

# PARADISE LOST

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RDMc  
Publishing  
FORT WORTH, TEXAS  
2007

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## Book I

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,  
Sing, Heav'nly Muse, that, on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed  
In the beginning how the Heav'ns and earth  
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill  
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first  
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,  
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support;

That, to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view,  
Nor the deep tract of Hell; say first what cause  
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,  
Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off  
From their Creator, and transgress his will  
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.  
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?  
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind, what time his pride  
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host  
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring  
To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,  
If he opposed, and with ambitious aim  
Against the throne and monarchy of God,  
Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud,  
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Pow'r  
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.  
Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,  
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf,  
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom  
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,  
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.  
At once, as far as Angels ken, he views  
The dismal situation waste and wild.  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames  
No light; but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all, but torture without end  
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.  
Such place Eternal Justice has prepared  
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained  
In utter darkness, and their portion set,  
As far removed from God and light of Heav'n  
As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole.  
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!  
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed  
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,  
He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,  
One next himself in pow'r, and next in crime,  
Long after known in Palestine, and named  
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 changed  
From him who, in the happy realms of light  
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine  
Myriads, though bright! if he whom mutual league,  
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope  
And hazard in the glorious enterprise

Joined with me once, now misery hath join'd  
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest  
From what height fall'n: so much the stronger proved  
He with his thunder; and till then who knew  
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,  
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,  
Though changed in outward lustre, that fix'd mind,  
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,  
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,  
And to the fierce contentions brought along  
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,  
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,  
His utmost pow'r with adverse pow'r opposed  
In dubious battle on the plains of Heav'n,  
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 o'ercome?  
That glory never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace  
With suppliant knee, and deify his pow'r  
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late  
Doubted his empire, that were low indeed;  
That were an ignominy and shame beneath  
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,  
And this empyreal sybstance, cannot fail;  
Since, through experience of this great event,  
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,  
We may with more successful hope resolve  
To wage by force or guile eternal war,  
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,

Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy  
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n.

So spake th' apostate Angel, though in pain,  
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;  
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:

O Prince, O Chief of many throned Pow'rs  
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war  
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds  
Fearless, endangered Heav'n's perpetual King,  
And put to proof his high supremacy,  
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate,  
Too well I see and rue the dire event  
That, with sad o'erthrow and foul defeat,  
Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host  
In horrible destruction laid thus low,  
As far as Gods and Heav'nly Essences  
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains  
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,  
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state  
Here swallowed up in endless misery.  
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now  
Of force believe almighty, since no less  
Than such could have o'erpow'red such force as ours)  
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,  
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,  
Or do him mightier service as his thralls  
By right of war, whate'er his business be,  
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,  
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?  
What can it the avail though yet we feel  
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being  
To undergo eternal punishment?

Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend reply'd:

Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,  
To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
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,  
And out of good still to find means of evil;  
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps  
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb  
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.  
But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd  
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit  
Back to the gates of Heav'n: the sulphurous hail,  
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid  
The fiery surge that from the precipice  
Of Heav'n received us falling; and the thunder,  
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 th' occasion, whether scorn  
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.  
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,  
The seat of desolation, void of light,  
Save what the glimm'ring of these livid flames  
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;  
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;  
And, re-assembling our afflicted Pow'rs,  
Consult how we may henceforth most offend  
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,

How o'ercome this dire calamity,  
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,  
If not, what resolution from despair.

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,  
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,  
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge  
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den  
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast  
Leviathan, which God of all his works  
Created hugest that swim th' ocean-stream.  
Him, haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam,  
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,  
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,  
With fix'd anchor in his scaly rind,  
Moors by his side under the lee, while night  
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.  
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay,  
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence  
Had ris'n, or heaved his head, but that the will  
And high permission of all-ruling Heav'n  
Left him at large to his own dark designs,  
That with reiterated crimes he might  
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought  
Evil to others, and enraged might see  
How all his malice served but to bring forth  
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn  
On Man by him seduced, but on himself  
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.  
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool

His mighty stature; on each hand the flames  
Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and, roll'd  
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.  
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight  
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,  
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land  
He lights, if it were land that ever burned  
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,  
And such appeared in hue as when the force  
Of subterranean wind transports a hill  
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side  
Of thund'ring tna, whose combustible  
And fuel'd entrails, thence conceiving fire,  
Sublimed with min'ral fury, aid the winds,  
And leave a singed bottom all involved  
With stench and smoke. Such resting found the sole  
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate;  
Both glorying to have 'scap'd the Stygian flood  
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,  
Not by the suff'rance of Supernal Pow'r.

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,  
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, "this the seat  
That we must change for Heav'n? this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
Who now is sovereign can dispose and bid  
What shall be right: farthest from him is best  
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme  
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,  
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,  
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,  
Receive thy new possessor, one who brings  
A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
The mind is its own place, and in itself