

JOHN MILTON
PARADISE LOST



*Edited by William Kerrigan,
John Rumrich,
and Stephen M. Fallon*



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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 center (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, 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 known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. 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
 5 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 heavens and earth
 10 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

1. The first line's introduction of an exemplary man recalls the epics of Homer and Vergil. Milton's theme, however, is neither martial nor imperial but spiritual: humanity's disastrous failure to obey God counterpoised by the promise of redemption. **Of man's**: The proper name *Adam* is also the Hebrew word for generic man or humankind. He is both an individual male and, with Eve, the entire species: "so God created man . . . ; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1.27). *Of man* translates the Hebrew for "woman" (Gen. 2.23). **fruit**: Its dual meanings (outcome, food) are put in play by enjambment, a primary formal device by which Milton draws out sense "from one verse into another" (*The Verse*).
4. **one greater man**: Jesus, second Adam (1 Cor. 15.21–22; Rom. 5.19). Cp. *PR* 1.1–4.
5. **blissful seat**: translates Vergil's epithet for Elysium, *Aen.* 6.639.
6. **Sing Heav'nly Muse**: the verb and subject of the magnificently inverted sixteen-line opening sentence. By invoking a Muse, Milton follows a convention that dates from Homer. Yet Milton's Muse is not the muse of classical epic (Calliope) but the inspiration of Moses, David, and the prophets (cp. 17–18n). **secret**: set apart, not common. When the Lord descends to give Moses the law, thick clouds and smoke obscure the mountaintop, and the people are forbidden on pain of death to cross boundaries around the mountain (Exod. 19.16, 23).
8. **shepherd**: The vocation of shepherd is a key vehicle for Milton's integration of classical and scriptural traditions. Moses encounters God while tending sheep on Mount Horeb (*Oreb*) and later receives the law on *Sinai*, a spur of Horeb (Exod. 3; 19). (Or the doubling of names may simply acknowledge the inconsistency of Exod. 19.20 and Deut. 4.10.)
9. **In the beginning**: opening phrase of Genesis and the Gospel of John.
10. **Chaos**: classical term for the primeval state of being out of which God creates, also referred to as "the deep" (as in Gen. 1.2) and "the abyss" (as in 1. 21). **Sion hill**: Mount Zion, site of Solomon's Temple, "the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 6.1, 13). Adding to the persistent doubleness of the invocation, Milton requests inspiration from two scriptural sites associated with God's presence and prophetic inspiration. Both sites receive dual designations: Mount Horeb/Sinai and Mount Zion/Siloa's brook.
- 11–12. **Siloa's brook . . . God**: spring whose waters flowed through an underground aqueduct, supplied a pool near (*Fast by*) Solomon's Temple, and irrigated the

- Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 15 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
 20 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 highth of this great argument
 25 I may assert eternal providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.

king's lush garden (cp. 4.225-30). Jerome says it ran directly beneath Mount Zion (A. Gilbert 1919, 269). Scripturally, it symbolizes David's monarchical line (Isa. 7-8, esp. 8.6). In opening the eyes of the man born blind, Jesus sends him to wash his eyes with its waters (John 9). Cp. 3.30-31. **oracle of God:** the holiest place in the Temple, the tabernacle of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 6.19). The classical Muses haunt a spring (Aganippe) on Helicon (cp. 15n), "the sacred well, / That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring" (*Lyc* 15-16). In identifying the spring near the "Holy of Holies" as similarly a site of inspiration, Milton again links scriptural and classical prophetic and poetic traditions.

14. **no middle flight:** Milton will go beyond middle air, whose upper boundary is as high as the peaks of tall mountains, and soar to the highest Empyrean, the abode of God. His soaring ambition recalls the myth of Icarus, whose failure to follow a *middle flight* caused him to tumble into the sea (cp. 7.12-20).
 15. **Aonian mount:** Helicon, Greek mountain favored by the Muses (cp. 11-12n). Hesiod says that while he tended sheep on Helicon (like Moses on Horeb), the

Muses called him to sing of the gods (*Theog.* 22).

16. Translates the opening of *Orlando Furioso* (1.2) and is reminiscent of *Masque* 43-45; cp. similar claims by Lucretius (*De Rerum Nat.* 1.925-30) and Horace (*Odes* 3.1.2-4).
 17-18. 1 Cor. 3.16-17, 6.19. The *Spirit* is the Holy Spirit (l. 21). In Milton's theology, the diverse functions of the Holy Spirit derive from "the virtue and power of God the Father," in this case "the force or voice of God, in whatever way it was breathed into the prophets" (*CD* 1.6, p. 1194). The site of revelation progresses from Horeb/Sinai to Sion hill/Silva's brook to, finally, the individual human heart.
 21. **brooding:** Milton thus renders the Hebrew word translated as "moved" in the *AV* (Gen. 1.2) but as *incubabat* (brooded) in St. Basil and other Latin patristic authors (see also 7.235). Cp. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*: "This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters, and in six days hatched the world" (73).
 24. **argument:** subject matter; cp. 9.28.
 25. **assert:** take the part of, champion.
 26. **justify:** vindicate; cp. Pope, *Essay on Man*: "Laugh where we must, be candid where we can, / But vindicate the ways of God to

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,
 30 Favored 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
 35 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 equaled 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,

man" (1.15-16). Milton's word order permits dual readings: either "justify (the ways of God to men)" or "justify (the ways of God) to men." Cp. *SA*: "Just are the ways of God,/And justifiable to men" (293-94).

27-28. Milton introduces the narrative with a query, an epic convention; cp. "Tell me, O Muse, the cause" (Vergil, *Aen.* 1.8). Homer also depicts the Muses as all-knowing: "Tell me now, ye Muses that have dwellings on Olympus—for ye are goddesses and are at hand and know all things" (*Il.* 2.484-85).

29. grand: great, original, all-inclusive; cp. line 122.

30. fall off: deviate, revolt (as in l. 33).

33. Cp. *Il.* 1.8.

36. what time: when; cp. *Masque* 291, *Lyc* 28.

44-49. Him . . . arms: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness" (2 Pet. 2.4; cp. Jude 6).

45. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10.18); cp. Homer's Hephaestus "hurled . . . from the heavenly threshold . . . headlong" (*Il.* 1.591-92).

46. ruin: a fall from a great height, from the Latin *ruina*; cp. 6.867-68.

48. adamant: unbreakable (Gk.); cp. Aeschylus's Prometheus, clamped "in shackles of binding adamant that cannot be broken" (*Prom.* 6). The myth of adamant persists today; the indestructible claws of the Marvel Comics hero Wolverine are made of "adamantium."

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,

49. **durst**: dared.

50–52. The rebel angels regain consciousness after nine days falling from Heaven (6.871) and nine days *rolling in the fiery gulf*: Hesiod's Titans fall nine days from heaven to earth and another nine from earth to Tartarus (*Theog.* 720–25). Milton, like many Christian mythographers, deemed the Titans' rebellion a pagan analogue for Satan's fall.

53. **Confounded**: destroyed. Combined with *though immortal*, it neatly defines the Christian concept of damnation.

54. **Reserved**: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6; cp. 2 Pet. 2.4). In *CD*, Milton cites these verses and others to show that "bad angels are kept for punishment" (1.9 in *MLM* 1218).

56. **baleful**: Of Old English origin, *baleful* signifies evil in both its active and its passive aspects. Satan's eyes thus brim with his own suffering and with malice toward others.

57. **witnessed**: Like *baleful*, active and passive. Satan's eyes express spite and woe and also observe it in the surrounding scene.

59. **ken**: "are able to see." Possessive apostrophes do not appear in early modern texts, so that *ken* here could also mean "visual range" of angels. The word is used both as a verb and as a noun elsewhere in *PL* (5.265, 11.379).

63. **darkness visible**: Judged "difficult to imagine" by T. S. Eliot, the paradox has scriptural and classical precedents. See the description in Job of the realm of the dead, "where the light is as darkness" (10.22) or, in Euripides' *Bacchae*, Pentheus's command to imprison Dionysus "so that he may see only darkness" (510). Milton previously flirted with the paradox in *Il Pens* (79–80). Cp. Keats's marginalia: "It can scarcely be conceived how Milton's blindness might here aid the magnitude of his conceptions, as a bat in a large gothic vault" (Lau 74).

- 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 sulfur unconsumed:
 70 Such place eternal justice had prepared
 For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
 In utter darkness, and their portion set
 As far removed from God and light of Heav'n
 As from the center 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 welt'ring by his side
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 80 Long after known in Palestine, and named
 Beëlzebub. 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

66-67. **And rest . . . all:** The inscription above the gate to Dante's Hell reads, "Abandon every hope, who enter here" (*Inf.* 3.9). Cp. Euripides, *Trojan Women* (681-82).

67-68. **but . . . urges:** "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20.10). **Still:** constantly.

70. Cp. "the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25.41). Dante similarly depicts the inferno as an artifice of divine justice (*Inf.* 3.4).

72. **utter darkness:** destination of those excluded from the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 8.12, 22.13, 25.30). The *AV* has "outer" instead of "utter"; cp. 3.16. The Geneva gloss on Matt. 8.12 explains, "there is nothing but mere darkness out of the kingdom of heaven."

73-74. Homer, Hesiod, and Vergil precede

Milton in expressing as a ratio distances between heaven, earth, and the pit of hell (*Il.* 8.16; *Theog.* 722-25; *Aen.* 6.577-79).

74. **center:** the earth, at the center of the Ptolemaic cosmos; **pole:** the point on the outside of the cosmic sphere closest to heaven.

78. **welt'ring:** rolling on waves; cp. *Lyc.* 13.

81. **Beëlzebub:** Phoenician god at Ekron consulted by King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1.2). The name in Hebrew means "Lord of Flies." In the Gospels, he is called "prince of the devils"; he was often identified with Satan (Matt. 12.24; cp. *CD* 1.9 in *MLM* 1219).

82. **Satan:** Hebrew word for adversary or enemy, first applied to Satan after his rebellion (5.658). He ultimately glories in the title (10.386-87).

84. **If . . . fall'n:** "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isa. 14.12; cp. Vergil, *Aen.* 2.274). The appearance of the rebel angels is altered for

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
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
 90 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
 In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
 From what highth 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 luster; 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,

the worse. They are also bereft of names (ll. 361-65). Hence Satan persists in the conditional salutation (l. 87).

98. **high disdain**: noble scorn. A relatively common reaction in an aristocratic era (Kerrigan 2000), it is characteristic of Satan (cp. 4.50, 82, 180).

103-5. Satan's account differs from Raphael's; cp. 6.832-34, 853-55.

107. **study**: pursuit.

109. "And what else does it mean 'not to be overcome'?"

114. **Doubted**: feared for.

- 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,
 120 We may with more successful hope resolve
 To wage by force or guile eternal war
 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
 130 Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
 Fearless, endangered Heav'n's perpetual King,
 And put to proof his high supremacy,
 Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate,
 Too well I see and rue the dire event,

115. **ignominy**: can be pronounced "ig-no-min-y" or "ig-no-my" (as it was often spelled). In the former case, the terminal *y* would coalesce with *and*. Cp. 2.207, 6.383.
 116. **fate**: Satan makes fate the ultimate authority, distinct from the deity, as in Homer. God later defines fate as what he wills, 7.273; cp. *CD* 1.2 in *MLM* 1145-46. The portrayal of fate as an independent governing principle is a feature of Stoic philosophy specifically criticized by Jesus in *PR* (4.313-18). **gods**: "Anyone can observe throughout the whole of the Old Testament . . . that angels often take upon them as their own the name . . . of God" (*CD* 1.5 in *MLM* 1185). God himself refers to the angels as gods (3.341). Cp. Herrick, *Of Angels*: "Angels are called gods; yet of them, none / Are gods, but by participation" (1-2).
 117. **empyrean substance**: fiery essence, like the substance of Heaven; cp. 2.771. Heaven

(the empyrean) and Hell both are based on the element of fire: in Hell it possesses only its destructive properties, in Heaven only its salutary ones. See 63n.

123. **triumphs**: Emphasis on the second syllable stresses a plosive-frictive fusion, as in *harumph*. It was common to accent the word thus.

125-27. Cp. Vergil's depiction of the seemingly optimistic Aeneas after he has rallied his distressed comrades: "So spake his tongue; while sick with weighty cares he feigns hope on his face, and deep in his heart stifles the anguish" (*Aen.* 1.208-9).

128-29. **powers . . . Seraphim**: Thrones and Powers, like *Seraphim*, are angelic orders. The phrase *thronèd powers* invokes no specific order of angel, however. It instead indicates the dignity and spiritual nature of those led by Satan, including the *Seraphim*.

134. **event**: outcome.

135 That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
 Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host
 In horrible destruction laid thus low,
 As far as gods and Heav'nly essences
 Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
 140 Invincible, and vigor 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'ed 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
 150 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
 155 To undergo eternal punishment?"
 Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied.
 "Fall'n cherub, to be weak is miserable
 Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,

141. *glory*: effulgence or brilliant, radiant light (see 63n, 117n). *Glory* is a word with a broad range of meaning in the poem (cp. in Book I, ll. 39, 110, 239, 370, 594, 612; see Rumrich 1987, 3–52). *extinct*: (be) put out, extinguished.

144. *Of force*: perforce; cp. 4.813.

147. *support*: endure.

148. *suffice*: satisfy.

149–50. *thralls/By right of war*: slaves by conquest. "The effects and consequences of this right are infinite so that there is nothing so unlawful but the lord may do it to his slaves . . . there are no torments but what may with impunity be imposed on them, nothing to be done but what

they may be forced to do by all manner of rigor and severity." (Grotius, *Rights* 48; cp. CD 1.11).

152. *deep*: chaos; see 10n.

153–55. The question crystallizes Satan and Beëlzebub's developing awareness of their plight: what possible advantage is there in being a mighty entity eternally sustained only to absorb eternal punishment?

158. *Doing or suffering*: The Stoic counterpoise of suffering and doing was a literary commonplace, with suicide sometimes seeming the active option. So Hamlet ponders whether it is nobler "to suffer/ The slings and arrows of outrageous

To do aught good never will be our task,
 160 But ever to do ill our sole delight,
 As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labor must be to pervert that end,
 165 And out of good still to find means of evil;
 Which oftentimes 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 sulfurous 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,
 175 Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
 To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
 Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
 Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
 180 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,
 185 There rest, if any rest can harbor there,
 And reassembling our afflicted powers,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend
 Our enemy, our own loss how repair,

fortune / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles" (3.1.56-58). The antithesis is regularly and variously invoked in the first two books (see, e.g., 2.199) and later approaches personification in the characters of the aggressively suicidal Moloch and the craven Belial.

167. fail: err.

172. o'erblown hath laid: having blown over (or, having blown down from above) has calmed.

178. slip: neglect, miss.

182. livid: black and blue, like a bruise; furious.

186. afflicted: struck down, routed.

How overcome this dire calamity,
 190 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
 195 Prone on the flood, extended long and large
 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
 200 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,
 205 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
 210 Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence
 Had ris’n or heaved his head, but that the will

196. rood: a measure of length that varies from 5.5 to 8.0 yards (5.0 to 7.3 meters); a measure of land equal to a quarter acre, or 40 square rods (0.1 hectare).

198–99. Titanian . . . Typhon: In Greek myth the Titans, children of Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Gaia), were of the generation before the Olympian gods. The Giants, monstrous and huge, were also *Earth-born*. The Titans and Giants *warred* against the Olympian gods on separate occasions, but the two battles were often confused. See 50–52n. *Briareos* was a Titan with a hundred hands; *Typhon*, a hundred-headed Giant, “the Earth-born dweller of the Cilician caves,” in Aeschylus’s phrase (*Prom.* 353–54; cp. Homer, *Il.* 2.783, Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.15).

200. Tarsus: the capital of ancient Cilicia.

201. Leviathan: gigantic sea beast, symbolic of God’s creative power (Job 41), but in Isa. 27.1 a target of divine judgment, identified as Satan by commentators. Cp. 7.412–16.

203–8. Tales of enormous sea creatures and of mariners who mistook them for islands were common, as were moral applications of such stories.

204. night-foundered: sunk in night.

207. lee: the side away from the wind and thus sheltered from it.

208. Invests: cloaks.

210–15. Chained . . . damnation: Cp. lines 239–41. Some readers regard this providential logic with disapproval. See Tennyson’s response, as recorded by his son

- And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,
 That with reiterated crimes he might
 215 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
 220 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.
 225 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,
 230 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 fueled entrails thence conceiving fire,
 235 Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,

Hallam: "I hope most of us have a higher idea in these modern times of the Almighty than this" (881).

224. horrid: bristling, spiky (as *pointing spires* suggests).

226. incumbent: pressing with his weight (cp. *recumbent*); cp. Spenser's description of the dragon's flight, *FQ* 1.11.18.

230. hue: not simply color but also form or aspect. Cp. Shakespeare, *Sonnets* (20.7).

230-35. as . . . winds: Milton's account of Etna erupting echoes Vergil in diction (*thund'ring, entrails*), but unlike Vergil, he describes a geological process rather than trace the eruption to a pent-up giant (*Aen.* 3.571-77). The seismic violence attributed

to wind trapped underground is similarly described by Ovid (*Met.* 15.296-306) and Lucretius (*On the Nature of Things* 6.535-607). Cp. 6.195-98; *SA* 1647-48.

232. Pelorus: Cape Faro, promontory of northeastern Sicily, near Etna.

234. fueled . . . fire: combustible interior (*entrails*) igniting from the force of the wind and spreading.

235. Vaporized (*sublimed*) by the intense heat of burning rock, the fuel-laden interior becomes hot mineral gas that augments the wind expelled from the *shattered side* of the mountain.

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
 240 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
 245 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 equaled, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell happy fields
 250 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
 255 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

239. Stygian flood: body of water like the river Styx; the *fiery gulf* (52).

240-41. Satan and Beëlzebub contradict the narrator's explanation (ll. 210-15). Cp. Homer's Aias, who, having been saved from the sea by Poseidon, "declared that it was in spite of the gods that he had escaped the great gulf" (*Od.* 4.504). Poseidon immediately kills him.

244. change: exchange.

252. possessor: one who occupies without ownership (a legal term).

253. Cp. Horace, "the sky not the mind changes in one who crosses the sea" (*Epist.* 1.11.27). Young Milton adopted this as his motto (Hanford 98).

254-56. The chiasmus concluding line 255 epitomizes Satan's claim for the mind's constitutive power. Cp. *Hamlet*: "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (2.2.249-50). That Satan's condition is a function of his own unchanging psyche is later borne out, ironically and to his dismay; see 4.75, 9.118-23.

257. all but less than: This puzzling phrase is usually glossed as a combination of "only less than" and "all but equal to." Satan is not conceding inequality, however, but asserting parity. He is anything but less than God, who triumphed because of superior armament—"his only dreaded bolt" (6.491).

260 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,
 265 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
 270 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
 275 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
 280 Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,
 No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth."
 He scarce had ceased when the superior fiend
 Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield

263. Cp. Plutarch's account of Caesar riding past a sorry barbarian village, "I would rather be first here than second at Rome" (*Lives* 469) or the sentiments of Euripides' Eteocles, "When I can rule, shall I be this man's slave?" (*Phoe.* 520). Satan's specific preference has plentiful precedent, typically to the contrary: "I should choose . . . to serve as the hireling . . . of some portionless man . . . rather than to be lord over all the dead" (*Od.* 11.489-91); "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 84.10). See Abdiel's similar declaration, 6.183-84.

265. copartners: equal participants (coheirs) in an inheritance.

266. astonished: shocked, thunderstruck; oblivious: producing oblivion; cp. 2.74.

268. mansion: abode; cp. John 14.2: "In my father's house are many mansions."

276. edge: critical moment; battle line (as at 6.108). Shakespeare's Henry IV calls it "the edge of war" (*III* 1.1.17).

281. erewhile: some time ago; amazed: stunned; a stronger term in Milton's era than in ours.

284. Was moving: began to move; a classical use of the imperfect tense.

285 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,
 290 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 ammiral, were but a wand,
 295 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
 300 Of that inflamèd 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

288–91. Tuscan . . . globe: Galileo is the *Tuscan artist*, the only contemporary to whom Milton in *PL* overtly alludes or names (5.262). *Artist* here signifies one skilled in a science. In *Areopagitica*, Milton claims that he visited Galileo while touring Tuscany (*MLM* 950). Galileo was by 1638 already blind or nearly so, making it unlikely that Milton witnessed him using his telescope (*optic glass*) to view the moon. Yet the poet was obviously fascinated by the new technology and the vistas it opened to imagination (Nicolson). *Fesole* overlooks the Arno river valley (*Valdarno*) and the city of Florence—a landscape and a society that Milton idolized. Galileo describes the moon's surface as mountainous in *Sidereal Messenger*.

292–94. Homer's Polyphemos, the Cyclops, wields "a staff . . . as large as is the mast of a black ship of twenty oars" (*Od.* 9.322). After he is blinded, "a lopped pine guides

and steadies his steps" (Vergil, *Aen.* 3.659). Milton extends Homer's comparison into a ratio that renders a great ship's mast inadequate to indicate the size of Satan's spear.

294. ammiral: obsolete spelling of *admiral*; a vessel carrying an admiral, flagship.

296. marl: rich, crumbly soil.

298. vaulted: The heavens are commonly described as an arched structure, or vault, like the ceiling of a cathedral. In Hell, even the sky is on fire.

299. Nathless: nonetheless.

302. autumnal leaves: Comparison of the dead to fallen leaves is commonplace; cp. Homer, *Il.* 6.146; Vergil, *Aen.* 6.309–10; Dante, *Inf.* 3.112–15. Milton's description is distinctly echoed in Dryden's 1697 translation of Vergil: "thick as the leaves in autumn strow the woods" (*Aen.* 6.428).

303. Milton likely visited the heavily wooded valley of *Vallombrosa* in the fall of 1638. The Italian place name literally means

- High overarched embow'r; or scattered sedge
 305 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
 310 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
 315 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
 320 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
 325 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
 His swift pursuers from Heav'n gates discern
 Th' advantage, and descending tread us down

"shady valley." Note its somber aural combination with *autumnal*, *strow*, *brooks*, and *embow'r*. Etruria: classical name for the Tuscan region. *Shades* is a metonymy for trees as well as a name for spirits of the dead.

304. *sedge*: botanical transition from the autumnal leaves of Vallombrosa to the Red Sea of Exodus. The Hebrew name for the Red Sea means "Sea of Sedge."

305. *Orion armed*: constellation of a hunter with sword and club. Orion rising was associated with stormy weather.

307. *Busiris*: mythical Egyptian king often identified as an oppressor of the Hebrews but here as the scriptural Pharaoh whose

army is engulfed after it pursues the Hebrews into the parted Red Sea (Exod. 14). *Memphian chivalry*: Memphis was the ancient capital of Egypt; *chivalry* refers to armed forces (cp. *PR* 3:344).

309. *sojourners of Goshen*: Hebrews fleeing Egypt, the land of Goshen (Gen. 47:27).

320. *virtue*: strength, valor.

324. *Seraph*: singular of *seraphim* (on the model of *cherub/cherubim*).

325. *anon*: straightaway, instantly (not "in a little while").

327. *tread us down*: trample us in triumph; cp. 2:79.

Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
 330 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n."
 They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
 335 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
 340 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
 345 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
 350 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain;
 A multitude, like which the populous north
 Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the south, and spread
 355 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith from every squadron and each band

337. The construction *obey to* is unusual but not unprecedented; see Shakespeare's *Phoenix*: "to whose sound chaste wings obey" (4); cp. Rom. 6.16.

339. Amram's son: Moses, who with his rod calls a black (*pitchy*) cloud of locusts to afflict Egypt (Exod. 10.12-15; cp. 12.185-86).

341. warping: floating and swarming.

345. cope: covering, vault, like that of the sky; cp. l. 298, 4.992.

348. sultan: ruler, despot, or tyrant.

351-55. Alludes to barbarian hords (Goths, Huns, Vandals) who from the third to fifth centuries poured into the southern Roman Empire. The Vandals crossed from Spain (*Beneath Gibraltar*) into Northern Africa (*Libyan sands*).

353. Rhene . . . Danaw: Rhine, Danube.

The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms
 Excelling human, princely dignities,
 360 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
 365 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
 370 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,
 375 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,
 380 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

363. *Books*: On God's condemnation as erasure (*razed*) from the roll of eternal life, see Exod. 32.32–33 and Rev. 22.5. The fallen angels' previous identities no longer exist; cp. 84n.

372. *gay*: gaudy, wanton; cp. 4.942.

373. That pagan gods were fallen angels was a Christian commonplace rooted in classical and scriptural thought, as Verity de-

tails (672–74). Cp. *Nat Ode* 173–228, *PR* 2.121–26.

376. The catalog is conventional, as is the request of the Muse to supply it; cp. Homer, *Il.* 5.703; Vergil, *Aen.* 9.664. Invocation of the Muse, a pagan deity, may seem jarring here, though in the invocations to Books 1 and 7 Milton identifies his Muse with inspiration from God.

380. *promiscuous*: random, diverse.

385 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
 390 His holy rites, and solemn feasts profaned,
 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
 395 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
 400 Audacious neighborhood, 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

386–87. **Sion . . . Cherubim:** Zion is the site of Solomon's Temple, which houses the Ark of the Covenant. The throne of God's invisible presence stands on top of the Ark between images of cherubim; see 10n.

389. **Abominations:** scripturally, causes of pollution, especially idols of false gods; objects that excite disgust and hatred in true believers.

392–96. **Moloch . . . idol:** *Moloch*, whose name is Hebrew for "king," was an Ammonite god represented by an idol "of brass, having the head of a calf . . . with arms extended to receive the miserable sacrifice [an infant], seared to death with his burning embracements. For the idol was hollow within, filled with fire. And lest their lamentable shrieks should sad the hearts of their parents, the priests of Moloch did deaf their ears with the continual clang of trumpets and timbrels"

(Sandys 1637, 186). Victims were said to be *passed through fire* to Moloch (2 Kings 23.10).

397–99. **Rabba:** Ammonite capital, the "city of waters" (2 Sam. 12.27); *Argob* was Ammonite territory in *Basan* (on the Eastern side of the Jordan). *Arnon* is the name of a river erroneously supposed to flow near Rabba.

400–405. Moloch dares induce worship among the Ammonites, whose realm bordered on Israel. Even more impudently, he leads Solomon to build him a temple opposite God's temple.

404. **Hinnom, Tophet thence:** valley sacred to Moloch, south of Jerusalem. The Greek for *Gebenna* ("valley of Hinnom") is in the *AV* translated as Hell (e.g., Matt. 23.33). *Hinnom* was thought to derive from the Hebrew for "outcry," referring to the screams of sacrificial babies; *Tophet* from the Hebrew for "timbrel," the instrument

- 405 And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
 Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons,
 From Aroar to Nebo, and the wild
 Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
- 410 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.
- 415 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
- 420 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
 Of Baälim and Ashtaroth, those male,
 These feminine. For spirits when they please
 Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
- 425 And uncompounded is their essence pure,
 Nor tied or manacled with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,

used to drown the screams (Selden 314). Post-exile Jews made the valley a dump where corpses of animals and criminals were burned. It thence symbolized the place of eternal punishment.

406–17. **Chemos**: god of the Moabites (*Moab's sons*); a Priapus-like idol also called Baal-Peör (412). See Selden 46–65. The scriptural place names in lines 407–11 demarcate Moabite territory on the east shore of the Dead Sea (*Asphaltic Pool*). During the Exodus, wandering Hebrews participated in his *wanton rites* and were punished with a plague (*woe*); see Num. 25, which Milton in *CMS* cites as the basis for a future work. Later, Solomon built a temple to Chemos on the mount (*bill of scandal*) where Moloch's temple also

stood (1 Kings 11:7; see 400–405n). The fertility cult of Chemos practiced ritual sex; Moloch's worshipers burned babies: hence, *lust hard by hate*.

418. **Josiah**: King of Judah admired by Reformers because he destroyed idols and defiled their sites of worship; see 2 Kings 23:10–14.

419–21. **from . . . ground**: i.e., the land of Israel or Canaan, distinguished by rivers that mark its northeastern and southwestern boundaries (Gen. 2:14).

422. **Baälim and Ashtaroth**: collective titles for Canaanite fertility gods and goddesses (sing. Baal, Ashtoreth—as at l. 438), often worshiped by ancient Israelites.

425. **uncompounded**: not differentiated into anatomical parts or systems.

Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
 430 Can execute their airy purposes,
 And works of love or enmity fulfill.
 For those the race of Israel oft forsook
 Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
 435 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;
 440 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,
 445 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,
 450 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

433. Living Strength: epithet for God (cp. 1 Sam. 15.29).

438-41. Phoenician version of the Assyrian Istar and the Greek Aphrodite, called *Astarte*. Her image had the body of a woman and the head of a horned bull, representing the crescent moon; cp. *Nat Ode* 200 and *Masque* 1002. Jeremiah (7:18) titles her the Queen of Heaven. *Sidon* was a chief Phoenician seaport. See Selden 141-71.

444-46. uxorious . . . foul: The king is Solomon, who to please foreign wives

(*fair idolatresses*) erects temples on the Mount of Olives (*th' offensive mountain*) to Moloch, Chemos, and Astarte (2 Kings 11.1-8). Cp. lines 403, 416. Solomon's *large heart* refers to his intellectual capacity (1 Kings 3.9-12). His *uxorious* idolatry appears in *CMS* among subjects for future works.

446-52. Thammuz . . . wounded: Thammuz is beloved of Astarte, who precedes him in the catalog. He is the Phoenician (Syrian) original of Adonis, which is also the

- 455 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
- 460 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
- 465 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon
 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.
- 470 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
- 475 His odious off'rings, and adore the gods

name of a river in Lebanon that runs red after the summer solstice, purportedly with blood from Thammuz's mortal wound. The river's source lies in a rocky coastal mountain range; hence its *native rock*. Adonis is a sun god whose annual death and revival signifies the changing of the seasons. See Sandys 1637, 20; Selden 239–49. Milton alludes to the familiar myth often, e.g., *Nat Ode* 204, *Manso* 11, and *Eikon*, where he scorns hypocritical mourning for the beheaded Charles (Yale 3365).

455. *Ezekiel*: Like other prophets, he condemned idolatrous observances in Israel, among them "women weeping for Thammuz" (Ezek. 8.14).

457–66. *Next . . . bounds*: During the era of Judges, the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant (see 386–87n) and set it in

the temple of their god, *Dagon*. His idol then fell before the Ark onto the temple threshold (*grunsel*) and broke (1 Sam. 5). Lines 464–66 name the chief cities of the Philistines. *Dag* is Hebrew for "fish." See Selden 173–89.

467–69. *Rimmon*: Syrian deity worshiped in Damascus, which lies between the rivers *Abbana* and *Pharphar*.

471. *A leper once he lost*: Elisha told the Syrian leper Naaman to cleanse himself in the Jordan. Naaman proclaimed the superiority of the rivers of Damascus but ultimately humbled himself, washed in the Jordan, and was cured (2 Kings 5.8–19).

471–76. *gained . . . vanquished*: King Ahaz of Judah defeated the Syrians but, returning to Jerusalem, erected an altar to Rimmon and worshiped him (2 Kings 16.10–16).

472. *sottish*: stupid.

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
 480 Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
 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
 485 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
 Lik'ning his Maker to the grazèd ox,
 Jehovah, who in one night when he passed
 From Egypt marching, equaled with one stroke
 Both her first born and all her bleating gods.
 490 Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
 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

478–82. *Osiris . . . human*: Ovid reports that when Typhon attacked Olympus (cp. 198–200n), some gods fled and wandered Egypt disguised as beasts (*Met.* 5.319–31). *Isis* and *Osiris* are Egyptian gods represented as having the heads of a cow and a bull. Plutarch wrote influentially about them, and their myth had a hold on Milton's imagination; see *Areop.* p. 955. Falcon-headed *Orus* was their son.

484–89. While Moses received the law on Mount Horeb (see 8n), the Hebrews pressured Aaron to forge a calf to worship (Exod. 12.35–36). It was made of Egyptian gold, *borrowed* by the Hebrews just before the Exodus (Deut. 9.8–21; Exod. 31.18, 32).

484–86. *rebel . . . ox*: Jeroboam, who rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam, *doubled* the sin at Horeb (see previous note) by repeating the former idolatry and by making two golden calves instead of one (2 Kings 12.12–23). "Thus they

changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Ps. 106.20).

487–89. Refers to the Hebrews' departure from Egypt, when Jehovah smites "all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast" and executes judgment "against all the gods of Egypt" (Exod. 12.12).

488. *equaled*: Jehovah with *one stroke* ends (and so proves equal to) many lives.

490. *Belial*: The Hebrew for *Belial* is not a proper noun, much less the name of a god, but refers to anyone opposing established authority, civil or religious. In English translations it became "worthless fellow" or "vile scoundrel." A Rabbinical etymology derives it from a verb meaning "throws off the yoke"; the Septuagint accordingly translates *Belial* with terms that signify lawlessness (*anomia* or *paranomos*). Milton with characteristic bite links *Belial* to organized religion and the court (cp. *PR* 2.182–83).

495 Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
 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
 505 Exposed a matron to avoid worse rape.
 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
 510 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
 515 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top

495. *Eli's sons*: For the lechery and sacrilege of Eli's sons, see 1 Sam. 2:12–24.

502. *flown*: filled to excess (obsolete past participle of *flow*).

503–4. *Sodom . . . Gibeah*: biblical cities in which gangs of men clamor at hosts' doors to rape male guests and are offered women instead—Lot's daughters in *Sodom* and the visiting Levite's concubine in *Gibeah* (Gen. 19, Judg. 19). 1667 reads "when hospitable doors / Yielded their matrons to prevent worse rape." 1674 concentrates on Gibeah, where the concubine, unlike Lot's daughters, actually is assaulted and in the morning deposited lifeless at the door where she had been *exposed*.

505. *matron*: Her Hebrew title is translated by "concubine," but Milton's diction is

not prudish. In polygamous Hebrew culture, concubines were secondary wives, owed the same respect from other men as the primary wife.

508. *Javan's issue*: Noah's grandson Javan was deemed (*held*) the ancestor of the Ionian Greeks; his name in the Septuagint is a version of Ionia (Gen. 10:2). Cp. *SA* 715–16.

509–14. *Gods . . . reigned*: Uranus and Gaea (*Heav'n and Earth*) beget the Greek gods. According to the Roman republican poet Ennius Quintus (239–170 B.C.E.), Titan's younger brother, Saturn, took Titan's *birthright* (cited by Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 1.14). *Jove*, Saturn's son by *Rhea*, usurped his father's throne.

515. *Ida*: mountain in *Crete* where Jove was born (cp. *Il Pens* 29).

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
 520 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
 525 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
 530 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 honor claimed
 Azazel as his right, a cherub tall:
 535 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 luster rich emblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies: all the while

516. **Olympus**: snowcapped peak where the Greeks supposed the gods resided; **middle air**: cooler region of the atmosphere, extending to the mountaintops. Milton makes it the postlapsarian possession of Satan and his followers (*PR* 1.44-46).

517. **Delphian cliff** on the southern slope of Mount Parnassus, the seat of the oracle of Apollo.

518. **Dodona**: town in Epirus, where Zeus had an oracle.

519. **Doric land**: Greece.

520-21. Saturn and his followers flee west from Greece, over the Adriatic Sea to Italy (*Hesperian fields*), to France (*the Celtic*), and finally to northwestern is-

lands, including Britain (*the utmost isles*); cp. *Masque* 59-61.

523. **damp**: dejected; cp. 11.293.

528. **recollecting**: remembering, reassembling; cp. 9.471.

532. **clarions**: "small shrill treble trumpet" (Hume).

534. **Azazel**: variously construed, but the Hebrew name suggests rugged strength. Cabbalistic lore made him one of Satan's standard-bearers, as Milton could have known from various sources (*West* 155ff).

537. **meteor**: comet.

538-39. **emblazed** . . . **trophies**: lit up or decorated with heraldic devices (*arms*) and memorials (*trophies*). Cp. 5.592-93.

- 540 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
- 545 Ten thousand banners rise into the air
 With orient colors waving: with them rose
 A forest huge of spears: and thronging helms
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
- 550 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
 Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
 To highth of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage
 Deliberate valor breathed, firm and unmoved
- 555 With dread of death to flight 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
- 560 Breathing united force with fixèd 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
- 565 Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,

540. *Sonorous metal*: synecdoche referring to the trumpets and clarions of line 532.

542. *tore Hell's concave*: carried through Hell's vaulted roof; see 8.242-44.

543. *reign*: realm; for *Chaos* and *Night* see 2.894-909, 959-1009. Their reaction is prophetic; Satan's activity will encroach on their realm; cp. 10.415-18.

546. *orient*: lustrous like a pearl; rising like the sun in the east.

548. *serried*: in close order.

550. *Dorian*: Plato would allow "manly" Dorian music in his ideal state because it

inspires, in Aristotle's words, "a moderate and settled temper" (*Rep.* 3.398-99; *Pol.* 8.5). Cp. *Areop* in *MLM* 943; *Of Ed* in *MLM* 979. Thucydides' account (5.70) of the Spartans in unbroken *phalanx*, calmly marching into battle to the sound of flutes, lies behind lines 549-62.

556. *swage*: assuage.

563. *horrid*: bristling (with spears).

565. *warriors old*: from the reader's perspective only; humanity has not yet been created.

Awaiting what command their mighty chief
 Had to impose: he through the armed files
 Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
 The whole battalion views, their order due,
 570 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
 575 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
 580 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,

567-68. files . . . traverse: He looks down and across the lines of warriors.

571. Their number last he sums: David orders a census to count the warriors he might deploy, as Satan does here; God punishes Israel for David's presumption and implicit lack of faith (2 Sam. 24).

573. since created man: since man was created.

575. small infantry: pygmies, mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 3.3-6). Addison was "afraid" that Milton intended the pun on *infant* (*Spectator* 297, Feb. 9, 1712).

577. Phlegra: In Greek myth, the Olympian gods defeated the giants on their breeding ground at Phlegra (Pallene), the westernmost prong of the Chalcidicean peninsula in the Aegean. The place name derives from the Greek for fire (cp. *Phlegethon* 2.581-82), so called because of the volcanic soil. Some later writers claimed that the battle culminated in Italy, where Jupiter blasts the giants on

similar turf—the Phlegræan plains near Vesuvius—and then imprisons them beneath regional volcanoes (*Diodorus* 4.21.5).

578. Thebes and Troy (*Ilium*) are main sites of Greek epic and tragedy.

579. auxiliar: In classical epic, the gods aid their mortal kin and other favorites.

580-81. King Arthur (*Uther's son*) and his knights, some from Brittany (*Armoric*). For Milton's fascination with Arthur, see *Damon* 166-68.

583-84. Aspramont . . . Trebisonde: Fighting against the Saracens, Roland wins honor at the castle of *Aspramont*, an episode often mentioned in Italian epic (see Ariosto, *OF* 17.14). *Montalban* is the site of the castle of Rinaldo, the hero to whom Tasso assigns victory in the battle for Jerusalem (*GL*). *Damasco*, *Marocco*, and *Trebisonde* are also sites associated with great warriors and battles between Christian and Saracen.

Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,
 585 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
 When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
 By Fontarabia. Thus far these beyond
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread commander: he above the rest
 590 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
 595 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
 600 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
 605 Signs of remorse and passion to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather

585. *Biserta*: Tunisian seaport from which Saracens embarked to invade Spain.

586–87. *Charlemagne . . . Fontarabia*: According to the Spanish Jesuit historian and noted advocate of tyrannicide Juan de Mariana (1536–1624), *Charlemagne* fell—that is, suffered ruinous defeat—at *Fontarabia* (1699). The historical incident is the basis for the epic tale of the death of Roland and his twelve paladins at nearby Roncesvalles.

588. *observed*: heeded, revered. Though it exceeds the greatest historical and legendary human armies combined, Satan's army acknowledges the still greater excellence of its leader.

594. *glory*: a coronalike brilliance; see 141n.

596. *Shorn*: an allusion to Samson, whose name derives from the Hebrew word for "sun."

596–99. *from . . . monarchs*: Charles II's censor objected to these lines, presumably because the king himself had been born on the day of an eclipse in 1630, a coincidence later construed "as a portent of the interregnum" (Leonard).

599. *Perplexes*: torments, a stronger term in seventeenth-century usage than now; see, e.g., *OTH* 5.2.346.

601. *intrenched*: cut into.

603. *considerate*: thoughtful, deliberate.

605. *passion*: suffering or affliction, in contrast with *cruel*, disposed to inflict suffering.

(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemned
 For ever now to have their lot in pain,
 Millions of spirits for his fault amerced
 610 Of Heav'n, and from eternal splendors 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 singèd top their stately growth though bare
 615 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,
 620 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,
 625 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
 630 As stood like these, could ever know repulse?

609. *amerced*: from the French for "at the mercy of"; a law term meaning "fined at the court's discretion." Milton's unidiomatic construction suggests that he had in mind a similar Greek verb used by Homer to explain the blindness of the bard Demodokos: "Of his sight [the Muse] deprived [*ámerre*] him" (*Od.* 8.64).

615. *blasted heath*: Cp. *MAC* 1.3.77.

620. *Tears . . . forth*: According to Raphael, angels digest food and make love. Here it seems that they also have the capacity to shed tears after their fashion (cp. 5.407-39, 8.622-29, 10.23-25). It was commonly supposed that males weep because they are

born of women. Milton rejects this theory (see 10.1101-2, 11.494-97) and had precedent for presenting angels capable of weeping; see, e.g., Shakespeare, *MM* 2.2.879, *OTH* 3.3.371. In context, Satan's tears suggest those of the Persian tyrant Xerxes before his invasion of Greece. Reviewing his vast army, he was overcome by consciousness of his soldiers' mortality "at the time when he was hastening them to their fate, and to the intended destruction of the greatest people in the world, to gratify his own vain glory" (Newton). Cp. 10.307-11.

624. *event*: outcome.

- 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?
 635 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,
 640 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
 645 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.
 650 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 favor equal to the sons of Heav'n:

632. *puissant*: powerful.

641. *still*: invariably.

642. *tempted our attempt*: Milton's propensity for paronomasia—close repetition of similar-sounding words distinct in meaning—has long been derided as “jingling”: “like marriages between persons too near of kin, to be avoided” (Hume). It is a figure distinctive of Hebrew Scripture, however, and one found in late Latin writers and Renaissance Italian poets. Milton often uses it in expressions of derision; see lines 666–67, 4.286, 5.869, 9.11, 9.648, 11.627, 12.78.

646. *close*: covert.

650. *Space may produce*: a notably active

construction for a state commonly regarded as a passive locale or empty setting. By *worlds* Milton means what we would call “universes.” The one that Satan proceeds to mention is our own, which “may be supposed as yet not made” (Argument; cp. 8.229–36).

651. *fame*: rumor; cp. 2.345–53, 830–35, 10.481–82.

653. *generation*: race; *choice regard*: selective estimation or judgment. *Regard* may also mean “purpose” or “intention,” as in the description of Shakespeare’s Henry V: “The King is full of grace, and fair regard” (1.2.22).

- 655 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
- 660 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
- 665 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 toward the vault of Heav'n.
- 670 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 sulfur. Thither winged with speed
- 675 A numerous brigade hastened. As when bands
 Of pioneers with spade and pickax armed
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on,
 Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell

656. *eruption*: outbreak; the diction seems suggestive of "hell's volcanoes" (Leonard), but according to the *OED* the association of *eruption* with volcanic activity is not current in England until well into the eighteenth century.

672. *scurf*: any incrustation upon the surface of a body (especially diseased or scabbed skin); here a sulfurous deposit.

673. *womb*: belly or cavity.

674. *work of sulfur*: "the offspring and production of sulfur, . . . the subterranean fire [that] concocts and boils up the crude

and undigested earth into a more profitable consistence, and by its innate heat, hardens and bakes it into metals" (Hume).

676. *pioneers*: soldiers who do demolition or construction for siege or defense.

678. *Mammon*: like *Belial*, a common noun. Derived from the Arabic for "riches," it means "wealth"; cp. Matt. 6.24. By medieval times, Mammon had been personified as a Christian version of Pluto. See Spenser, *FQ* 2.7.

679. *erected*: upright in posture, lofty in character.

- 680 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
- 685 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransacked the center, 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
- 690 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,
 695 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.
- 700 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:

682. Heav'n's pavement: see Rev. 21.21.

684. vision beatific: literally, the "happy-making sight" (*On Time* 18); viewing God.

686. center: the earth's interior.

686-88. impious . . . hid: a commonplace that originates in Ovid's account of a maternally abusive degeneration from the original "golden" age of justice and temperance (*Met.* 1.137-40). See Spenser, *FQ* 2.7.16, for a similar association of Mammon with such impiety. Cp. Comus's reversal of the theme, 718-36.

688-90. Soon . . . gold: The diction anticipates the production of Eve at 8.463ff.

690. ribs: veins of ore; admire: wonder.

694. The Tower of Babel (see 12.43-62) and the Egyptian pyramids.

700-704. The *massy ore* (gold is dense) extracted by the pioneers is melted (*founded*) in prepared *cells* heated from below by a second group of fallen angels, who use *liquid fire* conveyed from the burning lake in sluices (*Sluiced*). Smelting the metals separates (*severing*) the heavy gold from the less dense matter (*dross*), which rises to the top and is skimmed off (*scummed*), leaving pure gold in the cells. In line 703, 1674 prints *found out* instead of *founded* (1667).

- 705 A third as soon had formed within the ground
 A various mold, 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 soundboard breathes.
- 710 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
- 715 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
 Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
- 720 Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove

705-9. *A various mold* (hollow form or matrix) has been shaped by yet another crew, which fills it with molten gold transported from the cells *by strange conveyance*. This process is compared to an intricate musical composition taking audible form from *one blast of wind* into an organ.

710. *fabric*: fabrication.

711-12. Structural principles of music (e.g., Pythagoras' golden section) were deemed basic to architecture and other plastic arts, including, as Milton later presents it, cuisine (see 5.333-49). Athenians played music at the dedication of temples like the Parthenon.

711. *exhalation*: vapor emitted by the earth.

713-17. *Built . . . gold*: The edifice looks like a pagan temple, with features that recall the Roman Pantheon (e.g., golden roof), though the satirical Milton presumably also has St. Peter's Basilica in mind.

713. *pillasters round*: square columns built into the wall; *round* modifies *set*.

714. *Doric*: the least ornamented style of Greek column; like the laconic music of line 550.

715. *architrave*: the "master beam" or basis of the upper section of a classical temple; it sits on top of the columns (hence *overlaid*).

716. *Cornice or frieze*: The *frieze* is a band that sits on the architrave and is often, as in the case of the Parthenon, decorated with sculptures that stand out in relief, as if embossed (*bossy*). The *cornice* caps the frieze and is also often ornamented.

717. *fretted gold*: gold wrought with ornamental designs, as in the Pantheon.

718. *Alcairo*: Memphis, ancient capital of Egypt, near modern Cairo.

720. *Belus*: name for Baal in Babylon, where he had a celebrated temple, described by Raleigh (1621, 183); *Serapis*: Ptolemaic amalgamation of Hades and Osiris, with splendid temples in Memphis and Alexandria.

In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately highth, and straight the doors
 Op'ning their brazen folds discover wide
 725 Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the archèd roof
 Pendant by subtle magic many a row
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus yielded light
 730 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 sceptor'd angels held their residence,
 735 And sat as princes, whom the supreme 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
 740 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
 745 Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
 On Lemnos th' Aegean isle: thus they relate,

722-23. *ascending pile / Stood fixed*: After rising like a vapor out of the ground, the magnificent building achieved its finished state.

728. *cressets*: iron baskets suspended from the ceiling, containing flaming pitch (*asphaltus*).

729. *naphtha*: liquid pitch, supplies the lamps.

739. *Ausonian land*: Greek name for a district of Italy.

740. *Mulciber*: smelter; another name for Vulcan, Roman counterpart to the Greek

Hephaestus, god of fire and crafts. Homer mentions palaces he erects on Olympus (*Il.* 1.605-8), and Hesiod says he forged Pandora (cp. 688-90n; 4.714-19n).

740-48. *Men . . . before*: Homer's Hephaestus tells how Zeus threw him from Olympus to punish him for siding with Hera (*Il.* 1.591-95). Milton closely imitates that account but then corrects it.

745. *zenith*: (1) upper region of the sky, where vaporous meteorological phenomena such as *falling stars* were thought to ignite; (2) the highest point above the

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
 750 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
 755 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
 760 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
 765 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,

observer's horizon attained by a celestial body (the sun in this case).

750. *engines*: contrivances (it shares a common Latin root with *invention*); cp. 4.17.

756. *Pandaemonium*: Greek for "place of all the demons."

759. *By place or choice*: by virtue of rank or election.

764. *Wont*: were wont (accustomed) to; *soldan's*: sultan's (see 348n).

765. *paynim*: pagan.

766. *career*: short gallop at full speed, as in jousting.

767-75. *swarmed . . . affairs*: Bee similes occur frequently in classical literature, and the phrasing here variously echoes

precursors (cp. Homer, *Il.* 2.87-90; Vergil, *Aen.* 1.430-36; 6.707-9, and especially *Georg.* 4.149-227). Bees are usually presented as exemplary creatures, beneficial to humanity. Milton bends the tradition so that the inaugural scene of *state affairs* in Satan's palace anticipates the final one, when the fallen angels are straitened into swarms of hissing serpents (cp. 10.508ff). Note the predominance of sibilants in both passages. When Milton was in Rome, the seemingly ubiquitous insignia of Pope Urban VIII was a bee, and his followers were called bees.

769. *Taurus*: The sun stays in the astrological sign of Taurus from April 20 till May

- 770 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
 775 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
 780 Throng numberless, like that pygmean race
 Beyond the Indian mount, or faerie elves
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
 Or fountain some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
 785 Sits arbitress, 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
 790 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

20, the period immediately after Aries, the sign under which the world was created and would have persisted had the Fall not occurred.

774. *expatiate*: (1) walk about; (2) speak at length. Bees communicate by moving their legs in view of other bees, relaying directions to the best sites for pollen. Although such entomological discoveries are relatively recent, beekeepers have long recognized that allowing bees to "walk about" each other augments the harvest of honey; hence the "suburban" plank laid outside the hive for that purpose.

778. *Earth's giant sons*: See 198–200n.

780–81. *Throng . . . mount*: The legendary Pygmies were commonly thought to live beyond the Ganges in secluded mountainous regions where the Cranes that they battle lay their eggs (cp. 575n).

783–84. *belated . . . he sees*: The phrasing is generally taken as a borrowing from Vergil, when Aeneas thinks he glimpses Dido's shade. But vacillation between seeing and dreaming and mention of a *belated peasant* make reminiscence of *MND* equally likely (4.1.204–14).

785. *arbitress*: observer and judge.

The great Seraphic lords and Cherubim
795 In close recess and secret conclave sat
A thousand demigods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then
And summons read, the great consult began.

795. *close recess*: enclosed, secluded place;
conclave: literally, "lockable room"; in
the Catholic Church, it denotes the
meeting held to select a new pope, so
called from the secure room in which the
meeting occurs.

797. *Frequent*: numerous.

798. *consult*: In seventeenth-century usage,
the term is associated with secret meet-
ings for plotting insurgency.