'n gates discern
 Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
 Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.
 They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men went to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
 Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
 Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
 Innumerable. As when the potent rod
 Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day
 Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud
 Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
 That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
 Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:
 So numberless were those bad angels seen
 Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell
 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
 Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted spear
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct
 Their course, in even balance down they light
 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain;
 A multitude, like which the populous North

And with their darkness durst affront his light.
 First Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
 Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
 Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
 To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
 Worshipped in Rabba and her wat'ry plain,
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
 His temple right against the temple of God
 On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
 The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence,
 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
 Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons,
 From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
 Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
 The flow'ry dale of Sibma clad with vines,
 And Eleale to th' Asphaltic pool.
 Peor his other name, when he enticed
 Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
 Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
 Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
 Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
 With these came they, who from the bord'ring flood
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
 Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those male,
 These feminine. For Spirits when they please
 Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
 And uncompounded is their essence pure;
 Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,

Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith from every squadron and each band
 The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great Commander; godlike shapes and forms
 Excelling human, Princely dignities,
 And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones;
 Though of their names in Heav'nly records now
 Be no memorial, blotted out and razed
 By their rebellion, from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till wand'ring o'er the earth,
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and th' invisible
 Glory of him that made them to transform
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities:
 Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the heathen world.
 Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
 Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
 At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
 Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
 While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?
 The chief were those who from the pit of Hell
 Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
 Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
 Their altars by his altar, gods adored
 Among the nations round, and durst abide
 Jehovah thund'ring out of Sion, throned
 Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
 Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
 Abominations; and with cursèd things
 His holy rites, and solemn feasts profaned,

430 Can execute their airy purposes,
 And works of love or enmity fulfil.
 For these the race of Israel oft forsook
 Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
 To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
 Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called
 Astarte, queen of Heav'n, with crescent horns;
 To whose bright image nightly by the moon
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs,
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her temple on th' offensive mountain, built
 By that uxorious king whose heart though large,
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
 Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
 Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
 Of alienated Judah. Next came one
 Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
 Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off
 In his own temple, on the grunsel edge,
 Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers:
 Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
 And downward fish: yet had his temple high
 Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon
 465 And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
 Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
 Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks

Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
 He also against the house of God was bold:
 A leper once he lost and gained a king,
 Ahaz his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
 God's altar to disparage and displace
 For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
 His odious off'rings, and adore the gods
 Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
 A crew who under names of old renown,
 Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
 480 Their wand'ring gods disguised in brutish forms
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
 Th' infection when their borrowed gold composed
 The calf in Oreb: and the rebel king
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
 485 Lik'ning his Maker to the grazèd ox,
 Jehovah, who in one night when he passed
 From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
 Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
 Belial came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd
 490 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
 Vice for itself: to him no temple stood
 Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
 In temples and at altars, when the priest
 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
 495 With lust and violence the house of God.
 In courts and palaces he also reigns
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest tow'rs,
 500 And injury and outrage: and when night
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
 In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
 Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
 505 These were the prime in order and in might;
 The rest were long to tell, though far renowned,

Th' Ionian gods, of Javan's issue held
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heav'n and Earth
 Their boasted parents; Titan Heav'n's first-born
 With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
 By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove
 His own and Rhea's son like measure found;
 So Jove usurping reigned: these first in Crete
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
 Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air
 Their highest heav'n; or on the Delphian cliff,
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
 Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
 Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian fields,
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.
 All these and more came flocking; but with looks
 Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
 Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief
 Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
 In loss itself; which on his count'nance cast
 Like doubtful hue: but he his wonted pride
 Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
 Their fainting courage and dispelled their fears.
 Then straight commands that at the warlike sound
 Of trumpets loud and clarions be upreared
 His mighty standard; that proud honour claimed
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
 Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
 Th' imperial ensign, which full high advanced
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind
 With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies: all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
 At which the universal host upsent
 A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
 Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
 All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand banners rise into the air
 With orient colours waving: with them rose

A forest huge of spears: and thronging helms
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
 Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
 To height of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage
 Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved
 With dread of death to fight or foul retreat,
 Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
 With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they
 Breathing united force with fixed thought
 Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
 Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil; and now
 Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front
 Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
 Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,
 Awaiting what command their mighty chief
 Had to impose: he through the armèd files
 Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
 The whole battalion views; their order due,
 Their visages and stature as of gods,
 Their number last he sums. And now his heart
 Distends with pride, and hard'ning in his strength
 Glories: for never since created man,
 Met such embodied force, as named with these
 Could merit more than that small infantry
 Warred on by cranes: though all the Giant brood
 Of Phlegra with th' heroic race were joined
 That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
 Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
 In fable or romance of Uther's son
 Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
 And all who since, baptized or infidel
 Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
 Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebizond,
 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore

When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
 By Fontarabba. Thus far these beyond
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread commander: he above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent
 Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
 Of glory obscured: as when the sun new ris'n
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
 In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
 Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss) condemned
 For ever now to have their lot in pain,
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
 Of Heav'n, and from eternal splendours flung
 For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,
 Their glory withered. As when Heaven's fire
 Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
 With singed top their stately growth though bare
 Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
 To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
 With all his peers: attention held them mute.
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice in spite of scorn,
 Tears such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
 Words interwove with sighs found out their way.
 O myriads of immortal Spirits, O Powers
 Matchless, but with th' Almighty, and that strife
 Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,

As this place testifies, and this dire change
 Hateful to utter: but what power of mind
 Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
 Of knowledge past or present, could have feared,
 How such united force of gods, how such
 As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
 For who can yet believe, though after loss,
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile
 Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to reascend
 Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
 For me be witness all the host of Heav'n,
 If counsels different, or danger shunned
 By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
 Monarch in Heav'n, till then as one secure
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
 Consent or custom, and his regal state
 Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
 Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
 So as not either to provoke, or dread
 New war, provoked; our better part remains
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile
 What force effected not: that he no less
 At length from us may find, who overcomes
 By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
 There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
 Intended to create, and therein plant
 A generation, whom his choice regard
 Should favour equal to the sons of Heav'n:
 Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
 Our first eruption; thither or elsewhere:
 For this infernal pit shall never hold
 Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' abyss
 Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
 Full counsel must mature: peace is despaired,
 For who can think submission? War then, war
 Open or understood must be resolved.
 He spake: and to confirm his words, out flew

Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
 Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
 Far round illumined Hell: highly they raged
 Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
 Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
 Hurling defiance against the vault of Heav'n.
 There stood a hill not far whose grisly top
 Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
 Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
 That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
 The work of sulphur. Thither winged with speed
 A numerous brigade hastened. As when bands
 Of pioneers with spade and pickaxe armed
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on,
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From Heav'n, for ev'n in Heav'n his looks and thoughts
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodden gold,
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
 In vision beatific: by him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
 Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
 For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
 Opened into the hill a spacious wound
 And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
 That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
 Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
 And strength and art are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable scarce perform.
 Nigh on the plain in many cells prepared,
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire
 Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude

With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
 Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross:
 A third as soon had formed within the ground
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook,
 As in an organ from one blast of wind
 To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
 Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
 Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
 Built like a temple, where pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or frieze with bossy sculptures grav'n;
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors
 Op'ning their brazen folds discover wide
 Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the archèd roof
 Pendent by subtle magic many a row
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude
 Admiring entered, and the work some praise
 And some the architect: his hand was known
 In Heav'n by many a towered structure high,
 Where sceptred angels held their residence,
 And sat as princes, whom the súpreme King
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
 Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unadored
 In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
 Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
 From Heav'n, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day: and with the setting sun
 Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
 On Lemnos th' Aégean isle: thus they relate,
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
 To have built in Heav'n high tow'rs; nor did he 'scape
 By all his engines, but was headlong sent
 With his industrious crew to build in Hell.
 Meanwhile the wingèd heralds by command
 Of sov'reign power, with awful ceremony
 And trumpets' sound throughout the host proclaim
 A solemn council forthwith to be held
 At Pandaemonium, the high capital
 Of Satan and his peers: their summons called
 From every band and squared regiment
 By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
 Attended: all access was thronged, the gates
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
 (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
 Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
 Defied the best of paynim chivalry
 To mortal combat or career with lance)
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
 In springtime, when the sun with Taurus rides,
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
 Their state affairs. So thick the airy crowd
 Swarmed and were straitened; till the signal giv'n,
 Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass Earth's Giant sons
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless, like that Pygméan race

Beyond the Indian mount, or faery elves,
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
 Or fountain some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
 Sits arbutress, and nearer to the earth
 Wheels her pale course: they on their mirth and dance
 Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
 Though without number still amidst the hall
 Of that infernal Court. But far within
 And in their own dimensions like themselves
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
 In close recess and secret conclave sat
 A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
 Frequent and full. After short silence then
 And summons read, the great consult began.

From The History of Britain (1670)

The first four books of M.'s *History* were written in 1649. Passages (xi) and (xii) are translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae* I xi. In (xi) Brutus prays to Diana; in (xii) Diana replies. Brutus is the mythical Trojan founder of Britain.

Passage (xiii) is taken from the medieval chronicle, *Flores Historiarum*. The murder of the child-king Kenelm is related in the account of AD 821. A dove miraculously appeared above the altar of St Peter's in Rome, and dropped a note revealing the location of Kenelm's body. M.'s lines translate a Latin version of the note. M. himself dismisses the story with contempt (YP 5. 252).

PARADISE LOST

M.'s great epic is the culmination of two ambitions. Since his youth M. had wanted to write an epic. He refers to the hope in *Elegia VI, Mansus, Epitaphium Damonis* and elsewhere – but his plan had been to write an Arthuriad. He had also planned to write a tragedy about the Fall of Man. Edward Phillips reports that part of Satan's address to the sun (iv 32-41) was shown to him 'several Years before the Poem was begun', when it was intended to be 'the very beginning' of a tragedy (Darbishire 72). Aubrey reports that M. began writing *PL* in earnest in about 1658 and finished in about 1663 (Darbishire 13). The invocation to book vii was clearly written after the Restoration.

When first published in 1667, *PL* was a poem of ten books. Critics often see this ten-book scheme as a vestige of M.'s original dramatic design, a double five-act structure. An alternative model is Tasso's twenty-book epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*, to which M. often alludes in *PL*. For the second edition of 1674, M. split books vii and x into two, thus creating a twelve-book epic. His model here is Virgil's twelve-book *Aeneid*. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* each have twenty-four books, so the second edition of *PL* has the same relation to them as the first edition had had to *Jerusalem Delivered*.

The Verse, line 4. *invention of a barbarous age* Latin poets first began to use rhyme in Christian hymns of the fifth and sixth centuries.
line 14. *apt numbers appropriate rhythm*.
quantity number.

line 21. *the first in English* An exaggeration. The Earl of Surrey, who

From The Reason of Church Government (1641)

The line translates a favourite saying of the Emperor Tiberius. Several ancient sources report the saying, and Jonson quotes it in *Sejanus* II 330. The ultimate source may be Euripides' lost play, *Bellerophon*. M. in his prose tract attributes Tiberius's cruel selfishness to the bishops, who would drag down the monarchy with them 'in a generall ruine' (YP 1. 770).

From An Apology for Smectymnuus (1642)

M. cites Horace and Sophocles to justify his satirical and harsh treatment of the bishops (YP 1. 904-5).

(v) 3. *junkets* sweetmeats. *knaeks* choice dishes.

From the title-page of Areopagitica (1644)

M.'s version of Euripides is not quite so embracing of freedom as is the original Greek. Where Euripides extends free speech to anyone who 'wishes' to advise the city, M. speaks of those who 'can, and will' offer advice. M.'s 'can' is potentially restrictive for it implies that there are some who are unable (and so, perhaps, unfit) to 'advise the public', even if they want to do so.

From Tetrachordon (1645)

M. cites Horace in his divorce pamphlet because he wants to expose the hypocrisy of those who 'care only to live by the outward constraint of law', when they ought to follow 'the inward and uncompe'll'd actions of vertue' (YP 2. 639).

From The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649)

M.'s pamphlet appeared on 13 February 1649, a fortnight after King Charles's execution, which it defended. Seneca's lines are spoken by Hercules after he has killed the tyrant Lycus.

introduced blank verse into England, had used it in his translation of selections of Virgil's *Aeneid* (an *heroic poem*).

BOOK I

The Argument, line 9, *centre* (centre of) the earth.
line 10, *yet not made* Our universe was created after Satan fell from Heaven (vii 131-5), but before he escaped from Hell (ii 830-32, 1004-6).

line 11, *utter utter* and *outer*.

line 23, *angels . . . Fathers* Cp. *CD* i 7: 'many of the Greek Fathers, and some of the Latin, were of the opinion that angels . . . existed long before this world' (trans. Carey, *YP* 6, 313). Fathers who shared M.'s view included Jerome, Origen, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, and Chrysostom.

1. *man's mankind's* and Adam's (*Adam* in Hebrew means 'man').
fruit including 'consequences'.

4. *one greater man* Christ, the Second Adam (Romans 5. 19). Homer (*Od.* i 1) and Virgil (*Aen.* i 1) had sung of one 'man'; M. will sing of two.

6-16. The identity of M.'s *Muse* remains a mystery, despite attempts to see her as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. M.'s widow identified her as 'God's grace, and the Holy Spirit' (Newton lv). See below, 17*n*. See also iii 19*n*, vii 1-12, and ix 21-4.

8. *That shepherd* Moses, the supposed author of Genesis. He was tending sheep on Mount Horeb (*Oreb*), when God called him (*Exod.* 3. 1). He later received the Law on Horeb, or Sinai, one of Horeb's spurs (*Exod.* 19. 20).
10. *out of Chaos* M. believed that God created the universe out of unformed matter, not out of nothing. See *CD* i 7.

Sion hill Mount Zion, the site of Solomon's Temple.

11. *Siloa's brook* a spring near the Temple. Jesus cured a blind man with its waters (John 9. 7).

12. *oracle* the sanctuary housing the ark of the Covenant in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6. 19).

15. *Aonian mount* Helicon, sacred to the Muses. Porter (45-7) sees a specific allusion to Hesiod, whom the Muses visited while he tended his flocks on Helicon. Hesiod sang how 'from the beginning', 'heaven and earth and all things rose out of Chaos' (*Theog.* 115-16).

16. *Things . . . rhyme* translating Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* i 2: *Cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima*. Cp. also Horace, *Odes* III i 2-3: 'songs never heard before'.

17. *Spirit* the Holy Spirit, despite M.'s insistence in *CD* i 6 that the Holy Spirit is never invoked in the Bible (*YP* 6, 295). *Dove-like* (21) points to the doves of Mark 1. 10, Luke 3. 22 and John 1. 32, which even *CD*

identifies with 'the actual person of the Holy Spirit, or its symbol' (trans. Carey, *YP* 6, 285). If *chiefly* refers to *thou*, Spirit and Muse are distinct; if to *Instruct* (19), they are identical.

19. *Instruct* Latin *instruere*, 'to build', linking *temples* and *heart*.

21-2. *brooding* Cp. Gen. 1. 2. M. follows Junius-Tremellius (*incubabat*) rather than A.V. ('moved') and so preserves the image of a brooding dove.

24. *argument* subject-matter (*OED* 6).

25. *assert* defend, take the part of (*OED* 2).

26. *justify* both 'justify to men' and 'ways of God to men'.

28. *what cause* echoing Virgil, *Aen.* i 8: *Musa mihi causas memor* ('tell me the cause, O Muse').

29. *grand* pre-eminent (*OED* 3a) and all-inclusive (*OED* 6), as in 'grand total'.

30. *fall off* of friends: to become estranged. Of subjects: to revolt, withdraw from allegiance (*OED* 'fall' 92e), with overtones of 'the Fall'.

33. *Who first seduced them* Cp. Homer's question as to who sowed discord among the Greeks (*Il.* i 8).

34. *infernal Serpent* Cp. Rev. 12. 9: 'that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan'.

35-6. *deceived / The mother of mankind* There may be a pun on 'dis-Eved'. See Gen. 3. 20: 'Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living': 'Eve' meant 'life', and M. relates the name to prelapsarian immortality (xi 161-171). Cp. *PR* i 51-2.

36. *what time* when (*OED* 10a), not a Latinism.

38-49. *aspiring . . . arms* echoing several biblical accounts of Satan's fall. Cp. Isa. 14. 12-15, Luke 10. 18, II Pet. 2. 4, Jude 6, Rev. 20. 1-2.

43. *impious war* Latin *bellum impium*, 'civil war'.

46. *ruin* falling from a height (*OED* 1b), Latin *ruina*.

combustion confusion, tumult (*OED* 5b) and conflagration.

48. *adamantine chains* Satan was bound with 'chains of darkness' (Jude 6, II Pet. 2. 4) or 'a great chain' (Rev. 20. 1-2). Cp. also Phineas Fletcher, *The Purple Island* (1633) xii 64: 'the Dragon . . . bound in adamantine chain'. Adamant was a mythical substance of impenetrable hardness.

50. *space* extent of time (*OED* 3) and linear distance (*OED* 5a). The devils *Lay for Nine* days after their fall, which also lasted nine days (vi 871). Hesiod's Titans fell for nine days and nights from heaven to earth and nine more from earth to Tartarus (*Theog.* 720-25).

52. *fiery gulf* Satan is chained on a fiery lake. See lines 184 and 210, and cp. Rev. 19. 20: 'a lake of fire burning with brimstone'.

56. *round he throws his baleful eyes* Cp. Ariosto's description of the Saracen Rodomonte: *Rivolge gli occhi orribili* (*Orl. Fur.* xviii 18).

57. *witnessed* bore witness to (his own affliction) and beheld (his followers').

59. *angels' ken angels'* range of sight. The early texts do not use apostrophes, so *ken* might be a verb.
66. *hope never comes* recalling the inscription over Dante's Hell: *Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch' intrate* (*Inf.* iii. 9); 'Abandon every hope, you who enter'. Cp. also Euripides, *Troades* 681.
68. *Still* always.
71. *those*] *Ed I, Ed II*; these *MS*.
72. *utter* utter and outer (cp. Matthew 25. 30).
74. *the centre* the earth (*OED* 2b).
- pole* celestial pole. M. here measures the distance from Heaven to Hell as thrice the radius of the universe. At ii 1051-3 our whole universe is a speck in Chaos. Homer and Hesiod place Hades as far below earth as heaven is above it (*Il.* viii 16, *Theog.* 722-25). Virgil places Tartarus 'twice' as far below (*Aen.* vi 577).
81. *Beëlzebub* Hebrew 'Lord of the Flies', one of many forms of the Philistine sun-god Baal ('prince of the devils' in Matt. 12. 24). Notice that Beëlzebub will not get that name until *long after* (80). See below, i 361-57.
82. *Satan* Hebrew 'Enemy'. This is Satan's name in *Heav'n*, not Hell. The devils see God, not Satan, as the 'great Enemy' (ii 137). Satan lost his 'former name' when he rebelled (v 658). He acknowledges his new name only at x 386.
84. *how fall'n! how changed*. Cp. Isa. 14. 12 ('How art thou fallen . . . O Lucifer') and Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 274-5 (*quantum mutatus ab illo / Hectore*). Satan is unable to put any name to his companion. Cp. Dryden's revision in *The State of Innocence* (1677): 'Ho, *Asmaday*, awake, / If thou art he: But, ah! how chang'd from him!' (20).
93. *He with his thunder*. The devils repeatedly avoid naming 'God'. See e.g. i 122, 161-2, ii 59, etc. Contrast iii 695, where Uriel at once names God.
102. *me preferring* liking me better and putting me forward.
- 105-6. *What . . . lost*. Cp. Satan's boast in Fairfax's translation (1600) of Tasso, *Gerus. Lib.* iv 15: 'We lost the field, yet lost we not our heart'.
107. *study of effort* to achieve.
109. *And . . . overcome* 'What else does "not being overcome" mean?'
114. *Doubted* feared for.
116. *Fate* imagined by Satan to be an independent force, but cp. CD i 2: 'fate or *fatum* is only what is *fatum*, spoken, by some almighty power' (trans. Carey, YP 6. 131).
- gods* angels. Even God calls angels 'gods' (iii 341).
117. *empyrean* of the highest Heaven.
123. *triumphs* prevails, exults, rides in pomp (as in a Roman triumph).

126. *racked*] *Ed I, Ed II*; wracked *MS*. Satan is wrecked, ruined (*OED* 'wrack' 2, 3), but *In pain* gives priority to *racked*.
128. *Powers*] *MS*; Powers, *Ed I, Ed II*. Richardson (who was unaware of *MS*) noted in 1734: 'the Comma after Powers, as in all Editions we have Nored, perplexes the Sense. 'twas not *Satan*, but Those Powers that led the *Seraphim* to War under His Conduct. One of these Powers is This Bold Companion who Here under a Compliment he makes to *Satan* Proudly Insinuates his Own Merit.' *Powers* and *Seraphim* (129) are two of nine angelic orders, the others being Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, Angels.
134. *event* outcome.
139. *perish* including 'incur spiritual death' (*OED* 1b).
141. *glory* effulgence, bliss of heaven, halo (*OED* 6, 7a, 9).
extinct extinguished.
144. *Of force* perforce and due to the force.
146. *entire* unimpaired, undiminished (*OED* 4c).
147. *support* endure, undergo, esp. with fortitude or without giving way (*OED* 1b).
148. *suffice* satisfy.
152. *deep* Chaos (the usual meaning in *PL*).
- 153-5. *What . . . punishment?* 'What can it avail us that our strength is undiminished, and that our being is eternal, if our punishment is also eternal?'
156. **Arch-Friend* coined on the analogy of 'Archangel'.
158. *Doing or suffering* acting or enduring. Satan anticipates the famous words of Mutius Scaevola as he thrust his hand into a flaming brazier as a demonstration of Roman courage. See ii 1997 and cp. *PR* iii 194-5.
- 159-68. *To do aught good . . . aim* contrast God's power to bring good out of evil (xii 470-8).
166. *succeed* ensue (with *evil* as subject).
167. *if I fail not* unless I am mistaken. *Fail* means 'err' (*OED* 11), but the sequence *succeed . . . fail* also hints at Satan's ultimate failure.
disturb forcibly divert.
168. *destined* intended (*OED* 2) - but the sense of 'destiny' tells against Satan's boast.
173. *The fiery*] *Ed I, Ed II*; This fiery *MS*.
178. *slip* let slip.
180. *dreary* *dismal, gloomy (*OED* 4), dire, horrid, (*OED* 2).
182. *ivoid* of a bluish leaden colour (*OED* 1). Virgil (*Aen.* vi 320) and Statius (*Thebaid* i 54) describe the rivers of Hades as *ivoida*.
- 183-91. The rhymes signal a change of scene (as in a blank verse drama) and create an impression of order emerging from destruction.
185. *There rest, if any rest*. Cp. Shakespeare, *Richard II* V i 5-6: 'Here, let

- us rest, if this rebellious earth / Hath any resting for her true king's queen'.
 186. *afflicted powers* routed armies.
 187. *offend* strike so as to hurt (*OED* 6).
 196. *rood* either a linear measure (6–8 yards) or a measure of land (about a quarter of an acre).
 198–9. *Titanian* . . . *Typhon* Titans and Giants were *Earth-born* monsters who rebelled against *Jove* and were confined in Tartarus, the classical hell. In Homer and Hesiod, the hundred-armed *Briareos* is Zeus's ally, but Virgil makes him a Titan (*Aen.* vi 287, x 565). *Typhon* (Typhoeus) was a Giant with a hundred serpent-heads. At first the gods fled his attack (see i 481*n*), but Jove crushed him under Mount Etna (Ovid, *Met.* v 346–53). M. often compares these rebellions to Satan's (see i 50, 480–81, 510, 576, 778, ii 539, vii 605).
 201. *Leviathan* a whale, but the name was also associated with Satan. Cp. *Isa.* 27. 1: 'the Lord . . . shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan the crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea'. The story of the illusory island was a commonplace often applied to Satan. See J. H. Pitman, 'Milton and the Physiologus', *MLN* 40 (1925) 439. Contrast the undecceptive Leviathan at vii 412–16. Boiardo and Ariosto tell how the paladin Astolfo mistook a whale for an island and was carried off (*Orl. Inni.* II xiv 3, *Orl. Fur.* VI 37–43).
 202. *Ocean stream* the river Ocean, described by Homer as encircling the world. Homer locates such stream and wonderful creatures as the Pygmies and the Cimmerians 'by the stream of Ocean'. See e.g. *Il.* i 423, *Od.* iv 567.
 204. *night-foundered* engulfed in night. (The vessel is also about to founder.)
 207. *lee* shelter (from wind) given by neighbouring object.
 208. *Inveiss* wraps, covers.
 224. *horrid* dreadful and bristling (with *spires*).
 226. *incumbent* pressing with his weight upon (*OED* 1a).
 227. *unusual weight* Cp. Spenser's dragon, whose flight 'did forcibly divide / The yielding aire, which nigh too feeble found / Her flitting partes, and element unsound, / To beare so great a weight' (*FQ* I xi 18).
 228. *lights* alights, with overtones of 'lessens the weight' (*OED* v' 1).
 229–30. *MS* pointing. *Ed I* and *Ed II* (semicolon after *fire*, comma after *hue*) focus the simile exclusively on *hue*. *MS* likens the flying Satan to a flying *hill*.
 230–37. *force* . . . *smoke* Cp. the descriptions of *Etna* in Virgil, (*Aen.* iii 570–82), Ovid (*Met.* v. 346–58), and Tasso (*Gerus. Lib.* iv 8). The Giant Enceladus was buried under Etna after the Giants' revolt. See above, 198–9*n*. M. combines imagery of birth (*conceiving*) and excretion (*mind*, *entrails*, *bottom*, *stench*).
 231. *subterranean wind* the cause of earthquakes in classical and Renaissance seismology. Cp. Ovid, *Met.* xv 296–305.

232. *Pelorus* Cape Faro, near Mount Etna in Sicily.
 235. *Sublimed* converted directly from solid to vapour by volcanic heat.
 236. *involved* enveloped, wreathed.
 239. *Syngian* black as the river Styx.
 244. *change for* take in exchange for.
 254–6. *The mind* . . . *the same* Amalric of Bena's heresy that Heaven and Hell are states of mind had been condemned in 1204, but continued to attract seventeenth-century sects. Satan's boast takes an ironic twist at iv 75.
 257. *all but less than* eliding the idioms 'all but equal to' and 'only less than'.
 263. *Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n* The thought was proverbial (as was its opposite). See e.g. *Ps.* 84. 10, Homer, *Od.* xi 488, Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 965. M.'s version is close to Phineas Fletcher, *The Apollyonists* (1627) i 20: 'To be in heaven the second he disdaines: / So now the first in hell, and flames he raignes'. Cp. *The Purple Island* (1633) vii 10.
 265. *associates* companions in arms (*OED* B 2). *Copartners*, *loss* and *share* also evoke the image of a failed business venture.
 266. *astomished* including 'thunderstruck' (Latin *extonare*).
oblivious causing oblivion.
 276. *edge* critical moment (*OED* 6b), line of battle (*OED* 5a). Cp. Latin *acies* and 'rough edge of battle' (vi 108).
 282. *pernicious* destructive, ruinous.
 284–7. *shield* . . . *moon* Cp. Achilles' shield, from which 'the light glimmered far, as from the moon' (Homer, *Il.* xix 574).
 285. *Ethereal temper* tempered in Heaven and tempered in celestial fire (Greek *aithra*, 'to burn').
 288. *Tuscan artist* Galileo. He studied the moon with a telescope (*optic glass*). M. had visited him in Florence in 1638 or 1639. He is the only one of M.'s contemporaries to be named in *PL*. Cp. iii 588–90, v 261–3. *Fesole* (Fiesole) overlooks *Valdarno* (the valley of the Arno).
 292–4. *spear* . . . *wand* Cp. Homer's simile likening Polyphemus's club to the mast of a 'black ship of twenty oars' (*Od.* ix 322). M. implies relative magnitudes ('spear is to pine as pine is to wand'), but also evokes an image of Satan hobbling on a light walking-stick or twig (*OED* 'wand' 1c, 2a). See *Fish* (159).
 294. *ammiral* flagship. M.'s spelling 'gives the true etymology, from *emir* . . . not from *admirer*' (Ricks). Cp. Satan as 'Sultan' (i 348).
 296. *marl* soil.
 299. *Nathless* nevertheless.
 302. *autumnal leaves* Similes comparing the passing generations (or number-less dead) to falling leaves are frequent in epic. Cp. Homer, *Il.* vi 146, Virgil, *Aen.* vi 309–10, Dante, *Inf.* iii 112–15, Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xvi 75.

- The image is especially apt to fallen angels. Cp. Isa. 34. 4: 'all the host of heaven . . . shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine'.
303. *Vallombrosa* a wooded valley in Tuscany (Etruria), which M. may have visited. The name ('valley of shadows') evokes 'valley of the shadow of death' (Ps. 23).
304. **averarched*. M. repeats the neologism at ix 1107.
- sedge* seaweed. Cp. Isa. 57. 20: 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt'. Homer likens the routed Achaeans to seaweed cast up by a storm (*Il.* ix 5-9).
305. *Orion*. The constellation (representing an armed giant) was associated with stormy weather (see Amos 5. 8, Virgil, *Aen.* i 535 and vii 719, Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* i 1202).
306. *vexed* disturbed.
307. *Busiris* a mythical Pharaoh who sacrificed strangers. He was commonly identified with the Pharaoh of Exod. i. M. identifies him with the Pharaoh of Exod. 14 who pursued the Israelites (*sojourners of Goshen*) through the Red Sea.
312. *Abject* cast down (literal and metaphorical).
314. *deep* *Ed I, Ed II*; *deeps MS*.
315. *Princes, Potentates* suggesting 'Principalities' and 'Powers' (see above, 128n).
320. *virtue* strength. M. pointedly withholds the title of the angelic order of 'Virtues'. See ii 310-13, v 772-4, x 460-62 for further examples of such taunting with titles.
324. **Seraph* M. coined the singular on the analogy of *Cherub* and *Cherubim* (*OED*).
- 328-9. *thunderbolts* / *Transfix us* Cp. Virgil, *Aen.* i 44, where Oilean Ajax is pierced through the chest (*transfixo pectore*) by a thunderbolt which impales him to a rock.
339. *Amram's son* Moses, who summoned a plague of locusts with his *rod* (*Exod.* 10. 12-15).
- 340-41. *pitchy cloud* / *Of locusts* echoing Sylvester, *DWW* (1592-1608), *The Lave* (1606): 'a sable Clowde / Of horned Locusts' (533-4).
341. *warping* rising, swarming, whirling through the air (*OED*).
345. *cope* vault or canopy like that of the sky (*OED* 7d).
348. *Sultan* the title of the Ottoman emperors. The word carried a smear of despotism in M.'s time.
- 351-5. *the populous North* . . . *sands* refers to the Goths, Huns, and Vandals who inundated the Roman Empire and plunged Europe into the Dark Ages. For Satan's association with the North, see v 689n.
353. *Rhene, Danaw* Rhine, Danube.
- 361-5. *their names* . . . *new names* Contrast Rev. 3. 12, where it is the righteous who get a 'new name'. Here the *new names* are those of future

- devils. The *blotted* angelic names never appear in *PL*. Cp. i 80-81, v 658, vi 373-85. For God's blotting of names, see Exod. 32. 33 and Rev. 3. 5: 'He that overcometh . . . I will not blot out his name out of the book of life'. M. has *Books* (not 'Book') to suggest the great number of angels. 'Blot out' implies 'annihilate, destroy' (*OED* 5), as in xi 891: 'to blot out mankind'.
366. *sufferance* divine permission (*OED* 6c).
372. *gay* showy, specious, immoral (*OED* 3, 5, 2).
- religions rites* (*OED* 3a).
373. *devils to adore for deities* Cp. Deut. 32. 17: 'They sacrificed unto devils, not to God'. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, and Augustine had argued that pagan gods were fallen angels, and the belief continued uninterrupted until the Renaissance. Cp. *Nativity* 173ff. and see C. A. Patrides, 'The Cessation of the Oracles: The History of a Legend' (*MLR* 60, 1965, 500-507).
376. *who first, who last* Cp. Homer, *Il.* v 703 ('who then was the first and who the last that they slaughtered?') and Virgil, *Aen.* xi 664 ('whom first, whom last, fierce maid, did you strike down with your dart?'). Catalogues of warriors are frequent in epic. Cp. Homer, *Il.* ii 484-877, Virgil, *Aen.* vii 641-817, Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xiv.
380. *promiscuous* indiscriminate.
386. *Thund'ring out of Zion* Joel 3. 16 and Amos 1. 2 prophesy how God 'shall roar out of Zion'.
387. *Between the Cherubim* a common phrase in the O.T. (see e.g. M.'s translation of Psalm 80. 1). There were images of Cherubim on the ark of the Covenant and more Cherubim flanked the ark in the Holy of Holies (*Exod.* 25. 18-21, I Kings 6. 23, 8. 6-7).
391. *affront* insult and face in defiance.
392. *Moloch* Hebrew 'king'. A god of the Ammonites, whose capital was *Rabba*, 'city of waters' (II Samuel 12. 27). Hollow brass idols depicted Moloch enthroned, with arms outstretched, wearing a crown on his calf's head. Children were sacrificed by being placed in his red-hot arms.
395. *passed through fire* Cp. II Kings 23. 10: 'that no man might make his son or daughter to pass through the fire to Molech'. A marginal comment in the Geneva Bible explains that Moloch's worshippers 'smote on the tabret [timbre] while their children were burning, that their crye shulde not be heard'. See also Lev. 18. 21.
403. *opprobrious hill* the Mount of Olives. See below, 416n.
- grove* Groves are associated with idolatry throughout the O.T. See Deut. 16. 21: 'Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God'. Cp. I Kings 14. 23; I Kings 16. 33, I Kings 18. 19, II Kings 21. 7, II Kings 23. 4, and see *PR* ii 289 and note.
404. *Hinnom* a valley adjacent to Jerusalem. Patrick Hume, the earliest

editor of *PL* (1695), derived the name from a Hebrew verb meaning 'cry out through excessive torment'.

Tophet from Hebrew *toph*, 'a timbrel'. See lines 394-5.

405. *Gehenna* Greek, 'valley of Hinnom', translated in the A.V. (e.g. at Matt. 5. 29) as 'Hell'.

Type symbol (*OED* 1).

406. *Chemos* Moabite fertility-god, identified by Jerome with the phallic god Priapus. See Num. 25 for Israel's *wanton rites* (414) and the plague (*voe*) that followed.

407-11. *Aroer*, *Hesebon*, *Sibma* and *Eleale* were northern Moabite towns. *Nebo* was in the *Abarim* mountains in the south.

409. *Seon* the Amorite King Sihon, conqueror of Moab, conquered in his turn by Moses (Num. 21. 21-30).

411. *Asphaltic pool* the Dead Sea, which has deposits of bitumen.

416. *hill of scandal* the Mount of Olives, where Solomon built temples for *Chemos* and *Moloch* (I Kings 11. 7).

417. *lust hard by hate* The context invites a priapic pun.

418. *Josiah* a reforming King of Judah. He destroyed the groves and idols of *Moloch* and *Chemos* (II Kings 23. 10-14).

422. *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* plural forms of 'Baal' and 'Ashtoreth'. 'Baal' means 'lord' and is prefixed to proper names (e.g. Baal-Peor, Baal-Zebub).

Cp. Judges 10. 6: 'the children of Israel . . . served Baalim and Ashtaroth'.

425. *uncompounded* undifferentiated into members. Cp. vi 350-53.

429. *Dilated* enlarged. Cp. iv 986.

432. *these* *MS*; those *Ed I*, *Ed II*. *MS* is supported by line 437.

438-9. *Astoreth* . . . *Astarte* the Phoenician (*Sidonian*) original of *Aphrodite*, called *queen of Heav'n* at Jer. 44. 19. She had a bull's head above her own head, from which sprang lunar crescent horns (cp. *Nativity* 200).

443. *offensive mountain* the Mount of Olives, where the *uxorious king* Solomon built a temple for *Astoreth* to please his wives (II Kings 23. 13, I Kings 11. 4-5).

444. *heart* . . . *large* intellect . . . capacious. Cp. I Kings 4. 29: 'God gave Solomon . . . largeness of heart'. The Hebrew word translated as 'heart' in A.V. means 'intellect' (*OED* 'large' 3c).

446-52. *Thammuz* . . . *wounded*. *Thammuz* follows *Astarte* because they were lovers (identified with *Venus* and *Adonis*). Here *Adonis* is a river in Lebanon, discoloured every July with reddish mud (supposedly *Thammuz's* blood). This *annual wound* was the occasion of a religious festival. See *Nativity* 204.

452-7. *love-tale* . . . *Judah* Cp. Ezek. 8. 14: 'Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for *Thammuz*'.

457-61. *Next* . . . *fell flat*. The Philistines placed the ark of the Covenant

(which they had captured) in Dagon's temple. When they entered the temple the next morning, 'behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord: and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him' (I Sam. 5. 4).

460. *grunsel* groundsel, threshold.

462-3. *upward* . . . *fish* John Selden had derived Dagon's name from Hebrew *dag*, 'fish' (*De Dis Syris* ii 3).

464-6. The five main Philistine cities were *Azotus* (or *Asdod*), *Gath*, *Ascalon*, *Accaron* (or *Ecron*), and *Gaza* (or *Azza*). *M.* employs the variant forms in *SA*.

467. *Rimmon* the chief Syrian god.

471. *A leper once he lost* Elisha told the Syrian general Naaman he would be cured of leprosy if he washed in the Jordan. At first Naaman scoffed ('Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?'), but he obeyed, was healed, and renounced *Rimmon* for God (II Kings 5. 8-19).

gained a king King Ahaz of Judah defeated Syria, then converted to *Rimmon's* cult (II Kings 16. 7-17).

472. *sottish* foolish.

478. *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Orus* Egyptian gods represented with the heads of beasts (respectively a bull, a cow, and a falcon).

479. *abused* deceived (*OED* 4a).

481. *disguised in brutish forms* Ovid tells how the Olympian gods fled from Typhon into Egypt, hiding in bestial forms that the Egyptians later worshipped (*Met.* v 319-31). See above, 198-9n. Cp. also Virgil, *Aen.* viii 698, where Egypt's 'monstrous gods' fight for Antony at Actium.

484. *call in Oreb* Aaron made the 'calf in Horeb' (Ps. 106. 19) while Moses was receiving the Law (Exod. 32). The gold had been *borrowed* from Egypt (Exod. 12. 35), and the calf was traditionally identified with the Egyptian Apis.

rebel king Jeroboam, who led ten tribes of Israel in revolt against Solomon's son Rehoboam (I Kings 12. 12-23). The oxymoron implies that kingship is a kind of rebellion. Cp. vi 199, xii 36. In *Defensio* (1651) *M.* denies that Jeroboam was a rebel (*YP* 4. 406).

485. *Doubled* repeated (*OED* 3) and made twice as many (*OED* 1). Jeroboam set up two calves, 'the one in Bethel, and the other . . . in Dan' (I Kings 12. 29).

486. *Lik'ning* . . . *ox* Cp. Ps. 106. 20: 'they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass'.

487-9. *Fehovah* . . . *gods* God smote the Egyptian firstborn, 'both man and beast', at the passover (Exod. 12. 12).

490. *Belial* Hebrew 'worthlessness'. The word is not a name, and 'Belial'

was never worshipped as a god. But the biblical phrase 'sons of Belial', common in the O.T., encouraged personification, as in II Cor. 6. 15. M.'s Belial is a coward. He comes *last*, in contrast to soldier Moloch, who came 'First' (392).

495. *Eli's sons* Cp. I. Sam. 2. 12: 'the sons of Eli were sons of Belial'. Although priests, they 'lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle' (I Sam. 2. 22).

498. *luxurious* given to luxury, and lascivious, unchaste (OED 1).

499. *riot wanton revel* (OED 2), debauchery (OED 1).

500. *injury* including 'offensive speech, reviling' (OED 2).

outrage including 'violent clamour, outcry' (OED 2b).

502. *flown swollen, in flood* (OED 'flow' 11b), often used figuratively of persons, as in Spenser, *FQ* II ii 36: 'In wine and meats she flowd above the bancke'.

504-5. *when . . . rape* following *Ed II. MS* and *Ed I* read 'when hospitable doors / Yielded their matrons to prevent [*MS* avoid] worse rape'. Both versions allude to Gen. 19 and Judges 19, but *Ed II* gives priority to Judges. At Gen. 19. 8 Lot begs the Sodomites to rape his daughters rather than his angel guests. No rape took place and the angels destroyed Sodom. At *Gibeah* a Levite escaped *worse* (homosexual) *rape* by surrendering his concubine to 'certain sons of Belial'. The woman's fate could not have been worse. She was abused 'all the night' and died the next morning - possibly at the Levite's hands (Judges 19. 28-9). The change from 'Yielded' to *Exposed* might imply a moral judgement. Cp. Adam's 'To me committed and by me exposed' (x 957).

508. *Javan* Noah's grandson, ancestor of the Ionian Greeks (Gen. 10. 1-5).

509. *Heav'n and Earth* Uranus and Gaia, progenitors of the gods.

510. **boasted* OED's earliest participial instance.

510-13. *Titan . . . found* The Christian Lactantius (*Divine Institutes* I xiv) tells how *Titan*, the eldest son of Uranus and Gaia (*Heav'n and Earth*), was deposed by his brother *Saturn*, who was in turn deposed by his son *Jove*.

513. *measure* retribution (OED 15).

514-15. *Crete . . . Ida* *Jove* (Zeus) was born and secretly raised in a cave on Mount *Ida* in Crete.

516. *middle air* the second of three supposed layers of the atmosphere, extending only to the mountain-tops. *Satan* was associated with this region, on account of his title 'prince of the power of the air' (Eph. 2. 2). See *PR* i 39-47.

517. *Delphian cliff* the site of Apollo's oracle.

518. *Dodona* the site of Zeus's oracle, in northern Greece.

519. *Doric land* Greece.

519-21. *Saturn . . . isles* Following his defeat by *Jove*, *Saturn* fled over *Adria* (the Adriatic) to *th' Hesperian fields* (Italy), and thence to *the Celtic fields* (France) and *the utmost isles* (Britain).

523. *damp* dazed, stupefied (OED 2).

525. *found themselves not lost* Cp. Matt. 10. 39: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it'. The angels' newly-found selves are not the ones they have lost (see i 361-5*n*).

527. *doubtful* both 'full of apprehension' (OED 5) and 'giving cause for apprehensions' (OED 4).

528. *recollecting* remembering and pulling (himself) together.

530. *fainting* *Ed II*; fainted *MS, Ed I*.

532. *clarions* shrill trumpets used in war.

534. *Azazel* Hebrew 'God strengtheners'. Cabalistic lore made him one of four standard-bearers in Satan's army. 'Azazel' was sometimes thought to be his original name (see Bernard Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*, 1952, 278), but M.'s rebels have lost their angelic names. See i 80-81, 361-3, v 658 and cp. vi 371-85. In the Hebrew version of Lev. 16. 8, the word translated as 'scapegoat' means 'goat for Azazel', a wicked spirit.

536. *advanced* raised, elevated (OED 4).

541. **upsent* Cp. the neologisms 'upwhirled' (iii 493) and 'upgrown' (ix 677).

542. *conceave* vault.

543. *reign* realm (OED 2).

546. *orient* lustrous and rising.

548. **serried* pressed close together, shoulder to shoulder.

550. *phalanx* Greek and Macedonian battle formation consisting of heavy infantry presenting an impenetrable thicket of spears. Greek phalanxes were usually eight ranks deep; *Satan*'s is *Of depth immeasurable* (549).

550-59. *Dorian . . . minds* Cp. Plutarch's description of Spartans marching to *flutes*: 'it was a sight at once solemn and terrifying to see them marching in step to the pipes, creating no gap in the phalanx nor suffering any disturbance of spirit, but approaching the confrontation calmly and happily in time to the music' (*Lycurgus* 22). Plato describes the *Dorian mood* (mode) as 'the note or accent which a brave man utters in the hour of danger and stern resolve, or when his cause is falling, and he is going to wounds or death' (*Republic* iii 399, trans. Jowett).

556. *swage* assuage, relieve.

560-61. *Breathing . . . silence* Cp. Homer's Achaeans marching 'silently, breathing valour, / stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand by the others' (*Il.* iii 8). *Breathing* also suggests wind instruments such as *flutes*. Cp. vi 63-8.

563. *horrid* bristling (Latin *horridus*) with spears.

568. *traverse* across the ranks (having looked down the *files*).

573. *since created man* since man was created (Latin idiom).
575. *small infantry* Pygmies. On the war of Pygmies and cranes see Homer, *Il.* iii 3-6. Notice the pun on *infantry*.
577. *Phlegra* The war between the gods and the Giants began at Phlegra in Macedonia and ended at Phlegra in Italy.
579. *auxiliar* assisting, with a mocking pun on *auxilia* (foreign, low-paid troops in the Roman army).
580. *Uther's son King Arthur*, some of whose knights were Breton (*Armorica*).
583. *Aspramont* 'the dark mountain': a mountain in Calabria. Romantic epics tell how Charlemagne defeated a Saracen army there. See Andrea da Barberino's *Aspromonte* and Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* i 30, xvii 14, xxvii 54. *Montalban* 'the white mountain': the home of the paladin Rinaldo.
584. *Damascus* Damascus. Christians and Saracens joust there in Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xvii.
- Trebizond* a Byzantine city on the Black Sea, famous for tournaments.
585. *Biseria Bizerte*, a port in Tunisia, from which Boiardo's Troiano leads a Muslim invasion of Spain (*Orl. Inn.* ii).
- 586-7. *Charlemagne . . . Fontarabbia* There is no known source for Charlemagne's fall at *Fontarabbia* (Fuenterrabia, on the Spanish coast), though Charlemagne's paladin Roland made a famous last stand at Roncesvalles, some forty miles away. M. may be alluding to the events of August 1659, when Charles II visited Fuenterrabia in an attempt to muster French and Spanish support (Fowler).
588. *observed* including 'reverenced, honoured' (*OED* 4b). The syntax allows either Satan or his troops to be the observer.
594. *glory* see above, i 1417.
- 594-9. *sun . . . monarchs* Charles II's censor objected to these lines - and with reason. An eclipse had provoked *fear of change* on the day of Charles's birth, 29 May 1630. Royalists officially claimed the event as a good omen (see e.g. Dryden, *Astraea Redux*, 288-91), but M.'s nephew, Edward Phillips, remembered it as a portent of the Interregnum. See *Chronicle of the Kings of England* (1665), 498. See also Edward Chamberlayne, *Anglia Notitia* (1669), 127: 'the Sun suffered an Eclipse, a sad presage as some then divined, that this Prince's Power should for some time be eclipsed, as it hath been'. Cp. Tasso's comparison of Argantes to a comet that 'tidings sad of death and mischief brings / To mighty lords, to monarchs, and to kings' (*Gerus. Lib.* vii 52).
595. *horizontal* on the horizon.
597. *disastrous* ill-starred (Latin *dis* + *astrum*), with a hint that 'Lucifer' has been 'dis-starred'. See v 708, vii 131, x 425.
599. *Perplexes* puzzles and torments.
601. *intrenched* wounded (*OED* 'entrench' 3), *furrowed (*OED* 'intrench' 1, earliest instance 1754).
603. *courage* *Ed I, Ed II; valour MS.*
- considerate* prudent, deliberate (*OED* 2), as in 'the willing and considerate murderer' (1597); from Latin *considerare*, 'to watch the stars'.
609. *amerced / Of* *deprived of (*OED* 2d). 'Amerce' meant 'fine' and one was amerced 'in' or 'with' (not 'of') a sum. M.'s usage puns on the root *amercié*, 'at the mercy of'.
615. *blasted heath* echoing Shakespeare, *Macbeth* I iii 77.
620. *Tears such as angels weep* Angels were usually thought to be incapable of weeping, but cp. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* II ii 121-2, where 'proud man' is said to play 'such fantastic tricks before high heaven / As makes the angels weep'. M.'s good angels eat (v 434-5), make love (viii 620-29), and maybe weep (xi 23-5), so Satan's tears need not reveal a coarsened nature, though they might express a tyrant's sentimentality. Newton in 1749 saw an allusion to the Persian King Xerxes, who wept while reviewing his 'vast army, and reflecting that they were mortal, at the time that he was hast'ning them to their fate, and to the intended destruction of the greatest people in the world, to gratify his own vain glory'. Cp. x 307-11n.
624. *event* outcome.
632. *pissant* powerful.
636. *different* perhaps 'deferent', in the sense 'protracted, lingering' (*OED* 'defer' 4b).
646. *work plan* (*OED* 11).
- close design* secret scheming.
650. *Space* *stellar depths (*OED* 8), but even this sense is too small. Satan is referring to Chaos (not just our universe), and *worlds* here means 'universes'. Cp. ii 916, 1004, 1052, iii 74, vii 191, 209, etc. Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno had argued for an infinite universe with many habitable worlds. The theory had neo-Platonic and Epicurean sources, but it was still a 'fringe belief' in M.'s time (Marjara 77). Cp. Lucretius, *De Rerum Nat.* ii 1048-89.
651. *fame* rumour. See ii 346-52, 830, x 481-2 for the rumour of man's creation, and see vii 150-50n for God's motives in creating us.
654. *favour equal* Raphael later speaks of God's 'equal love' for men and angels (viii 228). Beëlzebub will soon claim that man is 'favoured more' (ii 350).
656. *eruption* breaking out (suggesting Hell's volcanoes).
662. *Open or understood* overt or covert. Cp. Belial's 'open or concealed' (ii 187). Belial wants to escape God's notice; Satan wants God to know his enemy.
- 666-7. *highly* haughtily (*OED* 5) and loudly (*OED* 3c). The paronomasia (*highly* . . . *Highest*) is typical of M. Cp. i 642, iv 181, v 869, ix 11, etc.
672. *scurf* sulphurous deposit (suggesting also a diseased body).

673. *his womb* 'the perverted body-landscape of Hell' (Ricks) – but this nuance might have been weaker in M.'s time, when *his* served for *its*. M. uses 'its' only three times in his poetry.
676. *pioneers* military engineers.
678. *Mammon* an Aramaic word for 'riches', personified at Matt. 6. 24 and Luke 16. 13. Medieval tradition identified Mammon with Plutus, the god of wealth, and so with Pluto, god of the underworld. Burton made him prince of the lowest order of devils (*Anatomy of Melancholy* I ii I 2).
679. *erected* high-souled (*OED* 2) and upright (in posture).
684. *vision beatific* mystical experience of seeing God.
685. *suggestion* devilish temptation (*OED* 1).
686. *centre* (centre of) the earth.
- 686–8. *impious* . . . *hid* Cp. Ovid's description of men rifling earth's bowels (*viscera terrae*) in search of riches (*Met.* i 137–40); also Spenser, *FQ* II vii 17, where 'a cursed hand' seeking 'hid treasures' wounds the 'wombe / Of his great Grandmother'; also Phineas Fletcher, *The Apolyonists* (1627) v 4: 'The earth (their Grandame Earth) they fierce invade, / And all her bowels search, and rent, and tear'. The oxymoron *precious bane* (692) recalls Giles Fletcher, *CV* (1610) ii 54, where men wound 'their mothers side' while searching for 'precious perills'.
690. *ribs* veins of ore (technical term). Pearce in 1733 compared viii 465–9 where God opens Adam's side and extracts 'a rib . . . wide was the wound'. *admire* marvel.
694. *Babel* the Tower of Babel (xii 38–62).
- works of Memphian kings* the Egyptian pyramids.
703. *founded*] *MS, Ed I*; found out *Ed II*. The devils had found the ore in lines 688–90. Now they melt it.
704. *bullion dross* boiling dregs.
711. *Rose like an exhalation* Exhalations were thought to cause comets, meteors (both bad omens), and pestilence. See ix 180*n*, x 692–4.
712. *dulcet symphonies and voices sweet* Pandoemonium, like Troy and Thebes, arises to the sound of music.
713. *pilasters* square columns or pillars.
714. *overlaid* surmounted.
715. *architrave* the lowest member of the entablature in a classical temple: the main beam that rests on the columns.
716. *Cornice* the uppermost member of the entablature, surmounting the frieze.
bossy carved in relief.
717. *fretted* adorned with carved or wrought patterns.
718. *Alcairo* Cairo (ancient Memphis).
720. *Belus* a Babylonian god. Herodotus describes his temple as a series of eight towers placed one on top of another (i 181).

- Serapis* a god of Ptolemaic Egypt (composite of Osiris and Apis).
728. *cressets* iron baskets hung from the ceiling.
729. *naphtha and asphaltus* oil and pitch, to be placed in *lamps* and *cressets* respectively.
731. *Admiring* marvelling.
- 732–5. *architect* . . . *residence* Cp. the gods' palaces built by Hephaestus (Homer, *Il.* i 605–8) and Mulciber (Ovid, *Met.* ii 1–4).
738. *his name* Hephaestus (in *Greece*), or *Mulciber* (or Vulcan) in Italy (*Ausonian land*). His angelic name has been blotted out and M. never speaks it.
- 740–46. *how he fell* . . . *isle* Cp. the daylong fall of Homer's Hephaestus (*Il.* i 591–5): '[Zeus] caught me by the foot and threw me from the magic threshold, / and all day long I dropped helpless, and about sunset / I landed in Lemnos'.
745. *zenith* highest point of the celestial sphere (*OED* 1, referring to Mulciber's fall) and culminating point of a heavenly body (*OED* 2, referring to *sun*).
746. *Aegean* For accent cp. *PR* iv 238 and Fairfax's Tasso (i 61): 'O'er Aegean Seas by many a Greekish hold'.
750. *engines* plots (*OED* 3) and machines used in warfare (*OED* 5).
756. **Pandoemonium* Greek 'seat of all demons (or *daimones*)'. The original spelling allows the devils to see themselves as classical *daimones* rather than demons (though *daimones* still suggests demons through N.T. usage). Cp. *PR* ii 122.
capita] *Ed I, Ed II*; 'Capitol' corr. to 'Capitall' (in a different hand) *MS*.
757. *peers* nobles. Pandoemonium has a King and House of Lords, but no Commons (see below, i 792*n*). Cp. ii 507 ('grand infernal Peers') and contrast i 39 and v 812, where 'peers' means 'equals'. Satan exploits the ambiguity at ii 445.
759. *place* rank, official position.
choice promotion or election from the ranks.
764. *Wont* were wont to.
Soldan's Sultan's.
765. *paynim* pagan.
- 768–75. *bees* . . . *affairs* Homer's Achaeans marching to a council (*Il.* i 87–90), Virgil's busy Carthaginians (*Aen.* i 430–35) and Virgil's dead awaiting reincarnation (*Aen.* vi 707–9) are all likened to bees. Seventeenth-century apiarists would kill off a swarm by lowering the hive into a flaming sulphur pit. This fiery end could serve as a warning to those who praised the swarm's Royalist politics (see John Simons, *MQ* 21. 1, March 1987, 21–2). Virgil (*Aen.* xii 583–92) and Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* ii

- 130-34) liken panic-stricken defenders of a city to bees whose hive is filled with smoke. See also Virgil, *Georg.* iv 149-227.
769. *Taurus* the zodiacal sign of the Bull (hence *rides*).
774. *expatiate* both 'wander at will' and 'speak at length'. The word adds mock grandeur to the devils.
780. *that Pygmean race* See above, 575n. The Pygmies were supposed to live beyond the Himalayas (*the Indian mount*).
- 781-8. *faery elves* . . . *rebounds* Encounters with elves are frequent in folklore. Aubrey tells of a shepherd who came across dancing elves: 'He said the ground opened, and he was brought into strange places under ground where they used musical Instruments, violls, and Lutes.' Such encounters bring joy at the time, but 'never any afterwards enjoy themselves' (*Remaines*, 1686-7, 204). A medieval tradition held that the less sinful fallen angels were allowed to haunt earth's forests, where they were known as 'elves'.
782. *midnight revels* Cp. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II i 141 ('moonlight revels'), but M.'s elves are quite un-Shakespearean.
- 783-4. *sees* / *Or dreams he sees* Cp. Virgil, *Aen.* vi 751-4, where Aeneas glimpses Dido's shade 'as one who sees . . . or thinks to have seen, the moon / Rising through cloud'.
785. *arbitress* witness (lit. 'one who goes to see', *ad + bito*).
790. *at large* free, uncramped - with a play on the other sense of 'large'. Ricks remarks that 'nothing could more effectively belittle the devils' than this 'superbly contemptuous pun?' (*Milton's Grand Style*, 15).
792. *Court* The royal connotation is ominous. Parliament was also a 'court', but there is no House of Commons in Pandaemonium, where Satan sits enthroned amidst *Lords*.
795. *close recess* secret and secluded place.
- conclave* secret assembly (*OED* 4), suggesting 'the assembly of Cardinals met for the election of a Pope' (*OED* 3). In Phineas Fletcher's *The Apollyon-isis* (1627) jesuitical devils conceive the Gunpowder Plot after meeting in 'deepe Conclave' (i 17).
797. *Frequent* crowded.
798. *consult* a secret meeting for purposes of sedition (*OED* 2).

BOOK II

- 1-6. *High* . . . *eminence* Cp. the bright throne of Spenser's *Lucifera* (*FQ* I iv 8); also M.'s description in *Defensio* of Charles I enthroned (*YP* 4. 506).
2. *Ormus* Hormuz, an island town in the Persian Gulf, famous for jewels.
5. *merit* desert of either good or evil (*OED* 2a).

7. *high uplifted beyond hope* both 'lifted high above (his) hope' and 'lifted high in a place so low as to be beyond all hope'. Cp. i 66, iv 160.
9. *success* outcome (with a wry pun on the modern sense).
11. *Powers and Dominions* angelic orders (*Col.* i. 16).
10. *imaginations* schemes, plots (*OED* 2a).
15. *Virtues* the angelic order, with overtones of 'manliness, valour' (*OED* 'virtue' 7).
- 24-40. *The happier* . . . *assured us* Lewis (98) calls Satan's argument 'nonsense', since its corollary is that 'every approach to victory must take away the grounds on which victory is hoped'. Waldock (69-70) replies that Satan's speech is rhetoric, not logic, and should be judged 'by its effect'.
41. *open war or covert guile* Cp. Tasso's Satan urging 'open force, or secret guile' (*Genus. Lib.* iv 16, trans. Fairfax). Notice that Satan asks the devils to debate how (not whether) to return.
43. *Moloch* As at i 392, Moloch is first on his feet. The contrast between the bellicose Moloch and the eloquent coward Belial has epic precedent in the contrasts between Virgil's Turnus and Drances (*Aen.* xi 336f.) and Tasso's Argantes and Orcanes (*Genus. Lib.* x 35f.). See below, 109n.
50. *recked* cared.
- thereafter* accordingly.
51. *sentence* judgement.
52. *More unexpert* less experienced.
63. *horrid* horrifying and bristling (with *flames*).
65. *engine* machine of war (God's thunder).
69. *Tartarean* of Tartarus, the classical hell.
- strange fire* Cp. Lev. 10. 1-2: 'the sons of Aaron . . . offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died'.
73. *drench* soporific potion (*OED* 2) and *act of drenching (*OED* 4, earliest instance 1808, but the verb had existed since medieval times).
74. *forgetful* causing oblivion.
75. *in our proper motion we ascend* Moloch is proved wrong when Satan encounters a 'vast vacuity' in Chaos and plummets downward (ii 932-5). The devils may have lost their angelic buoyancy, but Marjara (148-9) sees M. as confirming the New Philosophy of Galileo and debunking Aristotelian physics.
79. *Insulting* making assaults (*OED* 3) and exulting.
81. *ascent* is easy Contrast Virgil, *Aen.* vi 126-9: 'the descent to Avernus is easy . . . but to retrace one's steps and escape to the upper air, this is the task, this is the toil'. See also ii 432-3, iii 19-21, 524.
82. *event* outcome.
89. *exercise* vex, afflict (*OED* 4b).
90. *vassals of his anger* Cp. Spenser, *Tears of the Muses* 126: 'vassals of