

PARADISE REGAIN'D

A Poem in Four Books

JOHN MILTON

BIG PRINT VERSION

An Abridgement

intended for semi-staged performance,
presupposing a Musical Prelude and two Entractes

as at 22 November 2016



*This the argument:—
“Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And, devilish machinations, come to nought!”
(P.R. IV, 172, 180-1)*

Prelude

(An Overture, arranged from a Song in Comus (1634), composed by Henry Lawes, lasting about two minutes, allowing comfortable time for the audience to read and absorb three slides, projected on a large screen behind the readers, to the following effect.)

The dramatisation picks up the narrative at line 183 of the First Book.

Milton began (lines 18-32) by summarising the *third* chapter of St Matthew's Gospel, which narrates how Jesus, who had till then been living in obscurity, was baptised by John the Baptist and by the Holy Spirit and was identified by a voice from Heaven as 'My beloved Son'.

Milton went on (lines 33-182) to introduce the 'celestial machinery' (considered necessary for a classical epic poem), by giving his freely invented account of a debate in Hell among Satan and the Fallen Angels and then of the reflections of God in conversation with the Angel Gabriel.

You are about to hear the core of the remaining 1900 lines of the poem, in which Milton will expand just eleven verses in the *fourth* chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

Our performance begins, however, with a reading of the poet's opening statement of his theme and his prayer for inspiration – addressed not to the classical Muses, but to the Holy Spirit.

THE FIRST BOOK

MILTON

I, who erewhile the happy Garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.

Thou Spirit, who led'st this glorious Eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence 10
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire
As thou art wont my prompted song, else mute, 12
to tell of deeds 14
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age:
Worthy to have not remain'd so long unsung.

Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days 183
Lodg'd in Bethábarā, where John baptiz'd,
Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, (...) 187
One day forth walk'd alone, ... 189
the better to converse 190
With solitude, till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
He entered now the bordering Desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditations thus pursued:—

JESUS

O what a multitude of thoughts at once 196
Awakened in me swarm. (...) 197
When I was yet a child, no childish play 201
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to *do*
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things. Therefore, above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet;
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection that, ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great Feast 210
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The teachers of our Law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own,
And was admir'd by all.

Yet this not all
To which my spirit aspir'd. Victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts—one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restored:

Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear;
 At least to try, and teach the erring soul
 Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware
 Misled; the stubborn only to subdue. 226

MILTON

Full forty days he pass'd, (...) 303
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt, 308
 Till those days ended; hungered then at last
 Among wild beasts. They at his sight grew mild, 310
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed; his walk
 The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm;
 The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.

But now an agèd man in rural weeds,
 Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
 Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
 Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
 To warm him wet-return'd from field at eve,
 He saw approach; who first with curious eye
 Perus'd him, then with words thus uttered spake:— 320

SATAN

Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place,
 So far from path or road of men, who pass
 In troop or caravan? for single none
 Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here
 His carcass, pined with hunger and with drouth.
 I ask the rather, and the more admire,
 For that to me thou seem'st the man whom late
 Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
 Of Jordan honoured so, and called thee Son
 Of God.

I saw and heard, for we sometimes 330
 Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
 To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
 Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
 What happens new; fame also finds us out.

JESUS

Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.

SATAN

By miracle he may,
What other way I see not; for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel, and to drink go far— 340
Men to much misery and hardship born.
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

JESUS

Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed 350
Our fathers here with manna? 351
Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust 355
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

SATAN (*now undisguised*)

'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate 358
Who, leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven 360
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep—
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd,
but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth,
Or range in the Air; nor from the Heaven of Heavens
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.

I came, among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzéan Job,
To prove him, and illústrate his high worth; 370

And, when to all his Angels he propos'd
 To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud, 372
 I undertook that office, and the tongues 374
 Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies
 To his destruction, as I had in charge.

For what he bids, I do. Though I have lost
 Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
 To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contéplate and admire, 380
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,
 Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense.

What can be then less in me than desire
 To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind. Why should I? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence. By them
 I lost not what I lost; rather by them 390
 I gained what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
 Co-partner in these regions of the World. 392

JESUS (*sternly*)

Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies 407
 From the beginning, and in lies wilt end,
 Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
 Into the Heaven of Heavens.

Thou com'st, indeed, 410
 As a poor miserable captive thrall
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the prime in splendour, now depos'd,
 Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
 A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
 To all the host of Heaven. The happy place
 Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy—
 Rather inflames thy torment. (...) 418
 So never more in Hell than when in Heaven. 420

But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? but his patience won.

The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.

Yet thou pretend'st to truth! all oracles 430
By thee are given, and what confess'd more true
Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers? what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And, not well understood, as good not known?

Who ever, by consulting at thy shrine,
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concern'd him most, 440
And run not sooner to his fatal snare? 441

Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope, 494
I bid not, or forbid. Do as thou find'st
Permission from above; thou canst not more.

MILTON

He added not; and Satan, bowing low
His grey dissimulation, disappear'd,
Into thin air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade 500
The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

THE SECOND BOOK

MILTON

Meanwhile the new-baptized, who yet remain'd 1
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus Messiah, Son of God declared, (...) 4
Now missing him, their joy so lately found, 8
So lately found and so abruptly gone, 10
Began to doubt, and doubted many days.

<Thus> on the bank of Jordan, by a creek, 25
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and complaints outbreathed:—

SIMON

Alas, from what high hope to what relapse 30
Unlook'd for are we fallen! Our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
'Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand;
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored:'

Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze.
For whither is he gone? 39

MILTON

<And> to his mother Mary, when she saw 60
Others return'd from baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:—

MARY

Oh, what avails me now that honour high,
To have conceiv'd of God? or that salute,
'Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!'
While I to sorrows am no less advanced 69
By the birth I bore— 71

In *such* a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air? A stable was our warmth,
A manger his; yet soon enforc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and, missing, fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem.

From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years; his life 80
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king.

But now,
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shewn,
Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice— 85
But where delays he now?

Some great intent 95
Conceals him. When twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about
His Father's business.

What he meant I mus'd—
Since understand; much more his absence now 100
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.

But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events.

MILTON

Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:

The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed, 110
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set—
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high. 114

<Now> to the desert <Satan> takes his flight, 241
Where still, from shade to shade, the Son of God,
After forty days' fasting, had remain'd,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said:—

JESUS

Where will this end? Four times ten days I have passed
Wandering this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite. (...) 247
But now I feel I hunger; which declares 252
Nature hath need of what she asks.

Yet God

Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain. (...) 255

MILTON

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son 260
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven. There he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.

Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn—
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought;

He saw the Prophet also, how he fled 270
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper—then how, awak'd,
He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days. 276

Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark 279
Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry 280
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song.
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.

Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw—
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud. 290

Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High-roof'd, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene;
Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art),
And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs.

He view'd it round;

When suddenly a man before him stood,
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
 As one in city or court or palace bred, 300
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd:—

SATAN

With granted leave officious I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide,
 Of all things destitute, and, well I know,
 Not without hunger. (...) 306

Behold, 331

Nature ashamed, or – better to express –
 Troubled, that thou should'st hunger, hath purveyed
 From all the elements her choicest store,
 To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
 With honour. Only deign to sit and eat.

MILTON

He spake no dream; for, as his words had end,
 Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
 In ample space under the broadest shade,
 A table richly spread in regal mode, 340
 With dishes piled and meats of noblest sort
 And savour—

beasts of chase, or fowl of game,

In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
 Grisamber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore,
 Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
 And exquisitest name, for which was drained
 Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
 Alas! how simple, to these cates compared,
 Was that crude Apple that diverted Eve!

350

And at a stately sideboard, by the wine,
 That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
 Tall stripling youths, rich-clad, of fairer hue
 Than Ganymed or Hylas;

distant more,
 Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood,
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Náiadēs
 With fruits and flowers from Amalthéa's horn,
 And ladies of the Hespéridēs, that seemed
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since
 Of faery damsels met in forest wide
 By knights of Lógrēs, or of Lyoness, 360
 Lancelot, or Pélleās, or Pellënore.

And all the while harmonious airs were heard
 Of chiming strings or charming pipes; and winds
 Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.

Such was the splendour; and the Tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renew'd. 367

SATAN

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure. 370

JESUS (*temperately*)

Shall I receive by gift what of my own, 381
 When and where likes me best, I can command?

I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
 Command a table in this wilderness,
 And call swift flights of Angels ministrant,
 Arrayed in glory, on my cup to attend. (...) 386
 Thy pompous delicacies I contemn, 390
 And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles. 391

Entracte 1

(Appropriate seventeenth-century music, allowing comfortable time for the audience to read and absorb the following summary.

Satan tries another line of attack.

Jesus' heart is clearly 'set on high designs'. But 'great acts require great means of enterprise'. In short, he will need money:

Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.	422
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap.	427
Those whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,	430
While Virtue, Valour, Wisdom sit in want.	431

Jesus replies:

Yet wealth without these three is impotent	433
To gain dominion, or keep it gain'd.	434

Then, having dismissed the efficacy of wealth as a means to the end of conquest, he condemns the end itself:

With like aversion I reject / Riches and realms. 458-9

THE THIRD BOOK

MILTON

So spake the Son of God; and Satan stood	1
A while as mute, confounded what to say,	
What to reply, confuted and convinc'd	
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift;	
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,	
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts:—	

SATAN

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,	
What best to say canst say, to do canst do.	8

This is true glory and renown—when God, 60
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises. (...) 64

They err who count it glorious to subdue 71
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy, 80

Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipp'd with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rowling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward. 87

MILTON

So spake the Son of God; and here again 145
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin—for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all;
Yet of another plea bethought him soon:—

SATAN

Of glory, as thou wilt (...), so deem; 150
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
But to a Kingdom thou art born—ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father, though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms.

Judaea now and all the Promised Land,
 Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius, nor is always rul'd
 With temperate sway: oft have they violated 160
 The Temple, oft the Law, with foul affronts. 161

And think'st thou to regain 163
 Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring? 164

JESUS

But what concerns it thee when I begin 198
 My everlasting Kingdom? Why art thou
 Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition? 200
 Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
 And my promotion will be thy destruction?

SATAN (*inly wracked*)

Let that come when it comes. All hope is lost 204
 Of my reception into grace; what worse?
 For where no hope is left, is left no fear.

If there be worse, the *expectation* more
 Of worse torments me than the *feeling* can.
 I would be at the worst; worst is my port,
 My harbour, and my ultimate repose, 210
 The end I would attain, my final good.

My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime; whatever, for itself condemn'd,
 And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
 Reign or reign not—though to that gentle brow
 Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign
 (From that placid aspect and meek regard),
 Rather than aggravate my evil state,
 Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
 (Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell) 220
 A shelter and a kind of shading cool
 Interposition, as a summer's cloud.

If I, then, to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best?
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,
That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their King! 226

<But> consider 231

Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence could'st thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts—
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienced, will be ever 240
Timorous, and loth, with novice modesty, 241
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous. 243

But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state—
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries; that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand. 250

MILTON

With that (such power was given him then), he took 251
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain outstretched in circuit wide
Lay pleasant;
 from his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champaign, with less rivers intervein'd,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea. (...) 258

To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought 265
Our Saviour, and new train of words began:—

SATAN

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest, and field, and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league. Here thou behold'st
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds, 270
Aráxēs and the Caspian lake; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drouth.

Here, Níneveh, 275
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues, 280
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste, 283
Till Cyrus set them free;

Persépolis,

His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbátana her structure vast there shews, 286
And Hecatómpylos her hundred gates.

There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings; and there 289, 291
Artáxata, Terēdon, Ctésiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold. 293

All these the Parthian under his dominion holds;
And just in time thou com'st to have a view 298
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctésiphon hath gathered all his host 300
Against the Scythian. 301

See, though from far, 303

His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit—
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel." 307

MILTON

He looked, and saw what numbers numberless 310
The city gates outpour'd, light-armèd troops
In coats of mail and military pride. 312

He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd, 322
How quick they wheeled, and flying behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown.

Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor, on each horn,
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers;
nor of labouring pioneers 330

A multitude, with spades and axes arm'd,
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke:
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with útensils of war.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agricān, with all his northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrōne, from thence to win 340
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlēmane.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry. 342

SATAN

Hear and mark 349
To what end I have brought thee hither. 350
Thy kingdom, though foretold 351
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain.

Prediction still

In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means used, what it predicts, revokes.

But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne, 357
 how couldst thou hope 359
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure 360
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own: the Parthian first,
By my advice. 364

JESUS (*unmoved*)

Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm 387
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set, and in my ear 390
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.

Means I must use, thou say'st; prediction else
Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne!
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off), is not yet come.

When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome 400
Luggage of war there shewn me—argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.

My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons!
But whence to thee this zeal? (...)

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills
That screen'd the fruits of the earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion blasts.

<There> in the midst (...) an Imperial City stood, 33
 With towers and temples proudly elevate
 On seven small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
 Porches and théâtres, baths, aqueducts,
 Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
 Gardens and groves presented to his eyes.

And now the Tempter thus his silence broke:—

SATAN

The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable;

and there Mount Palatine, 50

The imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets, and terraces, and glittering spires. (...) 54

Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see 61
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:
Praetors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings;

Or embassies from regions far remote— 67
 From India and the Golden Chersoness, 74
 And utmost Indian isle Tapróbānē,
 Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed;
 From Gallia, Gādes, and the British west;
 Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmātians north
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.

All nations now to Rome obedience pay— 80
 To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain,
 In ample territory, wealth and power,
 Civility of manners, arts and arms,
 And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
 Before the Parthian.

These two thrones except,
 The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
 Shared among petty kings too far remov'd;
 These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all
 The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory. 89

Entracte 2

(Again, appropriate seventeenth-century music, allowing comfortable time for the audience to read and absorb the following summary, this time divided between three slides. The music must end with a strong chord ff, and at that point Jesus must start speaking immediately ('attacca').

*****Satan becomes specific, urging Jesus to 'expel from his throne' the hated Emperor
 Tiberius, now 'easily subdued'. He insists that:

To me such power
 Is given, and by that right I give it thee. 103-04

Jesus, 'unmoved', dismisses the advice, asserting that 'of my kingdom there shall be no end' when
 'my season comes to sit on David's throne' (146-7)

At this rebuke, Satan grows 'impudent'.

He repeats his offer of the 'kingdoms of this world', but makes the offer a conditional one:

... yet with this reserve, not else, 165
 On this condition:— if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superior lord. 167

Jesus replies 'with disdain':

I never liked thy talk, thy offers less; 171
 Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
 The abominable terms, impious condition. 173

He concludes his rebuke with the famous command:

Get thee behind me ! 193

JESUS (*with disdain*)

Get thee behind me ! Plain thou now appear'st 193
That Evil One, Satan for ever damn'd.

SATAN (*with fear abashed*)

Be not so sore offended, Son of God— 197
The triäl hath indamag'd thee no way, 206
Rather more honour left and more esteem;
Me naught advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.

Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more 210
Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not.

And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute;
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the Temple, there wast found
Among the gravest Rabbis, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shews the man, 220
As morning shews the day.

Be famous, then,
By *wisdom*; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge; all things in it comprehend.
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote;

The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st. 230

Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,	236
Westward, much nearer by south-west; behold	
Where on the Aegean shore a city stands,	
Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil—	
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts	240
And eloquence.	241
See there the olive-grove of Academe,	244
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird	
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.	246
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power	254
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit	
By voice or hand, and various-measured verse; (...)	256
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,	258
Blind Melesígēnēs, thence Homer called,	
Whose poem Phoebus challeng'd for his own.	260
Thence what the lofty grave Tragedians taught	
In chorus or iambic, teachers best	
Of moral prudence, with delight received	
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat	
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,	
High actions and high passions best describing.	
Thence to the famous Orators repair,	
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence	
Wielded at will that fierce democracy. (...)	269
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,	272
From heaven descended to the low-roof'd house	
Of Sócratēs—see there his tenement—	
Whom, well inspired, the Oracle pronounced	
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issu'd forth	
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools	
Of Academics old and new, with those	
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect	
Epicuréan, and the Stoic severe.	280

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

JESUS (*sagely*)

Think not but that I know these things. 286

He who receives 288

Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true; 290

But these are false, or little else but dreams,
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
 The first and wisest of them all profess'd
 To know this only, that he nothing knew. 294

Alas! what can they teach, and not mislead, 309
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, 310
 And how the World began, and how Man fell,
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
 Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry;

And in *themselves* seek virtue; and to *themselves*
 All glory arrogate, to God give none;
 Rather accuse him under usual names,
 Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
 Of mortal things.

Who, therefore, seeks in these
 True wisdom, finds her not. 319

Many books 321

(Wise men have said) are wearisome.

Who reads

Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330

Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace?

 All our Law and Story strew'd
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd, 335
Our Hebrew songs and harps (...) declare 337
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd—
Ill imitated while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own. 340

Their orators (..) then— 353
The top of eloquence ! Stātists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome. 360

In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only, with our Law, best form a king.

MILTON

But Satan, now (...), to the Wilderness 364 & 395
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear.

Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring Night. 398

Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind, 401
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest, 403
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick intertwin'd might shield
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head;
But, shelter'd, slept in vain; for at his head
The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep.

And either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds 410
From many a horrid rift abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with fire,
In ruin reconcil'd;

nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines
(Though rooted deep as high) and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer.

Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st 420
Unshaken! 421
Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair 426
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey,
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd 430
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.

And now the sun with more effectual beams
 Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dried the wet
 From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
 After a night of storm so ruinous,
 Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn. 438

Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
 Was absent, after all his mischief done, 440
 The Prince of Darkness; glad would also seem
 Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
 Yet with no new device (they all were spent).

SATAN (*in a careless mood*)

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God, 451
 After a dismal night...

JESUS

Desist (thou art discern'd, 497
 And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest.

SATAN (*swollen with rage*)

Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born! 500
 For Son of God to me is yet in doubt.
 Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
 By all the Prophets; of thy birth, at length
 Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
 And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.

From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
 Till, at the ford of Jordan, whither all 510
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest
 (Though not to be baptiz'd), by voice from Heaven
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God lov'd.

Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.

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

Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild,
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy. 525

Therefore, to know what more thou art than man, 538
Worth naming the Son of God by voice from Heaven,
Another method I must now begin. 540

MILTON

So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The Holy City, lifted high her towers—

And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn:— 550

SATAN

There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill. I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed: highest is best.

Now shew thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down. Safely, if Son of God;
For it is written, 'He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'

JESUS

Also it is written, 560
'Tempt not the Lord thy God.'

MILTON

He said, and stood;
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell— 562
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall. 571

And, as that Theban monster that propos'd
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devour'd,
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep,
So, strook with dread and anguish, fell the Fiend,
And to his crew <of rebel angels> brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God. 580

So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their vans receiv'd our Saviour soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine,
Ambrosial fruits fetch'd from the Tree of Life,
And from the Fount of Life ambrosial drink. 590

(...) And, as he fed, Angelic quires 593
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the Tempter proud:—

ANGELS

True Image of the Father, whether thron'd
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
In fleshly tabernacle and human form,
Wandering the wilderness, 600
still expressing 601
The Son of God, with Godlike force endued
Against the attempter of thy Father's throne
And thief of Paradise!

Him long of old
Thou didst debell, and down from Heaven cast
With all his army; now thou hast aveng'd
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise, 608

For, though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd, 612
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-install,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of tempter and temptation without fear. 617

Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both Worlds, 633
Queller of Satan! On thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save Mankind.

MILTON

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refresh'd,
Brought on his way with joy. He, unobserv'd,
Home to his mother's house private return'd. 639

Finis