

## BOOK 1 THE ARGUMENT

*This first Book proposes, first in brief, the whole Subject, Mans disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was plac't: 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*  
5 *with all his Crew into the great Deep. Which action past over, the Poem hasts into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell, describ'd here, not in the Center (for Heaven and Earth may be suppos'd as yet not made, certainly not yet accurst) but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest call'd Chaos: Here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning Lake, thunder-struck and astonisht, after a certain space*  
10 *recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in Order and Dignity lay by him; they confer of thir miserable fall. Satan awakens all his Legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; They rise, thir Numbers, array of Battel, thir chief Leaders nam'd, according to the Idols known afterwards in Canaan and the Countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his Speech, comforts them with hope*  
15 *yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new World and new kind of Creature to be created, according to an ancient Prophetie 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 Prophetie, and what to determin thereon he refers to a full Council. What his Associates thence attempt. Pandemonium the Palace of Satan rises,*  
20 *suddenly built out of the Deep: The infernal Peers there sit in Council.*

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit  
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast  
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

5–6. According to Horace, the epic poet should begin *in medias res*.

7. **Center.** Hell was not, as some thought, in the center of the earth.

17. **Fathers.** Church Fathers writing in the early Christian centuries, e.g., Jerome, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzen. See Milton's *Christian Doctrine*, 1.7.

1–26. The first Proem contains the epic statement of theme (1–5) and the invocation.

4. Christ, the second Adam.

6. See 7.1 and note. Urania, the Greek Muse of astronomy, had been made into the Muse of Christian poetry by Du Bartas and other religious poets. Here she is identified as the Muse that inspired biblical prophet-poets.

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,  
 In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth  
 10 Rose out of *Chaos*: Or if *Sion Hill*  
 Delight thee more, and *Siloa's Brook* that flow'd  
 Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence  
 Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,  
 That with no middle flight intends to soar  
 15 Above th' *Aonian Mount*, while it pursues  
 Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.  
 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 satst brooding on the vast Abyss  
 And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark  
 Illumin, what is low raise and support;  
 That to the highth of this great Argument<sup>o</sup> subject  
 25 I may assert Eternal Providence,  
 And justifie<sup>o</sup> the wayes of God to men. show the justice of  
 Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view  
 Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause  
 Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,  
 30 Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off  
 From thir Creator, and transgress his Will  
 For<sup>o</sup> one restraint, Lords of the World besides? because of

8. Moses, thought to be the author of Genesis and the other four books of the Pentateuch, was tending sheep on Mount Horeb ("*Oreb*") when God spoke to him from a burning bush (Exod. 3:1–2); he received the Law on the highest peak, "*Sinai*." **chosen Seed.** The Jews.

9–10 **In the Beginning.** Echoes Gen. 1:1; Milton thought God created the universe out of unformed matter ("*Chaos*"), not out of nothing. **Sion Hill.** Mount Zion, associated with the biblical poet David (reputed author of many psalms); also the site of Solomon's Temple with its songs and ceremonies.

11–12 **Siloa's Brook.** Siloah, a pool near Mount Zion (Neh. 3:15); it parallels Aganippe, the Muses' spring. Also Siloam, the pool where Jesus cured a blind man (John 9:1–11). **Oracle.** Mount Zion as site of Divine teaching and prophecy (Isa. 2:3).

15 **Aonian Mount.** Mount Helicon, home of the classical Muses.

16. The line translates Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* 1.2.2: "Cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima."

17 **Spirit.** Probably the creative power of God (see Milton's commentary on Gen. 1:2 in *Christian Doctrine*, 1.7), but possibly the Holy Spirit, understood in antitrinitarian terms (ch. 6).

17–22. A composite of biblical phrases (e.g., Gen. 1:2, 1 Cor. 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32). Milton's brooding image comes from the Hebrew, accurately translated in the Tremellius Latin Bible ("incubabat").

27. An opening question like this is an epic convention. Compare *Aeneid* 1.8, "Musa, mihi causas memora" ("Tell me the cause, O Muse").

Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?  
 Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile  
 35 Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd  
 The Mother of Mankind, what time<sup>o</sup> his Pride *when*  
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host<sup>o</sup> *army*  
 Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring  
 To set himself in Glory above his Peers,<sup>o</sup> *equals, nobles*  
 40 He trusted to have equal'd the most High,  
 If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim  
 Against the Throne and Monarchy of God  
 Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud  
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
 45 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie  
 With hideous ruine and combustion down  
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
 In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,  
 Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.  
 50 Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night  
 To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
 Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe  
 Confounded though immortal: But his doom  
 Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought  
 55 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful<sup>o</sup> eyes *malignant*  
 That witness'd huge affliction and dismay  
 Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:  
 At once as far as Angels kenn<sup>o</sup> he views *range of sight*  
 60 The dismal Situation waste and wilde,  
 A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
 As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames  
 No light, but rather darkness visible  
 Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,  
 65 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

33. Compare *Iliad* 1.8, asking who first sowed discord among the Greeks.

34. See Rev. 12:9: "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." The description of Satan's fall (42–9) echoes Isa. 14:12–15, Luke 10:18, and Jude 6.

48. Adamant was a mythical substance of great hardness.

50. Alludes to the analogous fall of the defeated Titans in Greek myth (Hesiod, *Theogony* 664–735), who fell nine days from heaven to earth and nine more into Tartarus.

66. The phrase alludes to the inscription over Dante's Hell, "All hope abandon, you who enter here" (*Inferno* 3.9) and to Euripides, *Troades* 681, "to me even hope, that remains to all mortals, never comes."

That comes to all; but torture without end  
 Still urges,<sup>o</sup> and a fiery Deluge, fed *always provokes*  
 With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:  
 70 Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd  
 For those rebellious, here thir Prison ordain'd  
 In utter darkness, and thir portion set  
 As far remov'd 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'whelm'd  
 With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
 He soon discerns, and weltring<sup>o</sup> by his side *rolling in the waves*  
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,  
 80 Long after known in *Palestine*, and nam'd  
*Beelzebub*. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,  
 And thence in Heav'n call'd *Satan*, with bold words  
 Breaking the horrid silence thus began.  
 If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd  
 85 From him, who in the happy Realms of Light  
 Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine  
 Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,  
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope  
 And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,  
 90 Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd  
 In equal ruin: into what Pit thou seest  
 From what highth fall'n, so much the stronger prov'd  
 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 chang'd in outward lustre, that fixt mind  
 And high disdain, from sence of injur'd merit,  
 That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,  
 100 And to the fierce contention brought along

74. Milton here describes the distance from Heaven to Hell as three times the distance from the center (earth) to the outermost sphere. Cf. other descriptions of the universe at 2.1051–3 and 8.66–170.

81. The Phoenician sun god Baal (the name in Hebrew means “Lord of the Flies”); in Matt. 12:24 he is called “the prince of the devils.” Like Satan (whose name in Hebrew means “Adversary”) and the other fallen angels, he is now known by the name he will bear in Hell and as a pagan deity.

84–5. Satan's opening words recall Aeneas' vision of the ghost of Hector on the night of Troy's fall, “so changed from the living Hector” (*Aeneid* 2.274–5).

Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd  
 That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,  
 His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd  
 In dubious<sup>o</sup> Battel 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 deifie his power,  
 Who from the terrour of this Arm so late  
 Doubted<sup>o</sup> 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,<sup>o</sup>  
 Since through experience of this great event  
 In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,  
 120 We may with more successful hope resolve  
 To wage by force or guile eternal Warr  
 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 rackt with deep despare:  
 And him thus answer'd soon his bold Compeer.<sup>o</sup>  
 O Prince, O Chief of many Throned Powers  
 That led th' imbattelld Seraphim to Warr  
 130 Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds  
 Fearless, endanger'd Heav'ns 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,<sup>o</sup>  
 135 That with sad overthrow and foul defeat  
 Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty Host

*of uncertain outcome**feared for**cease to exist**comrade**outcome*

105. Cf. 6.833–4.

116–17 **Gods**. Usually angels (cf. 3.341), whose substance is “empyrean” (fiery, the substance of the highest heaven). But Satan sometimes uses “Gods” to imply a pagan pantheon (cf. 5.70–81, 9.718–30).

128–9. According to tradition there were nine orders of angels arranged hierarchically: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. The poem uses some of these titles, but does not keep the hierarchy.

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 vigour soon returns,  
 Though all our Glory extinct, and happy state  
 Here swallow'd up in endless misery.  
 But what if he our Conquerour, (whom I now  
 Of force<sup>o</sup> believe Almighty, since no less *necessarily*  
 145 Then such could hav orepow'rd such force as ours)  
 Have left us this our spirit and strength intire  
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
 That we may so suffice<sup>o</sup> his vengeful ire, *satisfy*  
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls<sup>o</sup> *slaves*  
 150 By right of Warr, what e're 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 undiminisht, or eternal being  
 155 To undergo eternal punishment?  
 Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-fiend reply'd.  
 Fall'n Cherube, to be weak is miserable  
 Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,  
 To do ought 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 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 thir destind aim.  
 But see the angry Victor hath recall'd  
 170 His Ministers of vengeance and pursuit  
 Back to the Gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous Hail  
 Shot after us in storm, oreblown<sup>o</sup> hath laid *calmed*  
 The fiery Surge, that from the Precipice  
 Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the Thunder,  
 175 Wing'd 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<sup>o</sup> th' occasion, whether scorn, *miss*

- Or satiate<sup>o</sup> fury yield it from our Foe. satisfied
- 180 Seest thou yon dreary Plain, forlorn and wilde,  
The seat of desolation, voyd of light,  
Save what the glimmering of these livid<sup>o</sup> flames bluish  
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
- 185 There rest, if any rest can harbour there,  
And reassembling our afflicted Powers,  
Consult how we may henceforth most offend<sup>o</sup> vex, harm  
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,  
How overcome this dire Calamity,
- 190 What reinforcement we may gain from Hope,  
If not what resolution from despare.
- Thus *Satan* talking to his neerest Mate  
With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes  
That sparkling blaz'd, 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 warr'd 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<sup>o</sup> slumbring on the *Norway* foam perhaps  
The Pilot of some small night-founder'd<sup>o</sup> Skiff, benighted
- 205 Deeming some Island, oft, as Sea-men tell,  
With fixed Anchor in his skaly rind  
Moors by his side under the Lee,<sup>o</sup> while Night out of the wind  
Invests<sup>o</sup> the Sea, and wished Morn delays: covers  
So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
- 210 Chain'd on the burning Lake, nor ever thence

183–91. Five of these lines rhyme.

196 **rood**. An old unit of linear measure (6–8 yards), or the fourth part of an acre.

198–9. Both the Titans (led by "*Briareos*," said to have a hundred hands) and the Giants, represented by "*Typhon*" (who lived near Tarsus and was said to have a hundred serpent heads) made war on Jove. They were cast into the underworld in punishment (Hesiod, *Theogony* 713–16, 820–85). Christian mythographers (and Milton) often interpreted myths as analogues to the story of Satan's rebellion and fall.

200–1. The whale, often identified with the great sea-monster and enemy of the Lord in Isa. 27:1, and the crocodile-like dragon of Job 41:1–34, who is "king over all the children of pride." Both were commonly identified with Satan.

203–8. The story of the deceived sailor and the illusory island was a commonplace (see, e.g., *Orlando Furioso* 6.37–41) often applied to Satan.

- Had ris'n or heav'd 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  
 215 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought  
 Evil to others, and enrag'd might see  
 How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth  
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn  
 On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
- 220 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd.  
 Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool  
 His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames  
 Drivn backward slope thir pointing spires,<sup>o</sup> and rowld *points of flame*  
 In billows, leave i'th' midst a horrid<sup>o</sup> Vale. *horrible, bristling*
- 225 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight  
 Aloft, incumbent<sup>o</sup> on the dusky Air *pressing*  
 That felt unusual weight, till on dry Land  
 He lights,<sup>o</sup> if it were Land that ever burn'd *alights*  
 With solid, as the Lake with liquid fire;
- 230 And such appear'd in hue, as when the force  
 Of subterranean wind transports a Hill  
 Torn from *Pelorus*, or the shatter'd side  
 Of thundring *Aetna*, whose combustible  
 And fewel'd entrals thence conceiving Fire,
- 235 Sublim'd<sup>o</sup> with Mineral fury, aid the Winds, *vaporized*  
 And leave a singed bottom all involv'd<sup>o</sup> *enveloped*  
 With stench and smoak: Such resting found the sole  
 Of unblest feet. Him followed his next Mate,  
 Both glorying to have scap't the *Stygian*<sup>o</sup> flood *Styxlike, hellish*
- 240 As Gods, and by thir own recover'd strength,  
 Not by the sufferance<sup>o</sup> of supernal Power. *permission*  
 Is this the Region, this the Soil, the Clime,  
 Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat<sup>o</sup> *estate*  
 That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
- 245 For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
 Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid  
 What shall be right: fardest from him is best  
 Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supream

230–7 **subterranean wind**. Thought to be the cause of earthquakes. **Pelorus**. Cape Faro, a promontory on the east of Sicily, near the volcanic Mount "*Aetna*." Cf. *Aeneid* 3.570–7, Virgil's description of Etna darkening Pelorus with its smoke.

- Above his equals. Farewel 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 chang'd by Place or Time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in it self  
 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 then<sup>o</sup> he *scarcely less than*  
 Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built  
 260 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce  
 To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:  
 Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n.  
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,  
 265 Th' associates and copartners of our loss  
 Lye thus astonisht<sup>o</sup> on th' oblivious Pool, *stunned*  
 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 Regaind in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?  
 So *Satan* spake, and him *Beelzebub*  
 Thus answer'd. Leader of those Armies bright,  
 Which but th' Onnipotent none could have foyle,  
 If once they hear that voyce, thir liveliest pledge  
 275 Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft  
 In worst extreame, and on the perilous edge<sup>o</sup> *front lines*  
 Of battel when it rag'd, in all assaults  
 Thir surest signal, they will soon resume  
 New courage and revive, though now they lye  
 280 Groveling and prostrate on yon Lake of Fire,  
 As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd,  
 No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious highth.  
 He scarce had ceas't when the superiour Fiend  
 Was moving toward the shoar; his ponderous shield

254–6. Compare Satan's soliloquy, 4:75–8.

262–3. The sentiment, and its opposite, were proverbial. Cf. Phineas Fletcher, *The Purple Island*, 7.10, "In heav'n they scorn'd to serve, so now in hell they reign." See also Abdiel (*PL* 6.183–5).

266 **oblivious pool**. Suggests Lethe (forgetfulness), one of the classical rivers of Hades.

284–7. Cf. Achilles' shield, *Iliad* 19.373.

- 285 Ethereal temper, massy,<sup>o</sup> large and round, solid, weighty  
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
 Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb  
 Through Optic Glass the *Tuscan* Artist views  
 At Ev'ning 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,<sup>o</sup> were but a wand, admiral's flagship
- 295 He walkt with to support uneasie steps  
 Over the burning Marle,<sup>o</sup> not like those steps clay soil  
 On Heavens Azure, and the torrid Clime  
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with Fire;  
 Nathless<sup>o</sup> he so endur'd, till on the Beach nevertheless
- 300 Of that inflamed Sea, he stood and call'd  
 His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't  
 Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks  
 In *Vallombrosa*, where th' *Etrurian* shades  
 High overarch't imbowr;<sup>o</sup> or scatterd sedge<sup>o</sup> form bowers / seaweed
- 305 Afloat, when with fierce Winds *Orion* arm'd  
 Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves orethrew  
*Busiris* and his *Memphian* Chivalry,  
 While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd  
 The Sojourners of *Goshen*, who beheld
- 310 From the safe shore thir floating Carkases  
 And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown  
 Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,  
 Under amazement<sup>o</sup> of thir hideous change. stupefaction  
 He call'd so loud, that all the hollow Deep

285. **Ethereal.** Tempered with celestial fire.

288–91. Galileo studied the moon with a powerful telescope (“Optic Glass”) which as “Artist” (*artifex*) he made. He did so from the hill town of Fiesole (“*Fesole*”) outside Florence and from the valley of the Arno (“*Valdarno*”), in Tuscany. Milton visited him in 1638 or 1639.

292–4. Ships’ masts were customarily made from “*Norwegian*” fir trees. Cf. Homer’s comparison of Polyphemus’ club to the mast of a “black ship” (*Odyssey* 9.322–3).

302–4. Similes comparing the numberless dead to fallen leaves are frequent in epic (e.g. *Aeneid* 6.309–10). **Vallombrosa.** Shady valley; a wooded region high in the Apennines, about 20 miles from Florence in the region anciently known as “*Etrurea*.”

305–12. The constellation **Orion** (representing an armed giant) was associated with stormy weather (*Amos* 5:8; *Aeneid* 1.535, 7.719). **Busiris** was a mythical Egyptian pharaoh identified by Milton with the pharaoh of *Exod.* 14, who pursued the Israelites (formerly “*Sojourners of Goshen*” in *Egypt*) into the Red Sea; it rolled back for them but inundated the Egyptians (“*Memphian Chivalry*”).

- 315 Of Hell resounded. Princes, Potentates,  
 Warriars, the Flowr of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,  
 If such astonishment as this can sieze  
 Eternal spirits; or have ye chos'n this place  
 After the toyl of Battel to repose
- 320 Your wearied vertue,<sup>o</sup> for the ease you find *strength, valor*  
 To slumber here, as in the Vales of Heav'n?  
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn  
 To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds  
 Cherube and Seraph rowling<sup>o</sup> in the Flood *tossing about*
- 325 With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns,<sup>o</sup> till anon *battle flags*  
 His swift pursuers from Heav'n Gates discern  
 Th' advantage, and descending tread us down  
 Thus drooping, or with linked Thunderbolts  
 Transfix us to the bottom of this Gulfe.
- 330 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.  
 They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung  
 Upon the wing, as when men wont<sup>o</sup> to watch *accustomed*  
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,  
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
- 335 Nor did they not perceave the evil plight  
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;  
 Yet to thir Generals Voyce they soon obeyd  
 Innumerable. As when the potent Rod  
 Of *Amrams* Son in *Egypt*s evill day
- 340 Wav'd round the Coast,<sup>o</sup> up call'd a pitchy cloud *region*  
 Of *Locusts*, warping<sup>o</sup> on the Eastern Wind, *floating*  
 That ore the Realm of impious *Pharaoh* hung  
 Like Night, and darken'd all the Land of *Nile*:  
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen
- 345 Hovering on wing under the Cope<sup>o</sup> of Hell *roof*  
 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding Fires;  
 Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted Spear  
 Of thir great Sultan waving to direct  
 Thir course, in even ballance<sup>o</sup> down they light *perfect formation*
- 350 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the Plain;  
 A multitude, like which the populous North

338–43 **Amrams Son**. Moses (Exod. 6:20), who with his rod called down a plague of locusts on Egypt “so that the land was darkened” (Exod. 10:12–15; *PL* 12.184–8).

348 **Sultan**. The title of the Ottoman emperors, connoting despotism.

351–5. The barbarian invasions of Rome began with northern tribes crossing the Rhine (“*Rhene*”) and Danube (“*Danaw*”) rivers, then spreading across Spain via “*Gibraltar*” into North Africa (“*Lybian sands*”).

Pour'd never from her frozen loyns, to pass  
*Rhene* or the *Danaw*, when her barbarous Sons  
 Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread  
 355 Beneath *Gibraltar* to the *Lybian* sands.  
 Forthwith from every Squadron and each Band  
 The Heads and Leaders thither hast where stood  
 Thir great Commander; Godlike shapes and forms  
 Excelling human, Princely Dignities,  
 360 And Powers that earst<sup>o</sup> in Heaven sat on Thrones; *formerly*  
 Though of thir Names in heav'nly Records now  
 Be no memorial, blotted out and ras'd<sup>o</sup> *erased*  
 By thir Rebellion, from the Books of Life.  
 Nor had they yet among the Sons of *Eve*  
 365 Got them new Names, till wandring ore the Earth,  
 Through Gods high sufferance for the tryal of man,  
 By falsities and lyes the greatest part  
 Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake  
 God thir Creator, and th' invisible  
 370 Glory of him that made them, to transform  
 Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorn'd  
 With gay<sup>o</sup> Religions full of Pomp and Gold, *showy, specious*  
 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, thir Names then known, who first, who last,  
 Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery Couch,  
 At thir great Emperors call, as next in worth  
 Came singly<sup>o</sup> where he stood on the bare strand,<sup>o</sup> *one at a time / shore*  
 380 While the promiscuous<sup>o</sup> croud stood yet aloof? *randomly mixed*  
 The chief were those who from the Pit of Hell  
 Roaming to seek thir prey on earth, durst fix  
 Thir Seats long after next the Seat of God,  
 Thir Altars by his Altar, Gods ador'd  
 385 Among the Nations round, and durst abide

363 **Books of Life.** Record of the names of the faithful (Rev. 3:5 and 21:27).

373. Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and others identified the pagan gods with the fallen angels, and the belief continued to Milton's time.

376. The catalogue of the gods here is an epic convention. Homer catalogues commanders and ships, Virgil, warriors; both begin with an invocation to the Muse (*Iliad* 2.484; *Aeneid* 7.641).

381–91. The first group of devil-idols settled in the Middle East, close neighbors of "*Jehovah*" whose seat was in Jerusalem ("*Sion*"). Milton draws many details about them from John Selden's *De Diis Syris*.

- Jehovah* thundring out of *Sion*, thron'd  
 Between the Cherubim; yea, often plac'd  
 Within his Sanctuary it self thir Shrines,  
 Abominations; and with cursed things  
 390 His holy Rites, and solemn Feasts profan'd,  
 And with thir darkness durst affront<sup>o</sup> his light. *confront, defy*  
 First *Moloch*, horrid King besmear'd with blood  
 Of human sacrifice, and parents tears,  
 Though for the noyse of Drums and Timbrels<sup>o</sup> loud *tambourines*  
 395 Thir childrens cries unheard, that past through fire  
 To his grim Idol. Him the *Ammonite*  
 Worshipt in *Rabba* and her watry Plain,  
 In *Argob* and in *Basan*, to the stream  
 Of utmost *Arnon*. Nor content with such  
 400 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart  
 Of *Solomon* he led by fraud to build  
 His Temple right against the Temple of God  
 On that opprobrious<sup>o</sup> Hill, and made his Grove *polluted*  
 The pleasant Vally of *Hinnom*, *Tophet* thence  
 405 And black *Gehenna* call'd, the Type<sup>o</sup> of Hell. *figure*  
 Next *Chemos*, th' obscene dread<sup>o</sup> of *Moabs* Sons, *object of awe*  
 From *Aroar* to *Nebo*, and the wild  
 Of Southmost *Abarim*; in *Hesebon*  
 And *Horonaim*, *Seons* Realm, beyond  
 410 The flowry Dale of *Sibma* clad with Vines,  
 And *Eleale* to th' *Asphaltick* Pool.  
*Peor* his other Name, when he entic'd  
*Israel* in *Sittim* on thir march from *Nile*

386–7 **Cherubim**. Golden Cherubim adorned opposite ends of the gold cover on the Ark of the Covenant, where Jehovah was “thron’d” (2 Kgs 19:15; Ps. 80:1).

392–9 **Moloch**. In Hebrew, “King.” A god of the Ammonites, usually represented with a calf’s head crowned. **Rabba** (“city of waters”) is modern Amman in Jordan; the towns “*Argob*” and “*Basan*,” and the river “*Arnon*” lie east of the Dead Sea. Children were sacrificed by being placed alive in Moloch’s red-hot brazen image while “*Timbrels*” sounded to cover their cries (2 Kgs 23:10).

403–5 **that opprobrious Hill**. 1 Kgs 11:7: the Mount of Olives. Under the names “*Tophet*” and “*Gehenna*,” the “*Valley of Hinnom*” (2 Kgs 23:10) adjacent to Jerusalem became a “Type of Hell.” Groves throughout the Old Testament are associated with idolatry.

406–11 **Chemos**. Moabite fertility god, associated with the phallic god Priapus; his priests were said to defecate ritually before his shrine. Their lands (many taken from Isa. 15–16) are mentioned in these lines. **Seon**. Sihon, king of the Ammonites. **Asphaltick Pool**. The Dead Sea. “*Asphaltick*” refers to its deposits of bitumen.

412–14 **Peor**. The story of Peor seducing the Israelites in “*Sittim*” and the resulting “woe,” a plague killing 24,000, is told in Num. 25:1–9.

To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
 415 Yet thence his lustful Orgies he enlarg'd  
 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 bordring flood  
 420 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  
 425 And uncompounded is thir Essence pure,  
 Not ti'd or manacl'd with joynt or limb,  
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,  
 Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose  
 Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,<sup>o</sup>  
 430 Can execute thir aerie purposes,  
 And works of love or enmity fulfill.  
 For those the Race of *Israel* oft forsook  
 Thir living strength, and unfrequented left  
 His righteous Altar, bowing lowly down  
 435 To bestial Gods; for which thir heads as low  
 Bow'd down in Battel, sunk before the Spear  
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop  
 Came *Astoreth*, whom the *Phaenicians* call'd  
*Astarte*, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns;  
 440 To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon  
*Sidonian* Virgins paid thir 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,

dark

416 **Hill of scandal.** The Mount of Olives, where Solomon built temples to Chemos and Moloch (1 Kgs 11:7).

418 **Josiah.** A reforming king of Judah, Josiah destroyed the groves and idols of Moloch, Chemos, Astoreth, and Bael (2 Kgs 23:4–14).

419–21. Palestine is bordered by the “*Euphrates*” on the east and the “Brook” of Besor on the Egyptian border (1 Sam. 30:10).

422 **Baalim and Ashtaroth.** Plural forms of the sun god Baal and the moon goddess Astoreth (438; “*Astarte*,” 439). Baal means Lord, and is used as a prefix, e.g., Baal-Peor.

439–41 **Astarte.** The Phoenician (“*Sidonian*,” from the city Sidon) original of Aphrodite, with a bull’s head above her own from which sprang “crescent Horns” (Nativity Ode, 200).

443–6 **th’ offensive Mountain.** The Mount of Olives where “uxorious” King Solomon, whom God gave a “large” heart, built a temple for “*Astoreth*” at the behest of his many wives (2 Kgs 23:13; 1 Kgs 4:29, 11:1–8).

- 445 Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell  
 To Idols foul. *Thammuz* came next behind,  
 Whose annual wound in *Lebanon* allur'd  
 The *Syrian* Damsels to lament his fate  
 In amorous dittyes all a Summers day,  
 450 While smooth *Adonis* from his native Rock  
 Ran purple to the Sea, suppos'd with blood  
 Of *Thammuz* yearly wounded: the Love-tale  
 Infected *Sions* daughters with like heat,  
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred Porch  
 455 *Ezekiel* saw, when by the Vision led  
 His eye survey'd the dark Idolatries  
 Of alienated *Judah*. Next came one  
 Who mourn'd in earnest, when the Captive Ark  
 Maim'd his brute Image, head and hands lopt off  
 460 In his own Temple, on the grunsel edge,<sup>o</sup> threshold  
 Where he fell flat, and sham'd his Worshipers:  
*Dagon* his Name, Sea Monster, upward Man  
 And downward Fish: yet had his Temple high  
 Rear'd in *Azotus*, dreaded through the Coast  
 465 Of *Palestine*, in *Gath* and *Ascalon*  
 And *Accaron* and *Gaza's* frontier bounds.  
 Him follow'd *Rimmon*, whose delightful Seat  
 Was fair *Damascus*, on the fertil Banks  
 Of *Abbana* and *Pharphar*, lucid streams.  
 470 He also against the house of God was bold:  
 A Leper once he lost and gain'd a King,  
*Ahaz* his sottish<sup>o</sup> Conquerour, whom he drew foolish  
 Gods Altar to disparage and displace

446–52 *Thammuz*. A Syrian god; his Greek form was “*Adonis*,” beloved of Aphrodite, metamorphosed into the anemone. Annual festivals identify his death in “*Lebanon*” from a boar’s wound and his revival, with the death and rebirth of vegetation. Here, “*Adonis*” is a Lebanese river, so named because each July it turned blood red from iron-rich clay.

455 *Ezekiel*. Ezek. 8:12–16 describes women’s “dark” idolatrous rites for Thammuz in the “Porch” and men’s worship of the sun within the Temple.

457–63. When the Philistines stole the Ark of God they placed it in the temple of their sea-god, Dagon (half-man, half-fish) but his statue fell down and broke in pieces (1 Sam. 5:1–5).

464–6. The five chief cities of the Philistines, sites of Dagon’s worship (see Zeph. 2:4): “*Azotus*” (Ashdod), “*Gath*,” “*Ascalon*,” “*Accaron*” (Ekron), and “*Gaza*” (Azza).

467–76 *Rimmon*. The chief Syrian god. The Syrian general Naaman was cured of leprosy when (at the prophet Elisha’s bidding) he bathed in the river Jordan and then renounced Rimmon (2 Kgs 5:1–19); “*Abbana*” and “*Pharphar*” are rivers of “*Damascus*,” the chief city of Syria. King “*Ahaz*” of Judah conquered Syria but then converted to Rimmon’s cult (2 Kgs 16:7–18).

For one of *Syrian* mode, whereon to burn  
 475 His odious off'rings, and adore the Gods  
 Whom he had vanquisht. After these appear'd  
 A crew who under Names of old Renown,  
*Osiris, Isis, Orus* and thir Train  
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd<sup>o</sup> *deceived*  
 480 Fanatic *Egypt* and her Priests, to seek  
 Thir wandring Gods disguis'd in brutish forms  
 Rather than human. Nor did *Israel* scape  
 Th' infection when thir borrow'd Gold compos'd  
 The Calf in *Oreb*: and the Rebel King  
 485 Doubl'd that sin in *Bethel* and in *Dan*,  
 Lik'ning his Maker to the Grazed Ox,  
*Jehovah*, who in one Night when he pass'd  
 From *Egypt* marching, equal'd<sup>o</sup> with one stroke *leveled*  
 Both her first born and all her bleating Gods.  
 490 *Belial* came last, then whom a Spirit more lewd  
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love  
 Vice for it self: To him no Temple stood  
 Or Altar smoak'd; yet who more oft then hee  
 In Temples and at Altars, when the Priest  
 495 Turns Atheist, as did *Ely's* Sons, who fill'd  
 With lust and violence the house of God.  
 In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns  
 And in luxurious Cities, where the noyse  
 Of riot<sup>o</sup> ascends above thir loftiest Towrs, *debauchery*  
 500 And injury and outrage: And when Night  
 Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons  
 Of *Belial*, flown<sup>o</sup> with insolence and wine. *flushed, swollen*

477–82. The second group of devils includes gods originally driven from Olympus by the revolt of the giants and forced to wander in “brutish” (animal) forms (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.319–31). The Egyptians later worshiped such animal-headed gods: “*Osiris*,” a bull; “*Isis*,” a cow; “*Orus*” (Horus), a falcon.

482–4. While Moses was receiving the Law his brother Aaron made the “Calf in *Oreb*” with golden ornaments “borrow'd” (carried out of) Egypt (Exod. 12:35); the Israelites worshiped the idol, traditionally identified with the Egyptian god Apis (Exod. 32:1–4).

484–9 **Rebel King**. Jeroboam led ten tribes in a revolt against Solomon's son Rehoboam, and “doubled” Aaron's sin by making two golden calves, one in “*Bethel*,” one in “*Dan*” (1 Kgs 12:19–30); at the Passover, “*Jehovah*” (Exod. 12:12) smote the Egyptian firstborn (both men and beasts) and all their gods.

490–502 **Belial**. Hebrew for “worthlessness.” Not a god, but phrases such as “Sons of Belial” (Judg. 19:22, 20:13, and 2 Cor. 6:15) encouraged personification. The sons of the high priest “*Ely*,” themselves priests, were “sons of Belial,” seizing offerings meant for God and lying with prostitutes (1 Sam. 2:12–22). Milton invites association with Restoration churches, courts, and cities.

- Witness the Streets of *Sodom*, and that night  
 In *Gibeah*, when the hospitable door  
 505 Expos'd a Matron to avoid worse rape.  
 These were the prime in order and in might;  
 The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,  
 Th' *Ionian* Gods, of *Javans* Issue held  
 Gods, yet confest later then Heav'n and Earth  
 510 Thir boasted Parents; *Titan* Heav'ns first born  
 With his enormous<sup>o</sup> brood, and birthright seis'd *monstrous*  
 By younger *Saturn*, he from mightier *Jove*  
 His own and *Rhea's* Son like measure found;  
 So *Jove* usurping reign'd: these first in *Creet*  
 515 And *Ida* known, thence on the Snowy top  
 Of cold *Olympus* rul'd the middle Air  
 Thir 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 ore the *Celtic* roam'd the utmost Isles.  
 All these and more came flocking; but with looks  
 Down cast and damp,<sup>o</sup> yet such wherein appear'd *depressed*  
 Obscure some glimps of joy, to have found thir chief  
 525 Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost  
 In loss it self; which on his count'nance cast  
 Like doubtful hue: but he his wonted<sup>o</sup> pride *accustomed*  
 Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore  
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently rais'd  
 530 Thir fanting courage, and dispel'd thir fears.  
 Then strait<sup>o</sup> commands that at the warlike sound *immediately*

503–5. Lot begged the Sodomites to rape his virgin daughters rather than his angel guests; no rape occurred, and the angels destroyed “*Sodom*” (Gen. 19:1–10, 24). At “*Gibeah*” (Judg. 19:22–9) an old man prevented “worse” homosexual rape by surrendering his Levite guest’s concubine to “certain sons of Belial”; she was raped all night and was found dead the next morning. The change from the biblical concubine to “a Matron” heightens the crime.

508–10. The Ionian Greeks (“*Javans* issue,” i.e., of the line of Noah’s grandson Javan, son of Japhet) held the Titans to be gods, supposedly the progeny of “Heav’n” (Uranus) and “Earth” (Gaea).

510–15 *Titan*. Titan, the firstborn, was deposed by his younger brother “*Saturn*” (or Cronos), who was in turn deposed by his son “*Jove*” (Zeus) who had been reared in secret in a cave on Mount “*Ida*” in “*Creet*” (Crete).

515–19. The Olympian gods dwelt on Mount “*Olympus*”; Apollo’s Pythian oracle was at Delphi (“*Delphian* Cliff”), high on Mount Parnassus; “*Dodona*” was an ancient site of Zeus’ oracle; “*Doric* Land”: Greece.

519–21. The defeated “*Saturn*” fled over the Adriatic (“*Adria*”) to Italy (“th’ *Hesperian* Fields”), to France (“*Celtic*” lands) to roam (“the utmost Isles”) of Britain.

- Of Trumpets loud and Clarions<sup>o</sup> be upheard *small, shrill trumpets*  
 His mighty Standard; that proud honour claim'd  
 Azazel as his right, a Cherube tall:
- 535 Who forthwith from the glittering Staff unfurld  
 Th' Imperial Ensign,<sup>o</sup> which full high advanc't *battle flag*  
 Shon like a Meteor streaming to the Wind  
 With Gemms and Golden lustre rich imblaz'd,<sup>o</sup> *adorned with heraldic devices*  
 Seraphic arms and Trophies: all the while
- 540 Sonorous mettal<sup>o</sup> blowing Martial sounds: *trumpets*  
 At which the universal Host upsent  
 A shout that tore Hells Concave,<sup>o</sup> and beyond *vault, roof*  
 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<sup>o</sup> Colours waving: with them rose *lustrous*  
 A Forest huge of Spears: and thronging Helms  
 Appear'd, and serried<sup>o</sup> Shields in thick array *pushed close together*  
 Of depth immeasurable: Anon they move
- 550 In perfect *Phalanx* to the *Dorian* mood  
 Of Flutes and soft Recorders; such as rais'd  
 To hight of noblest temper Hero's old  
 Arming to Battel, and in stead of rage  
 Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
- 555 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,  
 Nor wanting<sup>o</sup> power to mitigate and swage<sup>o</sup> *lacking / assuage*  
 With solemn touches, troubl'd thoughts, and chase  
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain  
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they
- 560 Breathing united force with fixed thought  
 Mov'd on in silence to soft Pipes that charm'd  
 Thir painful steps o're the burnt soyle; and now  
 Advanc't in view, they stand, a horrid<sup>o</sup> Front *bristling with spears*  
 Of dreadful length and dazling Arms, in guise
- 565 Of Warriors old with order'd Spear and Shield,  
 Awaiting what command thir mighty Chief  
 Had to impose: He through the armed Files

534 *Azazel*. Traditionally, one of the four standard-bearers of Satan's army; a chief devil in the Book of Enoch.

543. For their "Reign" see 2.894–909, 959–70.

550–4 *Phalanx*. Greek battle formation consisting of footsoldiers presenting a square, impenetrable thicket of spears, usually eight ranks deep. *Dorian mood*. The Greek musical mode used for solemn martial music, intended to produce calm firmness (Plato, *Republic* 3.399A). The Spartans ("Hero's old") marched to battle to the Dorian music of "Flutes."

- Darts his experienc't eye, and soon traverse<sup>o</sup> across  
 The whole Battalion views, thir order due,  
 570 Thir visages and stature as of Gods,  
 Thir number last he summs. And now his heart  
 Distends with pride, and hardning in his strength  
 Glories: For never since created man,  
 Met such imbodyed force, as nam'd<sup>o</sup> with these compared  
 575 Could merit more then that small infantry  
 Warr'd on by Cranes: though all the Giant brood  
 Of *Phlegra* with th' Heroic Race were joyn'd  
 That fought at *Theb's* and *Ilium*, on each side  
 Mixt with auxiliar<sup>o</sup> Gods; and what resounds allied  
 580 In Fable or *Romance* of *Uthers* Son  
 Begirt with *British* and *Armoric* Knights;  
 And all who since, Baptiz'd or Infidel  
 Jousted in *Aspramont* or *Montalban*,  
*Damasco*, or *Marocco*, or *Trebisond*,  
 585 Or whom *Biserta* sent from *Afric* shore  
 When *Charlemain* with all his Peerage fell  
 By *Fontarabbia*. Thus far these beyond  
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observ'd  
 Thir dread commander: he above the rest  
 590 In shape and gesture proudly eminent  
 Stood like a Towr; his form had yet not lost  
 All her Original brightness, nor appear'd  
 Less then Arch Angel ruind, and th' excess  
 Of Glory obscur'd: As when the Sun new ris'n  
 595 Looks through the Horizontal<sup>o</sup> misty Air on the horizon  
 Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon

573 **never since created man.** i.e., since man was created (Latin idiom).

575–9. See *Iliad* 3.1–6 for the war of the pygmies (with a pun on “infantry,” infants) and the “Cranes.” The Giants fought the Olympian gods at “*Phlegra*” in Macedonia (Pindar, *Nemian Odes* 1.67–8); the Greek armies (“Heroic Race”) fought battles at “*Theb's*” and “*Ilium*” (Troy), aided by various gods.

580–4. Armies from romances include “*British*” and “*Armoric* knights” (from Brittany) who fought with Arthur (“*Uthers* Son”); and Charlemagne’s army that defeated the Saracens at “*Aspramont*” (the dark mountain). Knightly jousts took place at the sites named, all from romances about chivalric wars between Christians and Saracens: “*Montalban*” (the white mountain) the home of Rinaldo, “*Damasco*” (Damascus), “*Marocco*” (Marrakesh, a sultanate in what is now Morocco), and “*Trebisond*” (Trabzon, a Byzantine city on the Black Sea).

585–7. Saracens gathered at “*Biserta*” (Bizerte) in Tunisia to invade Spain (Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* 2.29.1–22); Charlemagne’s rearguard, led by his best knight Roland, was massacred at Roncesvalles, near “*Fontarabbia*” (Fuenterrabia, on the Spanish coast). But in no version of the story did Charlemagne himself fall.

In dim Eclips disastrous twilight sheds  
 On half the Nations, and with fear of change  
 Perplexes Monarchs. Dark'n'd so, yet shon  
 600 Above them all th' Arch Angel: but his face  
 Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care  
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under Browes  
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate<sup>o</sup> Pride *conscious, deliberate*  
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast  
 605 Signs of remorse and passion to behold  
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather  
 (Far other once beheld in bliss) condemn'd  
 For ever now to have thir lot in pain,  
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerc't<sup>o</sup> *deprived*  
 610 Of Heav'n, and from Eternal Splendors flung  
 For his revolt, yet faithfull how they stood,  
 Thir Glory witherd. As when Heavens Fire  
 Hath scath'd<sup>o</sup> the Forrest Oaks, or Mountain Pines, *scorched*  
 With singed top thir stately growth though bare  
 615 Stands on the blasted Heath. He now prepar'd  
 To speak; whereat thir doubl'd Ranks they bend  
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round  
 With all his Peers: attention held them mute.  
 Thrice he assayd,<sup>o</sup> and thrice in spight of scorn, *tried*  
 620 Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last  
 Words interwove with sighs found out thir way.  
 O Myriads of immortal Spirits, O Powers  
 Matchless, but with th' Almighty, and that strife  
 Was not inglorious, though th' event<sup>o</sup> was dire, *outcome*  
 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 fear'd,  
 How such united force of Gods, how such  
 630 As stood like these, could ever know repulse?  
 For who can yet beleeve, though after loss,  
 That all these puissant<sup>o</sup> Legions, whose exile *powerful*  
 Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to re-ascend

597–9. The censor objected to these lines, as perhaps an allusion to the eclipse on the day of Charles II's birth, portending "change" (i.e., the Interregnum). **disastrous.** astrologically unfavorable (*dis* + *astrum*).

620. Satan weeping before his defeated troops recalls Agamemnon stricken with grief in similar circumstances (*Iliad* 9.13–14)

- Self-rai's'd, and repossess thir native seat?  
 635 For mee be witness all the Host of Heav'n,  
 If counsels different, or danger shun'd  
 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 custome, and his Regal State  
 Put forth at full, but still<sup>o</sup> his strength conceal'd, *always*  
 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 warr, provok't; our better part remains  
 To work in close<sup>o</sup> design, by fraud or guile *secret*  
 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<sup>o</sup> *widespread*  
 There went a fame<sup>o</sup> in Heav'n that he ere long *rumor*  
 Intended to create, and therein plant  
 A generation, whom his choice regard  
 Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven:  
 655 Thither, if but to prey, shall be perhaps  
 Our first eruption,<sup>o</sup> thither or elsewhere: *breaking out*  
 For this Infernal Pit shall never hold  
 Cælestial Spirits in Bondage, nor th' Abyss  
 Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts  
 660 Full Counsel must mature: Peace is despaird,  
 For who can think Submission? Warr then, Warr  
 Open or understood<sup>o</sup> must be resolv'd. *covert*  
 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 illumin'd hell: highly they rag'd  
 Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms  
 Clash'd on thir sounding Shields the din of war,  
 Hurling defiance toward the Vault of Heav'n.  
 670 There stood a Hill not far whose griesly<sup>o</sup> top *causing horror*  
 Belch'd fire and rowling<sup>o</sup> smoak; the rest entire *undulating*  
 Shon with a glossie scurff,<sup>o</sup> undoubted sign *crust*  
 That in his womb was hid metallic Ore,

668. Like Roman legions, the fallen angels applaud by beating swords on shields.

- The work of Sulphur. Thither wing'd with speed  
 675 A numerous Brigad hasten'd. As when Bands  
 Of Pioners<sup>o</sup> with Spade and Pickax arm'd military engineers  
 Forerun the Royal Camp, to trench a Field,  
 Or cast a Rampart. *Mammon* led them on,  
*Mammon*, the least erected Spirit that fell  
 680 From heav'n, for ev'n in heav'n his looks and thoughts  
 Were always downward bent, admiring more  
 The riches of Heav'ns pavement, trod'n Gold,  
 Then aught divine or holy else enjoy'd  
 In vision beatific: by him first  
 685 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,  
 Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands  
 Riff'd the bowels of thir mother Earth  
 For Treasures better hid. Soon had his crew  
 Op'nd into the Hill a spacious wound  
 690 And dig'd out ribs<sup>o</sup> of Gold. Let none admire<sup>o</sup> veins / wonder  
 That riches grow in Hell; that soyle may best  
 Deserve the precious bane.<sup>o</sup> And here let those poison  
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell  
 Of *Babel*, and the works of *Memphian* Kings  
 695 Learn how thir greatest Monuments of Fame,  
 And Strength and Art are easily out-done  
 By Spirits reprobate,<sup>o</sup> and in an hour damned  
 What in an age they with incessant toyle  
 And hands innumerable scarce perform.  
 700 Nigh on the Plain in many cells prepar'd,  
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire  
 Sluc'd from the Lake, a second multitude  
 With wondrous Art founded<sup>o</sup> the massie Ore, melted  
 Severing each kind, and scum'd<sup>o</sup> the Bullion dross.<sup>o</sup> skimmed / boiling dregs  
 705 A third as soon had form'd within the ground  
 A various mould, and from the boyling cells

674 **Sulphur**. This was thought to be the father of metals.

678 **Mammon**. An Aramaic word for riches, *Mammon* came to be personified and associated with the god of wealth, Plutus, and with Pluto, god of the underworld. Cf. Matt. 6:24: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

684 **vision beatific**. Scholastic term for the sight of God, the greatest joy of heaven.

685–8. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.138–42, describes men rifling earth's "bowels" ("viscera terrae") in search of riches. Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 2.7.17.

694 **Babel**. The Tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1–9; *PL* 12.38–62).

**works**. The Pyramids built by

"*Memphian*" (Egyptian) pharaohs.

By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook,  
 As in an Organ from one blast of wind  
 To many a row of Pipes the sound-board breaths.

- 710 Anon out of the earth a Fabrick<sup>o</sup> huge building  
 Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound  
 Of Dulcet<sup>o</sup> Symphonies and voices sweet, sweet, pleasing  
 Built like a Temple, where *Pilasters*<sup>o</sup> round columns set in a wall  
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
- 715 With Golden Architrave; nor did there want  
 Cornice or Freeze, with bossy<sup>o</sup> Sculptures grav'n, embossed  
 The Roof was fretted<sup>o</sup> Gold. Not *Babilon*, richly ornamented  
 Nor great *Alcairo* such magnificence  
 Equal'd in all thir glories, to inshrine
- 720 *Belus* or *Serapis* thir Gods, or seat  
 Thir Kings, when *Ægypt* with *Assyria* strove  
 In wealth and luxurie. Th' ascending pile<sup>o</sup> large building  
 Stood fixt<sup>o</sup> her stately highth, and strait<sup>o</sup> the dores complete / at once  
 Op'ning thir brazen foulds discover wide
- 725 Within, her ample spaces, o're the smooth  
 And level pavement: from the arched roof  
 Pendant by suttile Magic many a row  
 Of Starry Lamps and blazing Cressets fed  
 With *Naphtha* and *Asphaltus* yeilded light
- 730 As from a sky. The hasty multitude  
 Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise  
 And some the Architect: his hand was known  
 In Heav'n by many a Towred structure high,  
 Where Scepter'd Angels held thir residence,
- 735 And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King  
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,  
 Each in his Hierarchie, the Orders bright.

711–12 **Exhalation.** Exhalations were thought to cause comets and meteors (bad omens) and pestilence (cf. 10.693–5). Pandæmonium rises to symphonic and vocal music, like Thebes to Amphion's lyre.

714 **Doric pillars.** Round and fluted, Doric pillars are severe and plain. Pandæmonium combines classical architectural features with elaborate ornamentation, perhaps suggesting St. Peter's in Rome.

715–16 **Architrave.** The beam that rests on top of the columns. **Cornice.** The part above and overhanging the frieze. **Freeze.** The frieze: the architectural element above the architrave on which the sculptures usually are set.

717–20 **Babilon.** Babylon in Assyria had temples to "*Belus*" (Baal); "*Alcairo*" (ancient Memphis, near Cairo) had temples to "*Serapis*" (composite of Osiris and Apis, the bull god). Both cities were famously magnificent.

728–9 **Cressets.** Iron baskets hung from the ceiling, holding burning pitch ("*Asphaltus*"); oily "*Naphtha*" was placed in the lamps.

- Nor was his name unheard or unador'd  
 In ancient *Greece*; and in *Ausonian* land
- 740 Men call'd him *Mulciber*; and how he fell  
 From Heav'n, they fabl'd, thrown by angry *Jove*  
 Sheer o're the Chrystal Battlements; from Morn  
 To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,  
 A Summers day; and with the setting Sun
- 745 Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star,  
 On *Lemnos* th' *Ægean* Ile: thus they relate,  
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout  
 Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now  
 To have built in Heav'n high Towrs; nor did he scape
- 750 By all his Engins,<sup>o</sup> but was headlong sent contrivances  
 With his industrious crew to build in hell.  
 Mean while the winged Haralds by command  
 Of Sovran power, with awful<sup>o</sup> Ceremony awesome  
 And Trumpets sound throughout the Host proclaim
- 755 A solemn Council forthwith to be held  
 At *Pandæmonium*, the high Capital  
 Of *Satan* and his Peers:<sup>o</sup> thir summons call'd nobles, companions  
 From every Band and squared Regiment  
 By place<sup>o</sup> or choice<sup>o</sup> the worthiest; they anon rank / election
- 760 With hunderds and with thousands trooping came  
 Attended: all access was throng'd, the Gates  
 And Porches wide, but chief the spacious Hall  
 (Though like a cover'd field, where Champions bold  
 Wont<sup>o</sup> ride in arm'd, and at the Soldans<sup>o</sup> chair were accustomed to / sultan's
- 765 Defi'd the best of *Panim*<sup>o</sup> chivalry pagan  
 To mortal combat or carreer<sup>o</sup> with Lance) joust  
 Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,  
 Brusht with the hiss of russling wings. As Bees  
 In spring time, when the Sun with *Taurus* rides,
- 770 Pour forth thir populous youth about the Hive

738–46. Hephæstus (in “*Greece*”), Vulcan or “*Mulciber*” in Italy (“*Ausonian* land”), was architect of the classical gods’ palaces; the story of his fall, cast out by Zeus (“angry *Jove*”) to land in “*Lemnos*” in the “*Ægean*” sea, is told in *Iliad* 1.590–4. **Zenith.** the highest point of the celestial sphere.

747 **Erring.** Milton thought the classical myths were erroneous versions of biblical stories.

756 **Pandæmonium.** Milton’s coinage, literally “all Demons,” an inversion of Pantheon, “all gods.”

768–76. Bee similes were common in epic from Homer on (*Iliad* 2.87–90; *Aeneid* 1.430–6); also, the bees’ (royalist) society was often cited in political arguments. The simile prepares for the sudden contraction of the “common” devils, enabling them to fit into the Hall of Pandæmonium (791–2).

769. The sun is in the zodiacal sign of “*Taurus*” (the Bull) from about April 19 to May 20.

- In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers  
 Flie to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,  
 The suburb of thir Straw-built Cittadel,  
 New rub'd with Baum, expatiate<sup>o</sup> and confer *walk about at large*
- 775 Thir State affairs. So thick the aerie crowd  
 Swarm'd and were straitn'd;<sup>o</sup> till the Signal giv'n. *packed together*  
 Behold a wonder! they but now who seemd  
 In bigness to surpass Earths Giant Sons  
 Now less then smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
- 780 Throng numberless, like that Pigmean Race  
 Beyond the *Indian* Mount, or Faerie Elves,  
 Whose midnight Revels, by a Forrest side  
 Or Fountain some belated Peasant sees,  
 Or dreams he sees, while over-head the Moon
- 785 Sits Arbitress,<sup>o</sup> and neerer to the Earth *witness*  
 Wheels her pale course, they on thir mirth and dance  
 Intent, with jocond<sup>o</sup> Music charm his ear; *merry*  
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.  
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
- 790 Reduc'd thir shapes immense, and were at large,  
 Though without number still amidst the Hall  
 Of that infernal Court. But far within  
 And in thir own dimensions like themselves  
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
- 795 In close<sup>o</sup> recess and secret conclave sat *secluded*  
 A thousand Demy-Gods on golden seat's,  
 Frequent and full. After short silence then  
 And summons read, the great consult began.

*The End of the First Book.*

780–1 **Pigmean Race**. Pygmies were thought to live beyond the Himalayas (“the *Indian* Mount”).

792–4. These “Lords” retained their own size.

795 **conclave**. Secret assembly, often ecclesiastical.

797 **Frequent**. Crowded together. **full**. In great number.



Figure 4 Illustration to Book 2, 1688